



School of Social Work  
DSW Program

**DSW POLICY HANDBOOK**

**Aurora Campus  
&  
George Williams Campus**

**2021 – 2022**

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# Our Mission at Aurora University

Aurora University is an inclusive community dedicated to the transformative power of learning. As a teaching-centered institution, we encourage undergraduate and graduate students to discover what it takes to build meaningful and examined lives. Our singular goal is to empower our students to achieve lasting personal and professional success.

## Core Values

**Integrity:** Aurora University adheres to the highest standards of integrity in every aspect of institutional practice and operation. Through this proven dedication to honesty, fairness, and ethical conduct, we lead by example and inspire our students to do the same.

**Citizenship:** Aurora University exercises the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in an inclusive educational community, founded upon the principles of mutual respect and open discourse. We live within our means and manage our resources wisely and responsibly while sustaining an environment that fosters teamwork and promotes services to others. We serve the needs of the Fox River Valley, McHenry County (Illinois), Walworth County (Wisconsin), and online learners by offering myriad educational and cultural opportunities to our students and the community-at-large.

**Continuous Learning:** Aurora University works and lives as a non-profit organization dedicated to continuous learning. We help students achieve their full potential.

**Excellence:** Aurora University pursues excellence by embracing quality as a way of community life.

## Aurora University's History

Aurora University traces its origins to the 1893 founding of a seminary in the small town of Mendota, Illinois. Though established initially to prepare graduates for ministry, the institution soon adopted a broader mission and moved to a new campus on the western edge of the nearby community of Aurora. With this change came a different name, Aurora College, and a growing enrollment.

When World War II ended, the campus population swelled again as veterans enrolled in the college's innovative evening degree program. The 1970s and 1980s saw an expansion of curricular offerings in several professional fields and the awarding of advanced degrees in selected disciplines. These changes culminated in the 1985 decision to rechristen the institution Aurora University.

## George Williams College's History

The roots of [George Williams College](#) run deep in the YMCA movement of the 19th century. In 1884, leaders from America's "western" YMCAs gathered on the shores of Geneva Lake in Williams Bay, Wisconsin, to attend a summer training program. Two years later, the camp was incorporated, and the first parcel of the current Williams Bay campus was purchased. Since that time, "college camp" has been a source of inspiration, recreation, education, and renewal for thousands of guests and students. In 1992, Aurora University and George Williams College traditions blended when the two institutions entered into an affiliation agreement that paved the way for a merger eight years later.

# Aurora University Today

Today, Aurora University operates two primary campuses: a campus of 37 acres in Aurora, Illinois; and the 137.5-acre George Williams College on Geneva Lake in Williams Bay, Wisconsin. Aurora University is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission to award degrees at the baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral levels. The institution enrolls approximately 5,500 degree-seeking students a year on its campuses. Classes are also offered at the Orchard Center in Aurora, Illinois, and the Woodstock Center in Woodstock, Illinois.

## Mission of School of Social Work

The School of Social Work empowers students through holistic and transformative education. Our inclusive learning community works to prepare social workers to competently build justice and systematic change for individuals, families, organizations, and communities while guiding students toward professional engagement.

## Mission and Goals of the DSW Program

The Doctor of Social Work program at Aurora University empowers students through holistic and transformative education. Our inclusive learning community works to advance learning, scholarship, teaching, and research. The DSW program prepares social workers to apply and disseminate the values, ethics, and skills of the field of social work.

DSW graduates will:

1. be prepared to design and teach BSW and MSW courses;
2. engage in systematic inquiry through coursework and the dissertation process; and
3. develop and maintain expertise in clinical social work.

## DSW Program

**This program is offered on the Aurora Campus.**

The Doctor of Social Work program offers a clinical doctorate designed for those who want to teach in higher education, particularly clinical theory and practice in BSW, MSW, and DSW degree programs. The DSW program responds to the real and pressing need for qualified faculty who can teach clinical theory and practice. Graduates are prepared to practice clinical social work at a highly advanced post-graduate level. Given the broad perspective of social work, the DSW program ensures continuing understanding of the micro, mezzo, and macro systems, allowing students to serve as leaders in the social work field as well.

The School of Social Work offers the DSW program on Saturdays on the Aurora campus, and in a format of one weekend per month on the George Williams College campus. The program requires 64 total semester hours including:

- 48 Academic semester hours
- 12 Clinical Preceptorship semester hours
- 4 Dissertation Supervision hours

# Admission Requirements

The School of Social Work strives to recruit a diverse group of students who have had relevant and significant work and life experiences, and who can relate to diverse and vulnerable populations. Factors considered include the applicant's academic ability, work, service, and extracurricular experience, especially as it relates to the promotion and development of resilient communities, organizations, groups, families, and individuals.

Applicants to the DSW program should:

1. Complete the [online application for graduate admission](#).
2. Have an MSW degree from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).
3. Have an overall MSW G.P.A. of 3.0/4.0 scale.
4. Have at least three years of post-masters work experience.
5. Submit two letters of recommendation from former professors, supervisors, and other professionals who have had extensive knowledge or experience with your work.
6. Complete a background check. Link available for Castle Branch during the application process.
7. Submit a writing sample in the area of Clinical Social Work Theory and Practice demonstrating initial mastery of theory and practice content and clinical experience using a disguised case example.

Submit all materials via email to [AUadmission@aurora.edu](mailto:AUadmission@aurora.edu)

## Writing Sample

The writing sample should consist of *no more than 10 pages* demonstrating an understanding of clinical social work practice. The sample is not a research paper and does not have to be written in APA format or include references. The writing sample should be focused on understanding and experience in clinical social work practice. For example, you may write about a case you have had and how theory informed your work with the client(s). The writing sample will be evaluated for both writing ability and knowledge of clinical social work theory and practice.

## Policy for Accepting Credit from Outside Programs

Graduate-level credit earned at **regionally accredited institutions of higher education** may be transferred to Aurora University and applied toward a master's or doctoral degree or other post-baccalaureate programs with the approval of the director of the program to which the student is admitted. Each graduate program limits the amount of credit that can be applied toward an Aurora University degree.

1. Graduate credit graded "B" or better may be transferred and applied to graduate programs at Aurora University with the approval of the graduate program director. Coursework graded "Pass" or "Credit" may be transferred at the option of the graduate program director. The individual graduate program shall establish the minimum grades required for acceptance of undergraduate prerequisite courses.
2. Graduate credit is transferred for application only to a specific graduate program; in the event that a student is subsequently admitted to a different graduate program, any graduate work completed at other institutions

will be re-evaluated by the director of the new graduate program and the transferred credit modified if necessary.

3. Transfer of credit once enrolled: Once the applicant has been accepted for enrollment in a graduate program at Aurora University, it is expected that he/she will complete all coursework for the degree or certificate at Aurora University. No coursework may be transferred to Aurora University after enrollment except upon prior, written approval of the graduate program director or school dean.

4. Residency Requirement: A minimum of 25% percent of the total credits required for the completion of the graduate degree must be earned at Aurora University.

5. DSW students wishing to receive credit must submit a request in writing to the Director. That written request should include course descriptions and syllabi if possible, as well as a transcript and for which DSW courses the credit will be given. The DSW Director will review the request and communicate the decision to the DSW student in a timely fashion.

# Program Requirements — Doctor of Social Work

## Year One

### First Sixteen Weeks

- SWK 7100 - The History of Psychological Theory and Practice (3 semester hours)
- SWK 7150 - The History of Clinical Social Work Knowledge and Practice (3 semester hours)

### Second Sixteen Weeks

- SWK 7200 - Clinical Seminar I: Individuals (6 semester hours)
- SWK 7250 - History of Social Policy (3 semester hours)

### Third Sixteen Weeks

- SWK 7300 - Clinical Seminar II: Couples (6 semester hours)
- SWK 7350 - Organizational Analysis (3 semester hours)

## Year Two

### First Sixteen Weeks

- SWK 7400 - Clinical Seminar III: Families (6 semester hours)
- SWK 7450 - Teaching Clinical Social Work Theory and Practice (3 semester hours)

### Second Sixteen Weeks

- SWK 7500 - Clinical Seminar IV: Groups (6 semester hours)
- SWK 7810 - DSW Electives: Three 3 credit hour courses (9 semester hours total) – Taken before the completion of the dissertation\*

## Year Three

### First Sixteen Weeks

- SWK 8100 - Research Methodology I (3 semester hours)
- SWK 8150 - Data Analysis I (3 semester hours)

### Second Sixteen Weeks

- SWK 8200 - Research Methodology II, Dissertation Planning (3 semester hours)
- SWK 8250 - Data Analysis II (3 semester hours)
- SWK 8800 - Dissertation Supervision (4 semester hours over two semesters) Taken during the dissertation process AND ONE SEMESTER HOUR FOR EACH SUBSEQUENT SEMESTER (INCLUDING SUMMER) UNTIL THE COMPLETION OF THE DISSERTATION\*.

## Year Four

- Dissertation Supervision\*
- Program completed or TBD

## Year Five

- Program completed

**ONE Extension may be approved for a one-year or a two-year extension. No more than one extension will be granted.**

# DSW Course Descriptions

## Year One

### **SWK7100 The History of Psychological Theory and Practice** 3 semester hours

This course will provide the doctoral student with a comprehensive overview of the history, development, and evolution of psychological theory and clinical practice.

**No prerequisites. Co-requisite: SWK7150.**

### **SWK7150 The History of Clinical Social Work Knowledge and Practice** 3 semester hours

This course will provide the doctoral student with a comprehensive overview of the history, development, and evolution of clinical social work knowledge and practice.

**No prerequisites. Co-requisite: SWK7100.**

### **SWK7200 Clinical Seminar One** 6 semester hours

This first clinical seminar will provide the doctoral student with a comprehensive overview of the history, development, and evolution of clinical social work knowledge and practice with individual clients. The doctoral student will also be involved in a clinical preceptorship that runs concurrently with the academic course.

**Prerequisites:** SWK7100 and SWK7150. **Co-requisite: SWK7250.**

### **SWK7250 History of Social Policy** 3 semester hours

This course will provide the doctoral student with a comprehensive overview and critique of the history, development, and evolution of social policy as it relates to clinical social work practice.

**Prerequisites:** SWK7100 and SWK7150. **Co-requisite: SWK7200.**

### **SWK7300 Clinical Seminar Two** 6 semester hours

This second clinical seminar will provide the doctoral student with a comprehensive overview of the history, development, and evolution of clinical social work knowledge and practice with couples. The doctoral student will also be involved in a clinical preceptorship that runs concurrently with the academic course.

**Prerequisites:** SWK7100, SWK7150, SWK7200 and SWK7250. **Co-requisite: SWK7350.**

### **SWK7350 Organizational Analysis** 3 semester hours

This course will provide the doctoral student with a comprehensive overview and critique of the history, development, and evolution of organizational theory as it relates to the current state of clinical social work practice.

**Prerequisites:** SWK7100, SWK7150, SWK7200 and SWK7250. **Co-requisite: SWK7300.**

## Year Two

### **SWK7400 Clinical Seminar Three** 6 semester hours

This third clinical seminar will provide the doctoral student with a comprehensive overview of the history, development, and evolution of clinical social work knowledge and practice with families. The student will also be involved in a clinical preceptorship that runs concurrently with the academic course.

**Prerequisites:** SWK7100, SWK7150, SWK7200, SWK7250, SWK7300 and SWK7350. **Co-requisite: SWK7450.**

**SWK7450 Teaching Clinical Social Work Theory and Practice** 3 semester hours This didactic and experiential course will expose the doctoral student to the theory and techniques to teach advanced clinical social work theory & practice in higher education.  
**Prerequisites:** SWK7100, SWK7150, SWK7200, SWK7250, SWK7300 and SWK7350. **Co-requisite:** SWK7400.

**SWK7500 Clinical Seminar Four** 6 semester hours  
This fourth clinical seminar will provide the doctoral student with a comprehensive overview of the history, development, and evolution of clinical social work knowledge and practice with groups. The doctoral student will also be involved in a clinical preceptorship that runs concurrently with the academic course. In this clinical seminar, the doctoral student will develop a comprehensive paper used in his or her clinical oral. Doctoral students will also use this course to help prepare for the clinical oral through practice presentation in class.  
**Prerequisites:** SWK7100, SWK7150, SWK7200, SWK7250, SWK7300, SWK7350, SWK7400 and SWK7450.

**\*SWK8810/8910 Special Topics: D.S.W. Electives** Three 3 semester hour courses/9 total semester hours

The remaining three electives will consist of three 3-hour courses in an area of the doctoral student's choosing. These courses must be approved by the doctoral student's advisor, and substantially relate to the overall dissertation plan, i.e. be relevant to the course of study and add to the expertise of the doctoral student's overall educational process. These could include EdD courses from AU, as well as other AU masters-level courses that can be revised to meet doctoral criteria for content and assignment rigor.

**Prerequisites:** Approval of Advisor; SWK7100, SWK7150, SWK7200, SWK7250, SWK7300, SWK7350, SWK7400 and SWK7450. **Co-requisite:** SWK7810.

### Year Three

**SWK8100 Research Methodology I** 3 semester hours  
This course will acquaint the doctoral student with the knowledge and application of research methodology in preparation for the development of the dissertation proposal.  
**Prerequisites:** Successful completion of the Clinical Oral and Comprehensive Exams. **Co-requisite:** SWK8150.

**SWK8150 Data Analysis** 3 semester hours  
This course will acquaint the doctoral student with the knowledge and application of statistics for the study and research of social work treatment practices in support of the development of evidence-based practice.  
**Prerequisites:** Successful completion of the Clinical Oral and Comprehensive Exams. **Co-requisite:** SWK8100.

**SWK8200 Research Methodology II, Dissertation Planning** 3 semester hours  
In this course, the doctoral student will finalize their Dissertation Committee and develop an initial dissertation proposal, including formulating the research question, literature review, methodology design, data analysis, human subjects protection procedures including consent forms, IRB application, and agency or organizational approvals.  
**Prerequisites:** SWK8100 and SWK8150. **Co-requisite:** SWK8250.

**SWK8250 Data Analysis II** 3 semester hours

This course is intended to support the student in developing a competitive level of statistical acumen in preparation for both finalizing the dissertation and engaging in professional practice or academia.

**Prerequisites:** SWK8100 and SWK8150. **Co-requisite:** SWK8200.

**SWK8800 Dissertation Supervision** 2-4 semester hours

**Prerequisites:** Successful completion of the Clinical Oral and Comprehensive Exam, SWK7500, SWK8200, SWK8250.

**\*IN ADDITION, DOCTORAL STUDENTS THAT DO NOT SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE THE DISSERTATION BY THE END OF THE FOURTH YEAR IN THE PROGRAM, MUST ENROLL IN A ONE SEMESTER CLASS OF SWK 8800 EACH SEMESTER UNTIL THE DISSERTATION IS COMPLETE.** An extension petition must be completed with the assistance of the dissertation chair, submitted to the DSW Director, and approved by the Registrar should the DSW program extend beyond the allotted five-year time frame. One extension may be approved. The petition is included in this handbook.

## Academic Performance Standards

The DSW program maintains high academic standards, as do all professional programs, where the well-being of future clients is of concern. In accordance with Aurora University regulations, the School of Social Work reserves the right to maintain academic standards for admission and retention in the social work program at the BSW, MSW, and DSW levels, above and beyond compliance with the general academic standards of the University.

### Criteria for Academic Performance

#### □ Graduate Academic Standards

Under general university standards, all graduate students must maintain a minimum cumulative program/major GPA of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale to remain in good standing. When a student initially fails to meet these minimum academic standards s/he will be placed on academic warning. Following a second semester (not necessarily consecutive) where the cumulative program/major GPA does not meet minimum standards (3.0 or higher), or if at any time more than two grades below “B” are earned while enrolled in a graduate program, a student will be dismissed from the university by the action of the Academic Conduct and Integrity Committee. The committee may also impose conditions on a student’s continued enrollment. If dismissed for poor scholarship, the student may not be readmitted to the university for at least one full semester following the academic dismissal. A successful petitioning for readmission to the university is required, as well as the filing of a new application for admission. The petition for readmission and application for admission must be submitted by the student to the university for consideration and review, no later than 30 days before the start of the semester for which readmission is sought. Individual programs may have additional or more stringent academic standards for retention and/or graduation of students in the program. These standards are available to students through the office of each respective program.

## □ **Graduate Academic Warning and Dismissal Steps**

1. When a student's academic performance does not meet minimum standards, the instructor should send an academic alert to the student.
2. A student is placed on academic warning at the end of any semester when their cumulative program/major GPA is less than 3.0.
3. A student placed on academic warning for a second time (not necessarily consecutive terms) will be academically dismissed for poor scholarship.
4. A student who at any time while enrolled in a graduate program, earns more than two grades below "B" will be academically dismissed for poor scholarship.
5. A student will be academically dismissed if their Term GPA is 0.00 in any given semester.
6. A graduate student who is dismissed from Aurora University for poor scholarship may apply for readmission after one full semester away.
7. To be considered for readmission, a new application for admission is required to be filed no less than 30 days prior to the requested semester of return.
8. A petition for readmission must be received in writing, by the Registrar's Office, no less than 30 days prior to the requested semester of return.
9. The petition will be reviewed by an academic program committee, comprised of the academic program director/chair and two faculty designated by the jurisdictional Dean. The academic program committee may require an in-person meeting.

## **Independent Study Courses**

Students may request to complete an independent study course on a selected topic not addressed in a regularly offered elective course. Requests must be made to the DSW Program Director. Approval for Independent Study courses is made by the Director.

## **Academic Advising/Course Registration**

The DSW Program Director, faculty, and staff of the School of Social Work provide academic advising to DSW students. The DSW Program Director, faculty, and staff help students plan their course of study within the School of Social Work. The DSW Program Director, faculty, and staff also provide students with academic information and help them understand university procedures. Students should consult the program structure charts or grids for guidance when scheduling courses. Students are reminded that deviating from the structured program plan may result in a delay in completing the program since courses are usually offered only in the academic terms outlined on the program structure charts.

## **Writing Standard**

Professional social workers are often judged by others based upon the quality of their written work. A poorly written professional report may suggest mistakes in other areas of work performance. When the work product of a social worker is devalued the result may be detrimental. Therefore, all written assignments are expected to meet professional standards. Work must be typed and edited. Each assignment must follow the guidelines stipulated by the instructor. The most current edition of APA guidelines will serve as a quality resource for writing and proper formatting.

## **Class Attendance Policy**

Students are expected to attend all classes. Those students unable to attend a scheduled class session are responsible for notifying the instructor in advance by phone or by e-mail explaining the need for absence. Twenty percent (20%) or more of the scheduled class session is considered excessive absences. Excessive absences may result in a reduction of the grade for the course.

Students will be graded on their *engaged learning demonstration*. This grade is more than just attendance. It involves the extent to which students are actively involved in classroom discussions around course readings and practice experience. Students will also be graded on the timeliness of assignments, the completeness of course work, and communication effort with peers and the instructor. While class participation is greatly encouraged and valued, other ways to demonstrate participation including asking questions/writing reflections on the Moodle Discussion Forum and coming to office hours. Occasionally, homework assignments will be given and the quality of homework will be considered. The activity level of the students during small group activities will also be taken into consideration.

# **Academic, Personal and Professional Performance Standards**

## Behavior in Classroom

Students in a professional program should conduct themselves as professionals in relation to the class session and assignments. Students are assessed not only for meeting basic performance criteria on assignments described in course syllabi, but also on their ability to relate to others and their personal and professional behavior.

## Professional Conduct

Students in a professional program should conduct themselves as professionals in relation to the class session and assignments. It is not acceptable to be late for classes except in unusual circumstances. Respect for the opinions of others is expected. Opinions expressed should be supported by data or carefully reasoned arguments. Asking questions per se, or offering opinions that do not reflect the readings assigned for the class do not constitute “prepared participation.”

Any use of consciousness-altering substances before, during, or between class sessions impairs learning and is unacceptable. Frequent lateness or unbecoming class conduct is likely to result in a lowered grade.

## Dress Code

Students are expected to respect and adhere to the dress code of the classroom. The appropriate dress may range from casual, business attire to business casual.

## Procedures for Use in Appealing Allegedly Capricious Term Grades for Students

- a. The following procedures are available only for review of alleged capricious grading, and not for review of the judgment of an instructor in assessing the quality of a student’s work. Capricious grading, as that term is used herein, is limited to one or more of the following:
  - The assignment of a grade to a particular student on some basis other than performance in the course;
  - The assignment of a grade to a particular student by more exacting or demanding standards than were applied to other students in that course;
  - The assignment of a grade by a substantial departure from the instructor’s standards announced during the first fourth of the term.
- b. The assessment of the quality of a student’s academic performance is one of the major

professional responsibilities of University faculty members and is solely and properly their responsibility. It is essential for the standards of the academic programs at Aurora University and the integrity of the degrees conferred by this University that the professional judgments of faculty members are not subject to pressures or other interference from any source.

- c. It is necessary, however, that any term grade is based on evidence of the student's performance in a course, that the student has access to the evidence, that the instructor be willing to explain and interpret the evidence to the student, and that a grade is determined in accordance with announced guidelines. These guidelines should be announced and put in writing for each class at the beginning of each term.

### Appeal Procedures

- a. A student who believes his/her term grade is capricious may seek clarification and, where appropriate, redress, as follows:
  - The student shall confer with the instructor, informing the instructor of questions concerning the grade, and seeking to understand fully the grounds and procedures the instructor has used in determining the grade. The aim of such a conference is to reach mutual understanding about the grade, the process by which it was assigned, and to correct errors, if any, in the grade. The student should do this within two weeks of receiving his/her final grade.
  - If, after consultation with the instructor, the student believes that a grade is capricious, the student shall submit a petition in writing to the DSW Program Director, who shall consult and advise with both the instructor and student separately or together, to reach an understanding and resolution of the matter.
  - If Steps One or Two do not resolve the problem, the student may submit a petition in writing to the Dean of the School of Social Work. This petition must be submitted to the Dean not later than the end of the fourth week of the term following that for which the grade is being appealed, excluding the summer term.
- b. The student shall request a meeting with the Director, and shall present evidence that the grade is capricious as defined above, and shall present the student's arguments which substantiate his/her conclusions. The Director shall refer the petition to the instructor and secure from the instructor a response in writing, setting forth the instructor's position on the matter.
- c. Based on a consideration of the student's petition and the instructor's response, the Dean shall conduct an inquiry which shall include a meeting with the student and the instructor separately or together and ascertain and consider relevant facts. The instructor and/or student may bring an advocate if he/she so chooses. If an advocate is to be present at a meeting, the Dean must be informed prior to the meeting.

Decision - The Dean shall make one of these decisions:

- a. That the grade was not assigned capriciously and shall stand as assigned.
- b. That the grade was assigned capriciously and should be changed. The Dean shall then, as a result of his/her consideration, assign a grade different from the grade decided to be capricious. The Dean shall authorize the Registrar to make the grade change and such a decision shall be final.

## **Professional/Ethical Standards**

Professional social work education requires high standards of academic, personal, and professional conduct. The educational program at both the undergraduate (BSW) and graduate levels (MSW and DSW) requires the development of ethics and values as well as knowledge and skills. Students are expected to exhibit values and behaviors that are compatible with the NASW Code of Ethics which regulates not only professional conduct concerning clients but also in relation to colleagues.

The School of Social Work recognizes that professional competencies and conduct are not always measurable by academic achievement. The SSW reserves the right to make decisions regarding admission and retention of student status based on high standards of personal and professional conduct demonstrated both in and out of the classroom. Students are evaluated on standards of personal and professional behavior, adherence to ethical standards, and based on civil and criminal records. Students may be suspended or dismissed from the program if an evaluation outcome does not meet professional standards.

### **Criteria for Professional/Ethical Behavior**

The student is required to know the contents of and is bound by, the University policies and regulations dealing with conduct presented in the Student Handbook. Students are required to know the contents of and are bound by, The Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). Social Work students are also bound by the School of Social Work's specific provisions below:

#### Misrepresentation of Self

Fraud or misrepresentation includes, but is not limited to, false or misleading statements on the application, during the admissions interview, and/or on the financial aid application. Falsifying degrees or professional credentials is also considered fraud or misrepresentation of self. Such behavior shall constitute grounds for dismissal.

#### Alleged Law Violations

Any student charged with fraud, malpractice, a felony, or misdemeanor, may be refused or revoked registration in classes without prejudice until an official determination has been made by the University.

#### Conviction for a Felony or Misdemeanor

Any student who has been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor for conduct that may be a threat to the well-being of others shall not be admitted to classes or activities until there is clear evidence of rehabilitation. Serving a sentence alone does not necessarily constitute evidence of rehabilitation. The faculty of the School of Social Work will be the sole judge of rehabilitation.

Following a conviction, the student shall be informed in writing of the criteria that the University will use in determining evidence of rehabilitation.

Some states prohibit licensure in the field of social work if a felony conviction is on record. It remains the student's responsibility to obtain information regarding the information specific to licensure through the appropriate governing body. Review of forcible felonies from the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulations is critical and enforced by the administration.

### **Inappropriate Behavior that Would Interfere with Performing Professional Duties**

Any student who engages in inappropriate behavior that would interfere with performing professional duties and could potentially threaten the well-being of clients, including violent behavior, behavioral indications of substance abuse, or having indicators of physical or psychiatric disorders shall not be admitted to class. Any behavior which may have been influenced by a student's mental state (regardless of the ultimate evaluation) or use of drugs or alcoholic beverages will not in any way limit the responsibility of the student for the consequences of his/her actions.

### **Statement of Criminal Background Notification**

Aurora University reserves the right to deny admission to its undergraduate, graduate, and non-degree programs based on application materials, previous academic records, and records of past conduct, including but not limited to the results of a criminal background check or registration of a sexual offense.

DSW applicants are required to complete a national background check before beginning the program. The DSW program may deny admission based on the results of a criminal background check. The school may refuse or revoke admission for the following: misrepresentation of self, criminal behavior, results of the national background check, and/or behavior that interferes with performing professional duties.

### **Student Confidentiality**

The School of Social Work maintains an academic file on each DSW student. This file contains admissions materials; academic records (transcripts, grades); formal communication between the Dean, DSW Program Director, DSW faculty, and the student. The program honors and complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act 20 USC Sec. 1232g which requires academic institutions to provide access to academic records to the student, and prohibits the release of any information to another party unless a signed authorization has been obtained.

### **Confidentiality of Admissions Materials**

Once the School of Social Work has the completed admissions file for a student, no materials within the file will be provided to the student or other parties. Included with this material are the student's clinical writing sample, official transcripts, and letters of recommendation. Letters of recommendation will not be released to students even with signed permission from the person who completed the recommendation.

### **Non-Discrimination and Affirmative Action**

A complaint of program non-compliance with the Non-Discrimination and/or Affirmative Action Policy should be directed to the DSW Program Director. See Chapter 1 of this handbook for the Non-Discrimination and Affirmative Action policy.

### **Student Review Policy**

On rare occasions, when a serious concern about academic, personal, or professional performance related to any of the program's standards and/or policies has been identified by a faculty member, at any point in the program, and it is deemed a concern warranting immediate attention, the faculty member reports such concerns to the DSW Program Director. The Director informs the student that a concern has been identified, seeks information from relevant parties thoughtfully appraises the student's situation, and assesses whether the situation warrants a Student Review.

The purpose of a Student Review is to either design a helping plan for continuance in the DSW program or to make a determination regarding continuance in the program, such as suspension or dismissal from the School of Social Work.

A Student Review is scheduled as needed and is chaired by the Director. A Student Review Committee is formed which consists of the faculty who are current instructors for the student, other faculty members, administrators, and University personnel (e.g., Center for Teaching and Learning) deemed relevant to the Student Review process as determined by the DSW Program Director.

The student will be notified in writing of the commencement of the student review, the nature of the student review, giving the date, time, and place, the facts, and occurrences that have given rise to concern, the nature of the student review, the student's right to attend (and bring an advocate or person for support), the student's right to bring to the committee's attention relevant information concerning these facts, and occurrences that the student wishes the committee to consider.

In cases where the committee deems it appropriate, the committee may request the student to have his/her physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other providers of professional services meet with the committee to discuss the student's capabilities, and/or may request the student to permit an examination by a

physician, psychiatrist, psychologist or other providers of professional services selected by the School, whose report and/or opinion concerning the student's capabilities will be shared with the student. The student may submit additional information in response. If necessary, the Committee shall continue the conference at a later date for the purpose of obtaining additional relevant information.

Once the committee has completed its review, the student will be notified by email of the committee's determination along with a summary of the student review meeting.

The determination can take any of the following forms: (1) a written plan establishing the conditions and requirements that the student must meet to continue in the program; (2) a temporary suspension of the student from the program, and; (3) a determination to discontinue the student from the program.

If the student wishes to challenge the determination of the Student Review Committee, the student has a right to appeal to the Dean of the School of Social Work. A written request for the appeal must be submitted to the Dean within four weeks of the student review. The written request should identify the student's grievance(s).

### **Program Termination**

Students who are not permitted to continue within the DSW program are informed of such by certified mail. At the time of suspension or dismissal, the student will be administratively dropped from current and future courses in the DSW program.

### **Termination Appeals**

Students who have been terminated from the DSW program can appeal a decision only based on alleged "capriciousness." The term "capricious" is limited to the following:

- Termination on the basis other than academic or professional performance;
- Termination on more exacting or demanding standards than were applied to other students in the program;
- A substantial departure from the standards and procedures contained in the DSW Policy Handbook.

Appeals based upon capriciousness are made to the DSW Program Director. The request for appeal must be in writing, identifying the student's grievance(s). Failing a mutually satisfactory resolution at the level of the DSW Program Director, the student may appeal the determination in writing to the Dean of the School of Social Work.

### **Readmission to the DSW Program**

A DSW student who leaves or withdraws from the DSW program; is dropped from the program for poor scholarship or unprofessional behavior; or is terminated for lack of registration or application for a leave of absence, and later decides to complete the program, must apply for readmission to the program. Prior records will be re-evaluated and the student, if readmitted, will be held responsible for completing all current degree requirements.

Courses that are taken more than five years before the reapplication time will need to be retaken. Preceptorships more than five years old will need to be retaken as well.

### **Handbook Terms of Issue**

Every attempt is made to permit students to graduate under the degree requirements in effect when they entered Aurora University and the School of Social Work provided that enrollment is continuous from the time of matriculation until graduation. *However, the School of Social Work reserves the right to modify academic requirements, curricula, and/or course offerings at any time without prior notice and without incurring obligation.* At the same time, the program attempts to enable students to participate in formulating and modifying policies affecting academic affairs.

## **University Academic & Professional Standards**

Please refer to the University Student Handbook for all University policies related to academic and professional standards, including (but not limited to):

- Academic and Social Expectations
- Statement of Academic Integrity
- Zero Tolerance Policy
- Statement of Discrimination and Sexual Harassment
- Learning Disabilities Policy
- Privacy Act of 1974 as Amended
- Policy for Grade Appeals
- Graduate Grading System

The University Student Handbook is located online at [www.aurora.edu/academics/resources/abook](http://www.aurora.edu/academics/resources/abook)

## **School of Social Work Pledge**

All School of Social Work students will receive a pledge related to expected behaviors. All programs in the School of Social Work (SSW) are grounded in Aurora University's commitment to integrity, citizenship, continuous learning, and excellence. The social work degrees are accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and are dedicated to advancing quality clinical specialization education. The curriculum is designed to include an emphasis on the mission of AU and the SSW, CSWE Competencies and Dimensions, the 12 Grand Challenges of Social Work, and the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) Knowledge, Skills and Abilities.

This Pledge document broadly articulates the behavioral expectations students are required to adhere to throughout their programs of study – in the classroom, on field trips, during the preceptorship, and in any other academic or professional setting. By understanding these guidelines and following them inside and outside of the classroom, students will develop human capital relating to the knowledge and practice of professional behavior. Accumulating this human capital will contribute positively to students' professional reputations – one vitally important component of career success.

The pledge can be found in the appendices of the DSW handbook.

# Clinical Seminar and Clinical Preceptor Responsibilities

In the fall semester of the first year, the doctoral student will consult with the DSW Program Director to secure a clinical preceptorship. The preceptorship will begin in the spring semester of the first year in the doctoral program and run for four consecutive semesters. In addition to a four-course clinical seminar sequence, the doctoral student is required to concurrently spend eight hours a week in a preceptorship, including one hour of weekly academic clinical consultation with an approved Clinical Preceptor. With the approval of the DSW Program Director, the doctoral student may use a current place of employment for the preceptorship. The Clinical Preceptor will be chosen in discussion with and approval by the Director. The Clinical Preceptor must have at least a master's degree and clinical experience and expertise relevant to the doctoral student's clinical practice. The Clinical Preceptor is not a direct supervisor, but a *Clinical Academic Consultant* who will help guide the doctoral student through the Clinical Oral process, including the paper and oral presentation preparation. This includes one-hour weekly discussions with the student (in person or by phone) to help them explore and examine their clinical work as it relates to the Doctor of Social Work curriculum, especially the Clinical Seminars. This four-semester experience culminates in the Clinical Oral Presentation. The Clinical Preceptor will have periodic contact with the DSW Program Director and the student's current Clinical Seminar Instructor as needed to maintain a positive preceptorship experience. This communication will serve to keep the DSW Program Director and Clinical Seminar Professors abreast of the doctoral student's progress. The Clinical Preceptor will be part of the Clinical Oral Committee and a voting member in the process.

At the end of the four-course sequence, the doctoral student will construct a short paper describing the client being presented in the clinical oral examination. This paper will be distributed to the clinical oral committee consisting of the doctoral student's Clinical Preceptorship, the DSW Program Director, and a Social Work faculty member or outside Clinical Practitioner chosen by the student and approved by the DSW Program Director. The doctoral student will present a clinical case to the committee, demonstrating mastery of a particular clinical theory and its application in clinical practice. The committee will cast a vote of a pass or fail at the completion of the clinical oral and discussion. The doctoral student will need at least two out of three favorable votes to pass.

# DSW Preceptorship Agreement Form

Student agrees to the preceptorship experience of participating in the four-course clinical seminar sequence. The doctoral student is required to concurrently spend eight hours a week in a preceptorship, including one hour of weekly academic clinical consultation with an approved Clinical Preceptor.

DSW Student: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

DSW Student: \_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

DSW Preceptorship Site: \_\_\_\_\_

Address and Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

DSW Preceptor: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

DSW Preceptor: \_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

Director: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

Director: \_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

Aurora University  
Doctor of Social Work  
Preceptee Rubric

Preceptee: \_\_\_\_\_  
Term: \_\_\_\_\_

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

	4 - Advanced	3- Proficient	2 – Developing	1 - Emerging	0 – No Evidence
<p><b>Learning</b></p> <p>Preceptee demonstrates learning related to resources and theory.</p>	Identifies circumstances when learning occurred independently. Able to point out learning resources available within and outside the organization. Integrates and applies theoretical constructs to a variety of populations/agencies.	Identifies opportunities to learn independently. Able to point out learning resources available within and outside the organization. Applies theoretical constructs to a population/organization.	Identifies opportunities to learn independently. Benefits from direction to discover learning resources within the organization. Benefits from discussions related to theoretical constructs.	Identifies opportunities to learn but requires direction in relation to relevant learning resources, and theoretical constructs.	Seeks guidance regarding the learning process of being a preceptee.
<p><b>Engagement</b></p> <p>Preceptee demonstrates an understanding of the process of engagement with preceptor, organization, and/or clientele. Preceptee is required to concurrently spend eight hours a week in a preceptorship, including one hour of weekly academic clinical consultation with an approved Clinical Preceptor.</p>	Engages preceptor at least one hour per week, organization, and/or clientele through the identification of both needs and strengths while partnering with organization staff/clients to create improved outcomes. Engages with organizations/clients in their environments as a primary form of engagement.	Engages preceptor at least one hour per week, organization, and/or clientele through the identification of both needs and strengths while partnering with organization staff/clients to create better outcomes.	Engages preceptor at least one hour per week, organization, and/or clientele through the identification of both needs and strengths.	Needs prompts to engage preceptor, organization, and/or clientele through the identification of both needs and strengths. Does not meet with Preceptor weekly unless promoted to do so.	Seeks guidance regarding the process of engagement. Does not meet with Preceptor weekly.
<p><b>Assessment</b></p> <p>Preceptee demonstrates an understanding of the process of assessment of the organization and/or clientele.</p>	Relates ongoing findings to potential complications; modifies plans and clinical interventions accordingly. Classifies the relative importance of multiple assessment findings over time.	Recognizes changes in organization/client affect, health, well-being, condition, and plans for intervention. Appropriately plans for reassessment.	Distinguishes between normative and non-normative assessment findings.	Performs client assessment with guidance/prompts.	Seeks guidance regarding the process of assessment.
<p><b>Intervention</b></p> <p>Preceptee demonstrates an understanding of the process of intervening with an organization and/or clientele.</p>	Modifies clinical care by synthesizing evidence-based knowledge into practice; utilizes and /or conducts research.	Implements an appropriate intervention plan and evaluates effect promptly.	Identifies active client concern(s), but needs help on selecting intervention(s)	Performs simple, basic client care/organizational care with prompts.	Seeks guidance regarding interventions.
<p><b>Evaluation of Application/Integration</b></p> <p>Preceptee demonstrates an understanding of the process of evaluation of the organization and/or clientele.</p>	Readily applies multiple theoretical concepts to a specific case/organization while evaluating engagement, assessment, and intervention.	Evaluates four or more concepts from a theoretical approach appropriate for engagement, assessment, and intervention to a specific case or organization.	Applies and explains one to three concepts from a theoretical approach appropriate for application to the specific case or organization.	Explains the rationale for a theoretical approach appropriate for application to a specific case or organization.	Seeks guidance regarding theoretical approaches appropriate for engagement, assessment, application, and intervention.

<p><b>Communication and/or Documentation</b></p> <p>Preceptee demonstrates articulate communication and well-developed documentation.</p>	<p>Synthesizes available information and possible outcomes during articulate discussion with preceptor and shares well-developed reporting.</p>	<p>Draws conclusions based on available information during discussions with the preceptor, and develop a standardized form for reporting.</p>	<p>Prioritizes available information for discussion and documentation with the preceptor.</p>	<p>Summarizes available information during discussions with the preceptor and develops documentation when prompted.</p>	<p>Seeks guidance about the means of communication/documentation or repeats basic information to the preceptor.</p>
<p><b>Diversity</b></p> <p>Preceptee demonstrates knowledge of diverse populations and utilizes knowledge of diverse populations in a responsive manner that demonstrates empathy and humility.</p>	<p>Articulates knowledge and understanding of various types of diversity, as well as biases. Leads in the creation of systems change to reduce the impact of risk factors for vulnerable populations. Helps colleagues and stakeholders understand work with diverse populations in a culturally responsive manner.</p>	<p>Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of various cultures and biases. Advocates for historically marginalized populations for social and economic justice to reduce barriers.</p>	<p>Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of risk factors and advocates for system change to reduce the impact of the risk factors. Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of cultural responsiveness.</p>	<p>Demonstrates basic knowledge of various cultures and biases when prompted.</p>	<p>Lacks knowledge of diversity and biases. Lacks understanding of disproportionately poor outcomes for many historically marginalized populations. Lacks knowledge of risk factors. Lacks knowledge of culturally responsive practices.</p>
<p><b>Human Rights</b></p> <p>Preceptee demonstrates knowledge of human rights.</p>	<p>Explicates the complicated relationship between human rights and international responsibilities to end human rights abuse articulately. Aware of implications related to human resources as they relate to the client and/or the organization.</p>	<p>Describes the complicated relationship between human rights and international responsibilities to end human rights abuse. Aware of implications related to human resources as they relate to the organization and/or client.</p>	<p>Describes a relationship between human rights and international responsibilities to end human rights abuse. Briefly describes an awareness of implications related to human resources as they relate to the organization and/or client.</p>	<p>Although the preceptee discusses the relationship between human rights and international responsibilities to end human rights abuse, the preceptee does not apply the connection to the organization and/or client. Has limited awareness of implications related to human resources as related to the client and/or organization.</p>	<p>Does not describe the complicated relationship between human rights and international responsibilities to end human rights abuse. Does not describe awareness of implications related to human resources as they relate to the organization and/or client.</p>
<p><b>Technology</b></p> <p>Preceptee demonstrates knowledge of innovative applications of new digital technology (CSWE, Grand Challenge 8)</p>	<p>Understands that innovative application of new digital technology presents opportunities for social and human services to reach more people with a greater impact on vexing social problems. Expresses an understanding of the importance of deploying technology to strategically target social spending, speed up the development of effective programs, and bring a wider array of help to more individuals and communities.</p>	<p>Demonstrates knowledge of technology and assists others in applying technology. Completes high-quality reports and documentation in an accurate, clear, concise, complete, and timely manner, reflecting the needs, for seamless monitoring of progress across settings. Shares data with stakeholders, as appropriate, to ensure consistency across all settings.</p>	<p>Demonstrates knowledge of district technology and utilizes technology on a consistent basis. Consistently completes reports and documentation in an accurate, clear, concise, complete, and timely manner, reflecting organizational or client needs. Provides documentation that effectively monitors progress and guides adjustment of interventions, when needed.</p>	<p>Demonstrates partial knowledge of technology. Inconsistently completes reports and documentation in an accurate and timely manner. Inconsistently stores reports and documentation in a secure manner. Provides documentation that is minimally sufficient to monitor progress or adjust service.</p>	<p>Lacks knowledge of the district technology. Fails to complete reports and documentation in an accurate, complete, and timely manner. Fails to provide documentation sufficient to monitor progress or adjust service.</p>

# Clinical Oral Exam

At the end of their second year in the DSW Program, students are **required** to successfully pass both a Clinical Oral exam and a Written Comprehensive Exam. These two benchmarks are typically scheduled for late in the spring semester or in May or June.

*Students must successfully complete the preceptorship hours and meetings with the preceptor before taking the oral or written comprehensive exam. Successful completion includes:* participating in the four-course clinical seminar sequence while concurrently spending eight hours a week in a preceptorship, including one hour of weekly academic clinical consultation with an approved Clinical Preceptor.

The Clinical Oral exam **requires** the DSW student to identify a client from their four semesters-long Clinical Preceptorship in consultation with their preceptor and the DSW Program Director. Also, through this process, the student will identify one primary Clinical Theory that will be the focus of Clinical Oral. The DSW student will develop a three-member DSW Clinical Oral Committee approved and chaired by the Director. The other two members of the Clinical Oral Committee will consist of the DSW student's Preceptor and one other experienced clinical professional or DSW faculty member. If the DSW Program Director is also the Preceptor, the student will work with the Program Director to find two suitable committee members.

*At least two weeks before the Clinical Oral, the DSW student will submit a short paper (3 to 5 pages) describing the client(s) to be discussed in the oral presentation. This paper will contain general information about the client(s), i.e. presenting concern and diagnosis. It will not address the clinical theory or application.*

The Clinical Oral Committee members will have read the DSW student's paper before the oral. The DSW student will have one hour in which to present their Clinical Oral case presentation. In the first 20 minutes of the presentation, the DSW student will present the theory that has been used in working with their client. The DSW student is expected to demonstrate mastery of that theory without applying it to their client. During the Clinical Oral, the DSW student may use note cards, but not any type of audio/visual presentation. The DSW student is also not to read directly from their notes. The notes should serve as a reference point for their presentation. After the theoretical presentation, the DSW student will have 20 minutes to discuss how the theory can or was applied to the case, with a special emphasis on the therapeutic relationship. The final 20 minutes is a question and answer session in which the Clinical Oral Committee members will further explore the DSW student's understanding and mastery of the case.

Questions from the committee are confined to the last 20 minutes of the presentation only.

At the end of the hour, the DSW student will be asked to leave the room. The committee will discuss their evaluation of the DSW student's performance and grade it on a pass/fail basis. The committee members will use the Clinical Oral Grading Form for this evaluation. The DSW student must receive two out of three passing votes to pass the oral. The student will be given copies of these completed evaluation forms soon after the Clinical Oral has been completed.

After the committee has made its decision, the DSW student is asked to come back to the room to hear and discuss the committee's vote. The DSW student must receive two out of three passing votes to pass the oral. If the student fails the oral, they will arrange a time to meet with the DSW Program Director to discuss preparing for another Clinical Oral sometime in the near future.

**Aurora University**  
**Clinical Oral Evaluation Form**

**Student's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Committee Member:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Comments on Initial Paper:**

**Comments on Theoretical Presentation:**

**Comments on Theoretical Application to Case:**

**Final Evaluation (circle one):**

**PASS**

**Fail**

**Comments:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

# DSW Comprehensive Written Examination

***Due to COVID-19, the written comprehensive exams were revised. The revisions go into effect immediately. Please keep in mind that the DSW Student Handbook is an organic document that reflects policies and practices in the School of Social Work.***

The purpose of the written comprehensive exam is to encourage and motivate the reading of course materials and texts. The ability to effectively and efficiently demonstrate familiarity with the literature in social work will be demonstrated through the written comprehensive exam. Synthesizing the literature to find common themes and to assemble the summary of readings coherently is critical to passing the written examination. Identifying gaps in the literature is imperative as well. Essentially, the student must function as an independent researcher by designing and developing original ideas. Bloom's (Bloom et al. 1056) emphasis on higher-order thinking skills, such as generalizability, must be present. In summary, students must think creatively, conceptually, and critically before moving to the dissertation writing stage of the DSW program.

When the first two years of **required** clinical and policy courses have been completed, doctoral students must pass a written comprehensive exam on the material. Once they have passed the written and oral examinations, they are accepted into doctoral candidacy and may begin their research course sequence and progress toward their dissertation.

The Comprehensive Exam is a **pass/fail** exam. Students who pass the comprehensive exams register for the research sequence of courses. Should a student **not pass** one portion of the exam, they will be permitted to retake the failed portion of the exam one time. The retake must occur within thirty days of the original exam date. *Should the student not pass the exam after the retake, the student will be dismissed from the program per the DSW handbook. **Students may not move forward in the DSW program if the oral and written exams are not passed.*** Readmission may be possible after a minimum of one calendar year.

Two options for the exam are available to the DSW candidates.

**Option One** \* The doctoral student will submit topic(s) related to their dissertation for the comprehensive exam to the SSW program administrative assistant. The written comp form can be found in the Appendix of the DSW handbook and on the DSW Moodle page. This step shall be completed by the end of spring classes in the second year of the DSW program.

For example, the candidate's dissertation topic relates to high conflict divorcing parents. The student shares this topic with the SSW administrative assist. The student's preceptor, dissertation committee, and/or previous instructors will develop **TWO** questions related to the topic. The questions or prompts will be posted to Moodle on a designated day in June. ***The student will have twenty-four hours to respond to the TWO questions/prompts by developing a paper not to exceed twenty-pages.***

Questions may be similar to the following.

1. What clinical exploration and implementation would be helpful for a social worker to consider regarding work with a high conflict divorcing couple? What developmental considerations are present?
2. If Bowen and Kohut were to work with a high conflict divorcing couple, how might they integrate their theoretical approaches to best treat the couple?

3. Identify laws and policies related to divorce as they pertain to high conflict parents. Offer a historical and contemporary systematic review.
4. Design an organization to address the idea of high conflict divorcing couples. How would you determine the organization's readiness to address the needs of the population? Describe how socio/technological impact that technology has had on the process of divorce and how it contributes to or resolves the high conflict.

**Option Two** \* Students who have not focused on an area of study for their dissertation will be given questions/prompts related to **TWO** content areas for the written comprehensive examination. The student will develop a paper not to exceed twenty-pages that would respond to the **TWO** questions/prompts provided by the student's preceptor, dissertation committee, and/or previous instructors. The written comprehensive examination prompts for the paper will be developed by the student's preceptor in collaboration with the dissertation chair or program chair as well as current DSW faculty. *The student will have twenty-four hours to respond to the TWO questions/prompts by developing a paper not to exceed twenty-pages.*

Questions may be similar to the following.

1. Compare and contrast the following theoretical frameworks. Identified populations that would benefit from treatment related to each theoretical framework.
2. John Ehrenreich wrote, *The Altruistic Imagination*. Explain your understanding of his ideas regarding the origins of social policy. What was happening in the United States politically, socially, economically, psychologically when the social policy was viewed to become necessary? Also, explain your understanding of Ehrenreich's beliefs about the reasons that social policy led to the profession of social work.

### **FORMAT OF THE EXAMINATION**

The doctoral comprehensive examination is a **two-question** examination to be completed outside the classroom, in which doctoral students may use whatever books and resources that are helpful to them. Doctoral students are expected to abide by the University's Code of Academic Integrity. Candidates' responses to these examinations must be their original work for this specific purpose. These examinations must not include cut-and-paste material from work previously written for other purposes. Doctoral students may use any written resources (e.g., textbooks, monographs, primary sources, journal articles, and other scholarly publications) relevant to this examination. Doctoral students must not, however, use people as resources (e.g., peers, colleagues, and faculty) regarding the content of the examinations and their responses. Comprehensive exams are subject to Turnitin®.

Doctoral students must use proper APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition citations for all sources in their examination. A complete list of references should be included for each question in the examination. Responses to each question must be submitted as a unique file with a cover page that includes a restatement of the question, student's name, cohort number, and date. Each response should be double-spaced, 12 point font, and conform to the requirements outlined in each question.

The DSW comprehensive examinations will be offered annually during **June**. Appeals for unanticipated and extraordinary circumstances must be made to the doctoral chairperson who will determine if an exception may be made and the examination rescheduled. Student responses are to be submitted to a designated Moodle shell as the depository no later than 24 hours after the distribution of the examination questions/prompts. GOOGLE DOCS will NOT be accepted for this examination. Those doctoral students who encounter a major personal issue, such as personal illness or death in the family, must notify the program chair **immediately** of their inability to complete the examination. With approval from the chair, the doctoral student will be required to return the questions and will be rescheduled to take the examination as soon as possible.

The comprehensive examinations consist of **TWO** questions: a clinical exploration and a policy exploration based upon the DSW student's area of focus and/or dissertation topic, ideally leading to research in preparation of the dissertation. If an area of focus has not been selected by the candidate and preceptor, question prompts will be provided by the School of Social Work.

The evaluation of each exam question will result in the following possible outcomes: a) Pass, b) No Pass/Failure. Criteria for the evaluation of the exam will include:

- Thoughtfulness of response
- Responsiveness to question(s) asked
- Clarity of communication
- Demonstration of critical thought and critical analysis
- Quality of writing (i.e., writing must demonstrate doctoral-level content, style, syntax, grammar, flow, organization, and higher-order thinking)
- Effectiveness of analysis of the question
- Use of scholarly works
- Application of theory to clinical practice and policy, as well as the pedagogy of teaching

If doctoral students fail a part of the examination or all of it, the student has the option to retake the examination **one time**. A retake constitutes retaking the failed portion of the examination, not the entire exam. If the candidate appeals the grading of the examination, the candidate may appeal to the Dean of the School of Social Work, who may ask faculty readers outside of the School of Social Work within Aurora University to evaluate the candidate's response. Doctoral students may also choose to leave the program.

# Dissertation Process

Once you have successfully completed the clinical preceptorship and passed the clinical oral and comprehensive exam, you may begin the dissertation process. After the successful completion of your first two research classes in the fall semester of your third year, you will secure a dissertation chair and form a Dissertation Committee that will consist of the dissertation chair and two other committee members who have accepted the committee assignment and been approved by the chair of the DSW program. (See the details on the construction of the Dissertation Committee in the sections below.) You will then embark upon the clinical dissertation. This includes successfully completing the four-course research sequence, developing a successful clinical dissertation proposal, securing university Institutional Review Board approval, gathering and analyzing data, and defending the completed clinical dissertation.

The DSW dissertation must be a Clinical Dissertation involving human subjects. Secondary data analysis, meta-analysis, and other dissertation topics and ideas not involving human subjects *may* be acceptable forms of study for the DSW program but must be approved by the dissertation chair and the DSW program director. All surveys must be approved by the IRB Human Subjects review and must be distributed in a manner that protects the confidentiality of the human subjects. For example, some students may utilize the online tool Qualtrics, which is one of the gold standards for data collection involving human subjects. Students must purchase their license for Qualtrics if the program fits their needs.

For questions about how to determine if a survey requires IRB review, please visit <https://aurora.edu/academics/resources/irb/index.html>

Graduation from the DSW Program requires that all students complete a single-authored dissertation that involves the application of research methodology and research literature to an area of interest within the broad domain of “Social Work.” The final dissertation must be approved by a committee and published in the ProQuest database. Additional information regarding ProQuest is provided in this handbook.

You will work closely and under the guidance of your dissertation chair to develop the clinical dissertation proposal, which will ultimately be orally presented to the Dissertation Committee. Once approved, you must secure Institutional Review Board approval for research on human subjects and may proceed to gather data. Once all data has been gathered and analyzed and the clinical dissertation has been written, you will present an oral defense of your study to the committee and public.

You will enroll in four credit hours of dissertation supervision upon the successful completion of the research course sequence. You may take all four credit hours at one time in the summer semester of your third year, or enroll in two credit hours each in the summer and fall semesters of the fourth program year. If you have not successfully completed the dissertation process by the end of the fourth year, you must register for a one-semester hour class of SWK 8800, Dissertation Supervision. You may continue the dissertation process by continuing to register for one-semester-hour classes of SWK 8800 Dissertation in the fall, summer, and spring semesters, but you must complete the dissertation no later than the end of the fifth year in the program.

**You must complete the program within five years.** In rare circumstances, students may apply for a one-time one-year, **or** two-year extension to complete the dissertation in six to seven years. To continue in the DSW program, you must register for one-hour classes of SWK 8800 Dissertation Supervision every semester.

# Anticipated Dissertation Timelines

## A. Complete Initial Research Sequence Coursework

The research sequence is customarily initiated in the fall semester of the third year. The fall coursework consists of SWK 8100, Research Methodology I and SWK 8150, Data Analysis I. During the fall semester, the student will develop a draft of the literature review, which is Chapter 2 of the Dissertation. The student may initiate contact during this time with potential Dissertation Committee members to inquire about their availability and interest in serving on the student's committee. The student may also seek guidance from potential committee members about literature sources pertaining to the student's topic of interest. The student is not expected to have formalized a planned methodological approach before this time and is prohibited from initiating contact with human subjects.

## B. Begin Advanced Research Sequence Coursework, Constitute Dissertation Committee

In the spring of the student's third year, he or she will begin the advanced research sequence, including 8200, Research Methodology II, and 8250, Data Analysis II. Once this coursework has begun, the student can formally invite participation on the Doctoral Research Committee. A form to formally appoint the Committee should be submitted to the Director prior to the development of Chapter 3 of the Dissertation (the Methodology). A copy of the form is included in this handbook. During the spring of the third year of coursework, while taking the advanced research sequence, the student is expected to work with Committee members to develop and document a mutually agreed-upon methodology for defense. The student may not submit to the Institutional Review Board for approval to carry out doctoral research and may not initiate contact with human subjects at this time.

## C. Defense of Dissertation Proposal

The student may schedule the defense of the Dissertation proposal once the Committee has approved Chapters 1 through 3 of the Dissertation Proposal (Chapter 1 may be developed after Chapters 2 and 3). The student should submit a Dissertation Proposal Defense Scheduling Request form (included in this handbook) to the Director. The Dissertation Proposal defense may take place in the summer following the student's third year of course work, although the defense can take place in the spring semester in cases where students are prepared and the Committee has approved proceeding to defense. If the student does not defend the proposal by the end of the fourth year, the Chair of the Doctoral Dissertation Committee will be expected to provide, in writing, an indication of whether the student is making substantive progress toward completing the Dissertation Proposal every semester to the Director. If the Chair indicates the student is not making substantive progress, the student will be dismissed from the program.

## D. Submission of Application to Institutional Review Board

All doctoral research protocols will be submitted to the Institutional Review Board, even if only to confirm exemption from review. The submission cannot be made until the Dissertation Proposal Defense hearing has been held, and the Dissertation Proposal has been approved. The submission will include all current requirements identified by the IRB application.

Visit the IRB page. <https://aurora.edu/academics/resources/irb/index.html>

The submission must be made at least one week in advance of the scheduled IRB meeting. The Chair of the Dissertation Committee must approve the application before it is submitted to the IRB. No contact with human subjects may be made until the IRB has approved the application and the approval letter is in the possession of the student. Any consent forms or instrumentation used must be date stamped by the IRB secretary before their utilization.

### **E. Data Gathering and Analysis, Final Dissertation Development**

After the IRB approval is obtained, the student is free to proceed with data collection to support the final Dissertation document. The student should remain in contact with committee members during this time to ensure the project is unfolding under their expectations. Once the final Dissertation draft has been developed and approved by all committee members, the student may schedule the final Dissertation Defense.

### **F. Final Dissertation Defense**

Once the student is ready to defend the final Dissertation, the student should submit a Dissertation Defense Scheduling Request Form (included with this handbook) and submit it to the DSW Program Director. The student must have defended the Dissertation Proposal before the first day of the seventh year from matriculation into the program, or the student will be dismissed from the DSW program.

### **G. ProQuest**

After all, changes are made to the dissertation, the dissertation is submitted to ProQuest to make the dissertation available online. Bound copies of the dissertation are available for purchase through ProQuest. Additional details of these procedures are provided below.

# Constitution of the Doctoral Dissertation Committee

The Doctoral Dissertation Committee is comprised of at least three members. The dissertation chair must be a full-time faculty member of Aurora University's School of Social Work. At least two members must hold a doctoral degree and must be affiliated with accredited institutions of higher education.

The first committee member will be the chair. The chair's approval is necessary before the proposal can proceed to defense and pass defense. The chair's approval is also necessary before the final dissertation can proceed to defense and pass defense.

The second committee member will be a methodologist. The student should select a faculty member or affiliate of AU or a different accredited institution of higher learning who is well versed in the student's anticipated methodology (e.g. quantitative/specific analysis, qualitative, mixed methods).

The third committee member will be a subject matter expert. The student should select a faculty member or affiliate of AU or a different accredited institution of higher learning with extensive knowledge of the topical focus of the student's dissertation. The third member must have a terminal degree within their profession. Please note, the MSW with an LCSW is considered to a terminal degree in the field of social work.

The constitution of the Doctoral Dissertation Committee must be approved by the Director using the form attached. In addition, any changes to the committee must also be approved by the Director. Any situation in which a committee member experiences incapacity or inability to fulfill their obligation to the student should be reported to the Director. However, intellectual disagreement and personality conflict are expected to be resolved within the confines of the established committee and not by way of change in the constitution of the committee.

All committee members must sign the Dissertation Proposal Defense Scheduling Request. A unanimous vote is necessary for the proposal to pass the defense. All committee members must sign the Dissertation Defense Scheduling Request, and a two-thirds vote (with stipulations specified above) is necessary for the Dissertation to pass the final defense.

Committee members will not be compensated for their work by Aurora University except as specified by contract with existing AU employees.

# Dissertation Proposal Defense

Once committee members have been consulted and the Dissertation proposal has been written and copy-edited and preliminarily approved by the committee, the Dissertation Proposal Defense can be scheduled. The Dissertation Proposal should *not be modified* between the time when the chair gives approval for defense and the time when the defense takes place. All members of the committee should be emailed the document proposed for the defense prior to the time when the Dissertation Proposal Defense Scheduling Form is submitted. Committee members are responsible for bringing their paper or electronic copies of the Dissertation Proposal to the defense.

To schedule the Dissertation Proposal Defense, please complete the attached form. Several informational items must be gathered:

- Availability of each committee member
- Availability of space on an AU campus or use of Zoom if needed

Please consult with committee members to ascertain their availability. Please consult with the Social Work staff to request space on campus. The Dissertation Proposal Defense Scheduling Request Form must be submitted to the Director at least one week in advance of when the defense is anticipated to take place. The Dissertation Proposal Defense is expected to require approximately one hour. We request that all members of the committee be physically present at the Dissertation Proposal Defense except for in extremely extenuating circumstances. If any such circumstances arise, approval by the Director will be required one week or more before the defense. If any committee members are unable to attend on the day of the scheduled defense, the defense will be rescheduled. The University will not assume costs associated with travel to the defense. If you have visitors from off-campus, please provide them with a campus map and information about where they may park their cars.

One person, selected by the student, may accompany the student to the Dissertation Proposal Defense to act as note-taker. The Dissertation Proposal Defense is not open to the public. No one aside from the committee members, the student, and the note-taker may attend.

At the Dissertation Proposal Defense, the student will be asked to give a short presentation summarizing the justification for their proposed study, research questions, expected benefits to be derived from the study, proposed study methods (including design, sample, instrumentation, and analysis), and human subjects considerations. Any costs to the student, subjects, and any participating organizations should be presented and discussed. Signed letters of commitment should be available from authorized representatives of each participating organization or agency and included in the Dissertation Proposal, and these should be reviewed during the presentation to demonstrate the feasibility of the proposed project. The University will not assume responsibility for costs the student incurs in carrying out the Dissertation research. Audiovisual aids (such as PowerPoint) may be used in the presentation but are not required. Once the presentation is concluded, the committee will ask a set of prepared questions of the student as well as any questions that arose during the presentation. Once the questions have been addressed, the student (and any note taker) will be asked to leave the room. The committee will conduct its deliberation

and then invite the student to return to the room. At that time, the student will be told their status concerning permission to proceed with the Dissertation process. The options are “Accept without Revisions,” “Accept with Revisions,” or “Decline.” If the decision is “Accept with Revisions,” the committee may elect to have the student present the revisions only to the chair for approval before he or she can proceed, or the committee may elect to have more than one member approve revisions. Written evidence of the effect that any required revisions have been made to the satisfaction of the chair and any other committee member to whom the student is required to present revisions must be obtained by the student before he/she can proceed to Institutional Review Board application. A second defense will not be held in cases where the decision is “Accept with Revisions.” Once an “Accept without Revisions” decision has been made or the student has made the revisions that were required, the student can proceed with the Institutional Review Board application.

If the decision is “Decline,” the student has one additional opportunity to present a Dissertation Proposal Defense. The second defense must take place within three months of the first defense. If the student chooses not to present a subsequent Defense or if a second “Decline” decision is made, the student will be dismissed from the DSW program.

## Institutional Review Board

All students must file applications with the Institutional Review Board (IRB), even if they believe their proposed methods are exempt from review. If the approved research is exempt, proof of exemption must be obtained from the IRB before the student can proceed.

The application for IRB review can be found at:

<http://www.aurora.edu/academics/resources/irb/index.html#axzz2czk0anbl>

This website can be accessed by visiting the Aurora University home page, going to A-Z Index, selecting “I,” and selecting Institutional Review Board.

The student must complete the Ethics Tutorial through [citiprogram.org](http://citiprogram.org) (link is on the IRB website) and include the certificate issued following completion with the IRB application. **Refer to the IRB page for details related to completing the online ethics tutorial.**

The IRB application must also include:

- application cover page;
- IRB application;
- sample consent forms;
- instrumentation planned for use;
- relevant letters to subjects or other recruiting materials;
- any relevant final site approval confirmations (e.g. letters of commitment from any cooperating agencies or organizations);
- current curriculum vita.

The IRB packet must be submitted to the Chair of the IRB no later than one week ahead of the IRB's scheduled meeting (commonly the first Monday of each month). Specific IRB application deadlines can be found on the AU IRB web page. The student **cannot proceed** with the research until the IRB approval letter has been delivered to the student along with date-stamped versions of any instrumentation, recruitment materials, and consent forms. If the IRB requires revisions to the dissertation proposal, these revisions must be carried out by the student and checked with the chair and the other committee members before the proposal is re-submitted to the IRB.

If the student finds that he or she must make substantive alterations to the proposed and approved research procedures to achieve the purposes of the research, these changes must be approved by the chair and committee members before they are made. In addition, the student must file an amendment to the approved protocol with the IRB. The amendment takes the form of a letter describing the changes that were made and their justification. If any instrumentation, recruitment materials, or consent forms are altered, these must be submitted along with the amendment. A letter from the IRB approving the proposed amendment and date-stamped copies of the revised, approved materials must be obtained before using the revised procedures and/or materials.

If any unanticipated problems involving risk to research subjects or others or adverse events are experienced by participants in the student's research, these must be reported in writing both to the Chair of the Dissertation Committee and the Chair of the IRB.

## **DISSERTATION FORMAT**

The format for the dissertation is described below. Sample templates of the dissertation are available in methodology courses and upon request to the student's dissertation chair.

1. **Number of copies:** Doctoral students must submit copies of the dissertation to the dissertation committee chairperson and each member of the committee prior to the defense. The following must be submitted in the defense-ready document: title page, abstract, table of contents, body of the manuscript, references, and all appendices.

2. Document Format:

**Type Styles:** Times New Roman in 12 point font is required for all dissertations.

**Margins:** Original manuscripts and copies must have these uniform margins:

- Left margins must be 1" throughout, including footnotes, appendices, charts, graphs, tables, etc.
- Right margins must be 1" throughout.
- Top Margins: First pages of all chapters must have a 1½" margin at the top. All other pages must have a 1" margin at the top.
- Bottom margins must be 1" throughout.
- Page numbers must be at least ¾" from the edge of the page.

**Spacing:** Double-space: abstract, dedication, acknowledgments, table of contents, and body of the manuscript; except for quotations as paragraphs, captions, items in tables, lists, graphs, charts. Single-space: footnotes/endnotes, bibliographic entries, lists in appendices.

**Pagination:** Use lowercase Roman numerals to number your introductory pages (title page, acknowledgments, dedication, abstract, etc.) with the title page bearing no number but included in the sequence. A table of contents is required, and on it should be listed all introductory pages, chapter headings, references, and appendices (if any). Arabic numerals number the remaining pages of the text, including appendices. Page numbers must be centered at the top of the page.

**Endnotes:** Should be placed at the end of each chapter. Please consult with your dissertation chair about preferences. Endnotes should begin on a separate page at the end of the chapter and be single-spaced, with a double space between each note. Notes should follow the guidelines of the *American Psychological Association (APA) Stylebook*, Sixth Edition, second or later printing.

**References:** A list of references must be appended to the dissertation. It must list (alphabetically by author) all references that are cited within the dissertation and must follow APA style guidelines except the references should be single-spaced, with a double space between each note. The reference list may only include works cited in the dissertation.

**Copyright:** If your dissertation is to be copyrighted, indicate as follows: © Copyright [date]. Copyrighting your dissertation is optional, so consult with your dissertation chair. ProQuest can copyright your dissertation if you request that service. The fee is \$55, paid at the time of submission to ProQuest.

**Condition of copies:** The School of Social Work requires that you assume full responsibility for the correctness of content and form of all copies of your dissertation. All pages must be present and in proper order before submitting copies of the dissertation to the committee.

**Title Page:** The title page of the original manuscript of the dissertation must contain the title of the dissertation, author, date, and copyright statement (if copyrighted). See the example in the appendix of this document.

**Dissertation Acceptance Page:** This page must contain the ink signatures of your committee members after the dissertation has been defended. See the example in the appendix of this document. This should be inserted into the final PDF document that gets uploaded to ProQuest.

**Abstract:** When the final manuscript is submitted, an abstract must also be submitted. The abstract is placed after the acceptance page.

**Preparing Your Manuscript for Submission (Including Supplemental Files) –Submit as a PDF**

When submitting a page-based manuscript of your dissertation or thesis, it must be submitted to ProQuest Dissertation Publishing in Adobe PDF format. When preparing your PDF, be sure to do the following:

- Embed all fonts (further information is provided below related to embedding fonts).
- Make sure there is no password protection on the PDF.
- Ensure that security settings allow printing.
- Format as individual, single pages.

Note: As part of our normal process, ProQuest inserts an extra page in the front of every published manuscript.

### **Verify Proper Formatting**

ProQuest Dissertation Publishing makes no changes to the formatting or content of submitted manuscripts. Therefore, the burden of how the manuscript looks when it is accessed or printed is entirely the responsibility of the author. ProQuest strongly recommends that individual authors take responsibility for reformatting the document into Adobe PDF, for checking the reformatted document for accuracy, and for submitting the PDF document to the graduate school or library for publication.

### **Manuscript Specifications**

Refer to previous formatting guidelines for Aurora University dissertations. **MAKE SURE** all your fonts are embedded. See the end of this guide for instructions on embedding fonts. Manuscripts without embedded fonts can cause ALL punctuation and formatting to disappear when the document is printed from the digital files and causes delays in the ProQuest publishing process.

### **Supplementary Materials**

If supplementary materials—such as audio, video, and spreadsheets—are part of your dissertation or thesis, you can submit them as supplementary files during the online submission process. Upload them as part of the submission process, and describe each supplementary file or files in the abstract of your graduate work.

- Do not embed media files in your PDF.
- Upload media files as supplementary files. During online submission, you will be asked to upload any supplementary files.
- Describe files in your abstract. Add a description of each supplementary file in your abstract.

### **Supporting Documentation for Supplementary Materials**

Including supplementary materials with the submission may require additional paper documentation before ProQuest can complete the publishing process. For further information see a [Sample Permission Letter for Use of Previously Copyrighted Material](#).

- Reprint Permission Letters:** If the candidate will include multimedia material covered under someone else's copyright—an audio or video clip, a digital photograph, etc.—it is the student's responsibility to provide us with written permission to include it.
- Third-Party Software Licenses (if needed):** If the candidate will include third-party software with his or her submission, written permission must be provided to distribute it. Note that this is

different than including a file generated by a particular program. For example, including a Microsoft Excel file (.xls) does not require including a software license.

Additional paper documentation, when required, can be mailed to ProQuest at the following address:

Dissertations Acquisitions  
ProQuest  
789 Eisenhower Parkway  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

### **Embedding Fonts**

This guidance assumes the candidate is writing his or her manuscript in MS Word on a PC. If you are using a Mac, similar guidance can be found at <http://www.etdadmin.com/cgi-bin/main/faq?siteId=0#pdf9>.

Create the manuscript using a TrueType font—NOT a scalable font. See below for a list of recommended TrueType fonts and point sizes.

Aurora University requires the following font and size:

- \*Times New Roman 12pt

\*Web font. Designed for easy screen readability. Since many readers are likely to view and/or use the dissertation or thesis onscreen, the candidate may wish to improve the readability of your text by using one of these fonts.

Once you have chosen a True Type font you must embed it:

1. On the Tools menu, click Options, and then click the Save tab.
2. Select the Embed TrueType fonts checkbox.
3. Save the document.

Alternatively, Adobe Acrobat Professional may be used with the following instructions:

1. Open the document in Microsoft Word.
2. Click on the Adobe PDF tab at the top. Select "Change Conversion Settings."
3. Click on Advanced Settings.
4. Click on the Fonts folder on the left side of the new window. In the lower box on the right, delete any fonts that appear in the "Never Embed" box. Then click "OK."
5. If prompted to save these new settings, save them as "Embed all fonts."
6. Now the Change Conversion Settings window should show "embed all fonts" in the Conversion Settings drop-down list and it should be selected. Click "OK" again.
7. Click on the Adobe PDF link at the top again. This time select Convert to Adobe PDF. Depending on the size of your document and the speed of your computer, this process can take 1-15 minutes.
8. After the document is converted, select the "File" tab at the top of the page. Then select "Document Properties."
9. Click on the "Fonts" tab. Carefully check all fonts. They should all show "(Embedded Subset)" after the font name.

10. If the message "(Embedded Subset)" appears after all fonts, the embedding process has succeeded.

# Appendix

# Written Comprehensive Exam Focus Area

1. **Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

2. **Dissertation Committee Members:**  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. **Preceptor's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

4. **Draft title of dissertation:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. **Current status of dissertation work product:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. **Which topics related to your dissertation are you most curious about?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Request for Appointment of Doctoral Dissertation Committee**  
**School of Social Work**  
**Aurora University**

Student's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of request: \_\_\_\_\_

The student requests the following individuals be appointed Doctoral Dissertation Committee members:

Chair:

Name	Degree	Affiliation
------	--------	-------------

Methodologist:

Name	Degree	Affiliation
------	--------	-------------

Content Expert:

Name	Degree	Affiliation
------	--------	-------------

Response from Program Director

Approve       Deny (reasons: \_\_\_\_\_)

Signature	Date
-----------	------

**The following chart delineates all expected deadlines for the dissertation defense process related to graduation. The deadlines are firm. No exceptions are permitted.**

<b>Graduation/ Degree Awarded</b>	<b>Request “Graduation Check” from Dept. Chair</b>	<b>Deadline to Complete Pre-Defense Meeting*</b>	<b>Final Draft to Committee*</b>	<b>Deadline for Oral Defense of Dissertation</b>	<b>Deadline for Submission of Final Dissertation (ProQuest)</b>	<b>Graduation Ceremony</b>
December	Summer Semester	September 1	October 1	November 1	December 1	Fall graduates participate in the December ceremony
May	Fall Semester	January 15	February 15	March 15	April 15	Spring graduates participate in the May ceremony
August	Spring Semester	May 1	June 1	July 1	August 1	Summer graduates participate in the December ceremony

# Dissertation Proposal Defense Scheduling Request Form

## School of Social Work Aurora University

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Dissertation Proposal: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Submission of Form: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Requested Dissertation Proposal Defense: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of Requested Dissertation Proposal Defense: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Requested Dissertation Proposal Defense: \_\_\_\_\_

Please attach an approved Room and Media Services Equipment Request

We, the undersigned Dissertation Committee members, have approved the scheduling of the defense of the Dissertation Proposal:

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

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

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

Approval of Program Director:

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

Copies to: Student, Chair, Members, File

# Dissertation Proposal Response Form

School of Social Work  
Aurora University

DSW Program Aurora University

Following the Dissertation Proposal Defense by \_\_\_\_\_ in the School of  
Social Work, Aurora University on \_\_\_\_\_ of the dissertation proposal  
entitled \_\_\_\_\_,  
the undersigned chair and members of the Dissertation Committee have arrived at the following  
decision concerning the proposal:

- Approve Without Revisions  
 Approve With Revisions – specify:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

add additional pages if necessary, if so Chair initial here: \_\_\_\_\_

- Decline

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Member

Copies to: Student, file



## DSW Program Petition for an Extension

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Cohort #</b>	<b>Home Phone:</b>
<b>Name</b>		<b>AU ID #</b>
<b>Address</b>		
<b>City, State Zip</b>		<b>Email</b>

The DSW Program allows six years for program completion. To continue enrollment in the DSW program after six years, you must apply for an extension. If you do not ask for an extension and decide later to reenter the DSW program, you will need to reapply and be accepted. In addition, you will need to update or retake courses that are more than six years old.

- I wish to apply for a one-time extension for one year.
- I wish to apply for a one-time extension for two years.

**\*\*\*A Program Completion Plan must accompany this request form.**

- I do not wish to apply for an extension. Please consider this official notice that I am withdrawing from the DSW Program.

*AU Only*

- Met with the Candidate and have outlined a detailed plan and timeline. (Attach a detailed word document that includes a timeline for completion)

\_\_\_\_\_

Dissertation Chair

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

### Approvals

\_\_\_\_\_

Program Chair

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Academic Dean

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Dean of Academic Administration

\_\_\_\_\_

Date



## Program Completion Plan DSW Department

The Completion Plan is a detailed timeline for the completion of the dissertation. Students who are asked to complete this plan have exhausted the university’s time frame for completing a doctoral degree or are nearing the end of the time frame allowed for completion. This plan should include a brief description of any strategies that will be employed to overcome logistical or other barriers. The Completion Plan is negotiated between the candidate and their supervisor/s, detailing the actions required by all parties to reach the point of the final defense of a dissertation. The Completion Plan is an agreement between the candidate and the supervisor/s to ensure student success. It serves as evidence that both parties have discussed and developed strategies and actions, and now have agreed to a realistic timeline for ensuring that the dissertation is finished within the time stipulated. Should the student not meet the deadlines outlined in this completion plan, they will be dismissed from the university.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Anticipated Completion Date \_\_\_\_\_

Tasks Completed	Tasks Remaining
<input type="checkbox"/> Draft Chapter 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Draft Chapter 1
<input type="checkbox"/> Draft Chapter 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Draft Chapter 2
<input type="checkbox"/> Draft Chapter 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Draft Chapter 3
<input type="checkbox"/> Final Draft Chapter 1, 2, 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Final Draft Chapter 1, 2, 3
<input type="checkbox"/> Proposal Defense (Chapter 1, 2, 3)	<input type="checkbox"/> Proposal Defense (Chapter 1, 2, 3)
<input type="checkbox"/> IRB Approval	<input type="checkbox"/> IRB Approval
<input type="checkbox"/> Data Collection	<input type="checkbox"/> Data Collection
<input type="checkbox"/> Data Analysis	<input type="checkbox"/> Data Analysis
<input type="checkbox"/> Draft Chapter 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Draft Chapter 4
<input type="checkbox"/> Draft Chapter 5	<input type="checkbox"/> Draft Chapter 5
<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Defense Meeting (Chapter 4, 5 drafts)	<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Defense Meeting (Chapter 4, 5 drafts)
<input type="checkbox"/> Final Draft Chapter 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	<input type="checkbox"/> Final Draft Chapter 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
<input type="checkbox"/> Final Defense (Chapter 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)	<input type="checkbox"/> Final Defense (Chapter 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
<input type="checkbox"/> Post-Defense Revisions	<input type="checkbox"/> Post-Defense Revisions
<input type="checkbox"/> Proquest Submission	<input type="checkbox"/> Proquest Submission

## TIMELINE

TASK	DATE FOR CANDIDATE COMPLETION OF TASK AND SUBMISSION TO CHAIR	DUE DATE FOR CHAIR FEEDBACK
Draft Chapter 1		
Draft Chapter 2		
Draft Chapter 3		
Final Draft Chapter 1, 2, 3		
Proposal Defense (Chapter 1, 2, 3)		
IRB Approval		
Data Collection		
Data Analysis		
Draft Chapter 4		
Draft Chapter 5		
Pre-Defense Meeting (Chapter 4, 5)		
Final Draft (Chapter 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)		
Final Defense (Chapter 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)		
Post-Defense Revisions		
Proquest Submission		

## STRATEGIES FOR COMPLETION

Strategy 1	
Strategy 2	
Strategy 3	

Possible strategies: regular meetings with, regular blocks of time set aside for writing and working on the dissertation, etc.

---

## APPROVALS

DSW Student \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Dissertation Chair \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Department Chair \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

# Final Dissertation Defense Scheduling Request Form

## School of Social Work Aurora University

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Dissertation: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Requested Dissertation Defense: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of Requested Dissertation Defense: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Requested Dissertation Defense: \_\_\_\_\_

Please attach an approved Room and Media Services Equipment Request

We, the undersigned Dissertation Committee members, have approved the scheduling of the final defense of the Dissertation:

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

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

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

Approval of the Program Director:

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

Copies to: Student, Chair, Members, File

# Final Dissertation Defense Response Form

School of Social Work  
Aurora University

DSW Program Aurora University

Following the Final Dissertation Defense by \_\_\_\_\_ in the School of Social  
Work, Aurora University on \_\_\_\_\_ of the dissertation entitled

\_\_\_\_\_,

the undersigned chair and members of the Dissertation Committee have arrived at the following  
decision:

Approve Without Revisions

Approve With Revisions – specify:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

add an additional page if necessary, if so Chair initial here: \_\_\_\_

Decline

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Member

Copies to: Student, file

**Dissertation Signature Page**

**School of Social Work  
Aurora University**

**DSW Program Aurora University**

Accepted by the faculty of the School of Social Work in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Social Work degree at Aurora University.

[ TITLE OF DISSERTATION ]

By: Candidate's First Name Last Name

Doctoral Committee:

Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Member: \_\_\_\_\_

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



School of Social Work  
DSW, MSW & BSW

## PLEDGE

All programs in the School of Social Work (SSW) are grounded in Aurora University's commitment to integrity, citizenship, continuous learning, and excellence. The social work degrees are accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and are dedicated to advancing quality clinical specialization education. The curriculum is designed to include an emphasis on the mission of AU and the SSW, CSWE Competencies and Dimensions, the 12 Grand Challenges of Social Work, and the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) Knowledge, Skills and Abilities.

This Pledge document broadly articulates the behavioral expectations students are required to adhere to throughout their programs of study – in the classroom, on field trips, during the preceptorship, and in any other academic or professional setting. By understanding these guidelines and following them inside and outside of the classroom, students will develop human capital relating to the knowledge and practice of professional behavior. Accumulating this human capital will contribute positively to students' professional reputations – one vitally important component of career success.

Students pledge to **behave ethically**. Specifically, students pledge to:

- Adhere to Aurora University's [Code of Academic Integrity](#).
- Understand the components of the disposition form.
- Follow the policies and procedures of the preceptorship site as they relate to the ethical conduct of preceptees.
- Follow all ethical practices as outlined by appropriate professional and disciplinary associations.
- Bring ethical concerns to the attention of appropriate personnel promptly.

Students pledge to **be prepared, respectful, and attentive**. Specifically, students pledge to:

- Attend and be on time for all professional events.
  - Professional events include class sessions, professional development activities, meetings, interviews, and preceptorship workdays.
  - Avoidable absences or tardiness are not to occur. Please do not schedule vacations or other non-emergency appointments during the semester.
  - Absences or tardiness due to sickness or other emergency circumstances are to be communicated to the appropriate supervisor (e.g., professor or preceptorship site supervisor) as soon as possible, ideally in advance.
  - Students are not to leave class, professional development events, or their preceptorship workdays early except due to emergency circumstances, having discussed the situation with their instructors or supervisors in advance if possible.
- Be prepared and engaged in professional activities.
  - Preparation requires the thoughtful completion of all tasks assigned by the instructor or supervisor before the deadline.

- Engagement means that students actively participate by taking notes when appropriate, contribute to class discussions and meetings and shoulder an equal share of the workload when in a team environment.
- Follow communication etiquette
  - Students are to communicate with instructors and supervisors using the methods, format, and style identified by those individuals.
  - During classes, professional development events, and preceptorships, students are to refrain from using electronic devices except in emergencies or when used for professional purposes.
  - Students are to use critical thinking skills to determine the best course of communication and will allow for appropriate response times to any inquiries of faculty, staff, or fellow students
- Be respectful in all settings
  - Students are to recognize the validity of diverging viewpoints and treat everyone with tact and courtesy.
  - Students are not to use language or behave in a manner that may be perceived as discriminatory in any respect.
- Dress professionally
  - The norms of professional dress vary by setting. Students are to identify and adhere to these norms as they are defined in each setting.

**Students pledge to act with integrity at all times, but especially concerning preceptorship.** Specifically, students pledge to:

- Actively participate in the preceptorship placement process.
  - Although Aurora University will assist students in navigating the preceptorship placement process, the student is solely responsible for securing a preceptorship that meets the approval of the university.
- Attend scheduled interviews or cancel more than twenty-four hours prior to the appointment.
- Commit themselves to a preceptorship once an offer has been accepted. Students are to terminate the preceptorship search once a preceptorship has been accepted.
- Satisfy the duties and responsibilities of the preceptorship as agreed to by the student, preceptorship site, and university
  - Except due to egregious circumstances, students are to remain in their preceptorships for the duration of the period agreed to by the student, site, and university.
  - Students should not terminate their preceptorships before the end of the semester without prior approval from the Dean, Program Director, Preceptorship Coordinator, and Site Supervisor.

This Pledge does not replace or supersede state or federal law or other Aurora University policies. Nevertheless, students **recognize and agree** that their failure to abide by the preceding might result in disciplinary action, up to and including removal from the program at the discretion of the Dean and Program Director/Chair. Your signature is an expected behavior to remain in good standing in the program.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, pledge to adhere to these commitments.  
(print name on line)

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# School of Social Work Directory

## Administration:

Dean, School of Social Work:	Dr. Brenda J. Barnwell ( <a href="mailto:bbarnwel@aurora.edu">bbarnwel@aurora.edu</a> , 630-947-8933)
Assistant Dean, GWC Campus:	Dr. Joan Fedota ( <a href="mailto:jfedota@aurora.edu">jfedota@aurora.edu</a> , 262-245-8621)
Director of Graduate Programs, Aurora Campus:	Professor Alison Arendt ( <a href="mailto:aarendt@aurora.edu">aarendt@aurora.edu</a> , 630-844-5793)
BSW Program Chair:	Ariana Carlson ( <a href="mailto:acarlson@aurora.edu">acarlson@aurora.edu</a> , 630-844-6147)
Director of Field:	Allison Schuck ( <a href="mailto:aschuck@aurora.edu">aschuck@aurora.edu</a> , 630-947-8936)
SSW Program Chair/GWC Campus:	Dr. Joan Fedota ( <a href="mailto:jfedota@gwc.aurora.edu">jfedota@gwc.aurora.edu</a> , 262-245-8621)
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Graduate Registration Coordinator:	Connie Revelle ( <a href="mailto:crevelle@aurora.edu">crevelle@aurora.edu</a> , 630-947-8931)
Administrative Assistant:	Eileen Trnka ( <a href="mailto:etrnka@aurora.edu">etrnka@aurora.edu</a> , 630-947-8937)

## Mailing Address:

Aurora University  
Attn: School of Social Work  
347 South Gladstone Avenue  
Aurora, IL 60506

## Office Location:

(Orchard Center) 2245 Sequoia Drive, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

## Office Hours:

Academic Year: 8:00 a.m. –5:00 p.m.  
Summer Term: 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

# Social Work Organizations

Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB)	<a href="https://www.aswb.org/">https://www.aswb.org/</a>
Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)	<a href="https://www.cswe.org/">https://www.cswe.org/</a>
Grand Challenges for Social Work	<a href="https://grandchallengesforsocialwork.org">https://grandchallengesforsocialwork.org</a>
Illinois Department of Financial & Professional Regulation	<a href="https://www.idfpr.com/">https://www.idfpr.com/</a>
National Association for Social Work (NASW)	<a href="https://www.socialworkers.org/">https://www.socialworkers.org/</a>