Ph.D. Student Handbook
School of Social Policy & Practice
Updated December 2019
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Purpose

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

Disclaimer

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

In addition to the contents of this Handbook, students must also comply with the rules stipulated in the Provost’s Educational Policies:
http://www.upenn.edu/provost/educational_policies_publications/.

Local Acronym Guide

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>DSSC</td>
<td>Doctoral Student Steering Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>SP2</td>
<td>School of Social Policy &amp; Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>GAPSA</td>
<td>Graduate and Professional Student Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>GSC</td>
<td>Graduate Student Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAS-gov</td>
<td>Student Government of the Graduate Students at the School of Arts &amp; Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>SHS</td>
<td>Student Health Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAPS</td>
<td>Counseling and Psychological Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIS</td>
<td>Student Intervention Services</td>
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<td>OSC</td>
<td>Office of Student Conduct</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISS</td>
<td>International Student Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABD</td>
<td>All but Dissertation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIP</td>
<td>Work-in-Progress</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The University, through the Graduate Division, sets the calendar of deadlines, creates forms, and processes degrees.

The website of the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly is a key source of information. In addition, Penn has prepared a Graduate and Professional Student Handbook, which highlights many aspects of social and cultural life at Penn as well as additional academic information. In addition to this Handbook, all Ph.D. students are encouraged to consult and familiarize themselves with these resources.

Program Administration

The Social Welfare Ph.D. program is administered by the Graduate Group in Social Welfare, which includes the standing faculty of SP2 and selected standing faculty from other schools and departments within the University. A list of the members of the Graduate Group is available on the program website.

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

The program’s Steering Committee, generally includes four (4) faculty members, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (who attends as the schedule allows), two (2) students, and the Graduate Group Chair. Together this committee monitors the program, recommends changes in policies and procedures, and serves, without student representation, as the Admissions Committee for the program.
Basic Requirements

A minimum of 20 credit units (CUs) are required by the University for the Ph.D. degree. Of this number, a minimum of four (4) CUs of pre-program credits will be granted to applicants with an appropriate master’s degree in social work or a related profession or allied discipline.

Students must pass written preliminary examinations in research methods, history & philosophy of social welfare, and social theory, typically at the end of the first year after completing required courses in research, history of social welfare, and theory. If a course is not offered in a given year (e.g. when the cohort is small), it will be offered the following year with the subsequent incoming class.

Failing any of the three preliminary exams may lead to expulsion from the program. If a student fails an exam, the student can do a make-up exam. Students may take only one make-up exam for each failed preliminary exam before expulsion.

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

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

Required Core Component (8 CUs)

The required core curriculum consists of:

- One course in the history and philosophy of social welfare (SWRK 803)
- Two courses in research methods (SWRK 852 and SWRK 855)
- Two courses in advanced statistics (e.g., MSSP 630 and MSSP 897)
- One course in social welfare economics (SWRK 968)
- One course in advanced social theory (SWRK 811)
- One course in policy analysis (SWRK 861)

Required Advanced Component (8 CUs)

The advanced curriculum consists of:

- One additional course in qualitative or quantitative methods (e.g., EDUC 682 Qualitative Methods, SOCI 662 Panel and Missing Data Analysis, EDUC 880 Multilevel Modeling, etc.), complementing the students’ substantive area to be chosen in consultation with the Advisor
- One theory course complementing the students’ substantive area to be chosen in consultation with the Advisor
- A half-credit Proseminar (SWRK 901) taken every semester until the student successfully passes the dissertation proposal defense
- A minimum of four (4) additional elective courses

At least four (4) of the courses in the advanced curriculum must be taken in the University but outside of SP2. Students are encouraged to use electives to develop content and methodological expertise in the areas of research in which the student has an interest. These courses must relate to the substantive content that students select for individualized program of study and must be listed by the University at or above the 500 level. In some cases, students are allowed to take graduate-level courses at other universities. The student’s advisor must approve the students’ selection of elective courses.

### Time Limitations

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

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

Beginning in the 2009-2010 academic year, the University allows up to 10 years for students to complete the Ph.D. Students who have not completed all requirements (including the dissertation) for the Ph.D. within 10 years from the date the student begins the PhD program may not be current with knowledge and research in the field. Students who exceed 10 years of study may petition the Graduate Group to return as a student for a maximum of 1 year in order to achieve recertification and defend the dissertation. Recertification criteria will be designated by the Graduate Group in Social Welfare and must be approved by the University’s Graduate Council of the Faculties.

[Penn policy](#) and [SP2 policies](#) outline the recertification details on how to petition for readmission if students fail to meet the 10-year maximum time to degree.

### Active Status

A student is on active status and in good standing when registration is complete, tuition and fees paid, and the student’s program of study represents approved coursework acceptable in accordance with the requirements of the Ph.D. program. A student also may be on active status when registered as being on dissertation-status. A student is considered full-time when taking 3-4 courses in a semester or being on dissertation-status.
A student who has completed all course requirements will, for registration purposes, be considered to have entered “dissertation-status.” The term “dissertation-status” also covers students who may have completed all course requirements but who have not yet passed the dissertation proposal. See the tuition section for additional information on tuition costs.

**Leave of Absence**

Continuous registration is required unless a formal leave of absence is granted.

A student who has reached dissertation status will not be granted a leave of absence except for military duty, medical reasons, family leave/parent accommodation, or personal leave as defined by the University Pennbook.

Obtaining a leave of absence does not automatically change the time limit, except for military duty, medical reasons, or family leave/parent accommodation.

**New Parent or Family Leave:** A student in a Ph.D. program at Penn is eligible for time off of eight weeks for the birth or adoption of a child. The student must complete the online New Parent Accommodation/Family Leave Request Form at least 60 days prior to the anticipated start date of the leave so that appropriate arrangements can be made to cover any teaching/research responsibilities.

Students wishing to take a leave of absence due to military duty, medical, or personal reasons, must submit a written request to the Director of the Ph.D. program that is approved by the student’s Advisor. This request must be accompanied with written plan for the completion of Ph.D. study that has been approved by the student’s Academic Advisor and Dissertation Committee. The request will be reviewed and responded to by the Director. Approved leaves of absence may be granted for up to one year. Decisions of the Director may be appealed to the Dean of SP2.

When a student is ready to return from LOA status, the student must send written notice to the student’s Advisor and the Program Director prior to the start of the term, stating the student’s intention to return to active student status. Such notification must be sent at least two weeks prior to the start of the semester.

No degree examinations, course work, or other paid PhD-related work may be done while a student is on a leave of absence.

**Withdrawals and Continuous Registration**

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

If a student withdraws from the Ph.D. program after reaching dissertation status and subsequently reapplies for admission, the student must pay the dissertation fees that would have been due during the withdrawal period. In addition, time away will be counted toward time limits.

Per the University-wide academic rules governing Ph.D. students, continuous registration as a graduate student is required unless a formal leave of absence is granted. (https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/academic-rules-phd/#text)

**Terminations**

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

- The student does not meet the required course GPA (a minimum of 3.0);
- The student fails the preliminary examination and the one-time exam make-up opportunity;
- The student does not complete the dissertation requirements according to the required time limits (see Pennbook for 5 and 10 year limits);
- The student is dropped from the program for other reasons (e.g., plagiarism, unethical behavior, or criminal behavior). In the latter case, a student may be terminated by action of the Director of the Ph.D. program only if, after due process and in accordance with policies and procedures established by the Graduate Group and the University, continued presence in the program is judged inimical to its interests and purposes. In such circumstances, the student’s Chairperson/Advisor will prepare a written summary of the student’s work completed and the reasons for termination, and the summary will be filed in the student’s record.

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

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

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

Academic Advisor

Upon entering the program, the Program Director and the admissions committee will assign each student an Academic Advisor, who assists the student in becoming oriented to the program. The first year advisors are selected on the basis of students’ area of interest as designated on the incoming student’s application for admission. This faculty member remains the student’s advisor for the first year of the program. A student may change Advisors in the second year of the program and beyond, but must choose an advisor from the Graduate Group. If a student want to change Advisors, the student must first discuss this with either the current Advisor or the Program Director, and then submit a written request for the change to the Program Director outlining the change. The new Advisor must be a member of the Graduate Group. Students may also choose to remain with the first-year advisor for the duration of the program but are not required to do so.

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

For best practices regarding academic advising, please see University guidelines that promote good mentoring relationship, as well as our Advisee and Advisor Guide for SP2 Ph.D. students.

Academic Progress

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

Second-Year Review
The second-year review is a required meeting between the student and advisor at the end of the second year. The purpose of the meeting is to review the student’s performance and progress and ensure the student is on track toward timely completion of the dissertation. At the end of this meeting, the student should send a written update of their progress, and timeline for completion to the Program Director.
Evaluations and Examinations

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

**Preliminary Examination**

The preliminary examination consists of three exams: History of Social Welfare, Social theory, and Research methods. Exams are conducted online via an appropriate software (e.g. Canvas). Exam questions are available to students beginning at a set time (generally 9 am) on the first day of the exam. Completed exams must be submitted in the desired format through the exam Canvas site by a set time (generally 5 pm) on the second day of the exam. No late submissions are accepted.

The preliminary exam is generally taken at the end of the first year after successfully completing the required first year courses.

The preliminary exam dates are scheduled in consultation with the cohort of students taking the exams and the Director of the Ph.D. Program. They are conducted as three separate exams and typically occur in May and June. Results are provided in July.

Students who fail any of the three exams have only one opportunity to retake that exam. The retake occurs no later than mid-August. Students who fail the retake exam are terminated from the program.

**Candidacy Examination/Dissertation Proposal Defense**

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

**Dissertation Defense/Examination**

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

**Grades and Academic Standing**

The letter grade evaluation system of the Graduate Group in Social Welfare is consistent with the system used by the MA and Ph.D. programs at the University (https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/academic-rules-phd/#text). “Specifically: A, excellent; B,
good; C, fair; D, poor but passing; and F, failure. At the graduate level, the grade of C, while passing, does not constitute satisfactory performance. Letter grades may be modified by a plus (+) or minus (-) sign at the discretion of the School.”

The mark of S is used to indicate satisfactory progress. An “S” may be used as a permanent grade only for 999 courses and SWRK 901 (Proseminar). It is a temporary grade for all other courses.

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

**Overall GPA**

Grade Point Averages (GPAs) are tabulated at the end of each semester and on a cumulative basis. The minimum standard for satisfactory work is a B average in each academic year. A student whose overall GPA falls below the B (3.0) average will be required to withdraw. Each student will be given one opportunity to retake classes in which the student received low grades before being required to withdraw.

The Graduate Group may set additional requirements that determine advancement, which may require a student to withdraw despite a satisfactory GPA. Such a situation may arise only if the quality of the student’s work is determined to not be at a level that predicts successful dissertation research.** In extreme and special cases, the Director of the Ph.D. program, in consultation with the Ph.D. Steering Committee, will make decisions regarding the academic standing of individual students in light of circumstances that may affect performance. Such circumstances may include personal or family health matters, a leave of absence, changes in course requirements or the timing of such courses, transfer of external credits, etc.

**Required Core Course Grades**

A letter grade of less than B (including a B-) in a required core course constitutes failure in that course. Students earning less than a B in any required core course will be placed on probationary status and must repeat and earn a B or better in the course. Students may repeat a failed required core course only once.

**Details under consideration**
**Elective Course Grades**

A letter grade of C or lower in an elective course will constitute a failure of that course. Students who fail an elective course will be permitted to retake that elective once or, with the prior approval of both the Director of the Ph.D. program and the student’s advisor, substitute another suitable elective for the failed course. Failure of two or more courses (required or elective) will subject the student to dismissal from the program.

**Code of Academic Integrity**

The University of Pennsylvania has a well-articulated set of policies and procedures pertaining to the academic and professional conduct of graduate students. The policies and procedures are published online in the Pennbook. The two most important policies in the Pennbook are the Code of Student Conduct and the Code of Academic Integrity. These two policies outline the general responsibilities of being a student at Penn, define academic integrity, and establish what constitutes a violation of academic integrity. For example, plagiarism and self-plagiarism are considered violations of academic integrity. Ph.D. students are expected to read, understand, and agree to uphold these policies, seeking guidance from the student’s Advisor and/or Ph.D. Program Director should anything be unclear.

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

All students must review and sign the Code of Academic Integrity as required by University policy.
Exchange Scholar Program and other cooperative agreements

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

Penn also has a cooperative arrangement with Bryn Mawr College, where any University of Pennsylvania student may, upon presentation of the proper credentials and with the permission of the instructor concerned, enroll for up to the equivalent of three course units at Bryn Mawr. Details regarding the institutional exchange agreements are available from the Office of the Vice Provost for Education.

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

Courses Taken Outside Penn

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

- No comparable course is available at the University of Pennsylvania;
- The content does not lend itself to a structured independent study;
- The proposed course is of sufficient quality and rigor to warrant Ph.D. credit;
- The proposed course is taken for elective credit;
- The student prepares a brief statement of justification outlining the special need to take the course outside of the University; and
- The student’s Advisor approves the designated course as appropriate for inclusion in the student’s educational plan.

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

First Year

Fall Semester (3.5 units)
SWRK 803: Advanced History & Philosophy of Social Welfare*
SWRK 852: Social Welfare Research Methods*
MSSP 630: Quantitative Reasoning
SWRK 901: Proseminar

Spring Semester (4.5 units)
SWRK 811: Social Theory*
SWRK 855: Advanced Research Methods*
MSSP 897: Applied Linear Modeling
SWRK 901: Proseminar
Elective

Spring Semester (4.5 units)
SWRK 861: Policy Analysis
SWRK 901: Proseminar
Elective (either fall or spring)
Elective (either fall or spring)

End of the First Year
Preliminary Examinations

Second Year

Fall Semester (4.5 units)
SWRK 968: Social Welfare Economics
SWRK 901: Proseminar
Theory Course (choose with help of advisor in either fall or spring)
Advanced Methods Course (choose with help of advisor in either fall or spring)
Elective (either fall or spring)

Spring Semester (3.5 units)

Third Year (generally reserved for dissertation research writing)

Fall Semester
SWRK 901: Proseminar (if Proposal defense is incomplete)

Spring Semester
SWRK 901: Proseminar (if Proposal defense is incomplete)

Fourth Year (generally reserved for dissertation research writing)

Fall Semester
SWRK 901: Proseminar (if Proposal defense is incomplete)

Spring Semester
SWRK 901: Proseminar (if Proposal defense is incomplete)

*subject to change

Joint MSW/Ph.D.*

Students already enrolled in the MSW program may apply to the joint MSW/Ph.D. program (the application deadline is the same as the regular Ph.D. program application deadline, December 15). Under special circumstances, students may apply to the joint MSW/Ph.D. program at the time of admission to the MSW program. After completing the first (foundation) year of the MSW curriculum, joint MSW/Ph.D. students begin to take Ph.D.-level courses. Upon
satisfactory completion of the MSW advanced-level curriculum, students receive the MSW degree and continue full time in Ph.D. courses. Course and examination requirements for MSW/Ph.D. students are identical to those of full-time Ph.D. students.

**Curriculum for MSW/Ph.D.**

The proposed curricular plan for the MSW/Ph.D. is a recommendation, not a requirement. Students will advance into the Ph.D. program in consultation with the Director of the PhD program and at different paces.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Year (MSW Program)</th>
<th>Spring Semester (4 cu's)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall Semester (4 cu's)</td>
<td>SWRK 714 or 718: Advanced Practice II (Direct or Macro) + Field</td>
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<tr>
<td>SWRK 602: Human Behavior in the Social Environment I</td>
<td>SWRK 811: Social Theory (Ph.D.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SWRK 604: Foundations of Social Work Practice + Field</td>
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<tr>
<th>Spring Semester (4 cu's)</th>
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<tr>
<td>SWRK 611: Contemporary Social Policy</td>
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<td>SWRK 612: Groups, Organizations, and Communities in the Social Environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>SWRK 613: Promoting Social Change: Issues of Race and Gender</td>
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<tr>
<td>SWRK 614: Social Work Practice + Field</td>
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<th>Second Year (MSW/Ph.D. Program)</th>
<th>Spring Semester (4.5 cu's)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fall Semester (4 cu's)</td>
<td>MSSP 630: Quantitative Reasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWRK 704 or 708: Advanced Social Work Practice I (Direct or Macro) + Field</td>
<td>SWRK 901: Proseminar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWRK 852: Social Welfare Research Methods (Ph.D.)</td>
<td>Theory Course (choose with help of advisor either fall or spring)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWRK 803: Advanced History &amp; Philosophy of Social Welfare (Ph.D.)</td>
<td>Elective</td>
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<tr>
<td>SWRK 7xx: Advanced Social Work Practice Elective</td>
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*subject to change

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<th>Third Year (Ph.D. Program)</th>
<th>Spring Semester (4.5 cu's)</th>
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<td>MSSP 897: Applied Linear Modeling</td>
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<td>SWRK 901: Proseminar</td>
<td>SWRK 968: Social Welfare Economics</td>
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<td>Advanced Methods Course (choose with help of advisor either fall or spring)</td>
<td>SWRK 861: Policy Analysis</td>
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Independent Study

Approval of independent studies is arranged through the student’s Advisor. Independent studies should further the student’s educational plan and must complement, rather than substitute for, existing courses. Students requesting an independent study must complete this request form from the SP2 website and send it to the SP2 Registrar. Emails coming from both the student’s Advisor and the independent study instructor, if different approving the course, must accompany the completed form to the Registrar.
Dissertation

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

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

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

Dissertation Advisor and Committee Chair

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

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

Committee Composition

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

- A committee must have a minimum of three voting members.
- All voting committee members must be Social Welfare Graduate Group members or members of the Standing or Associated Faculty of the University.
- No more than two members may be from the faculty of SP2. Please note Dissertation committees need not include a member of the SP2 faculty.
- Students may have a committee larger than three, as long as at least half of the voting members are members of the Social Welfare Graduate Group.
With the consultation of the Dissertation Chair, a student may include non-voting members on the Dissertation committee. Such persons may include advocates, social work practitioners, or policy leaders who can contribute their expertise. However, the majority of the Dissertation committee must be Graduate Group members.

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

The primary director of dissertation work and the dissertation Chair need not be the same person. For example, if a student is working closely with a member of the Associated Faculty, that faculty member is not eligible to chair the dissertation committee. However, the student may appoint an eligible member of the Standing Faculty in the Graduate Group to be the Chair with the mutual understanding that the roles of Chair and principal director of the dissertation work are divided among different committee members.

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

**Proposal and Proposal Defense/Candidacy Examination**

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

Students are also responsible for working with the Chair and committee to determine an acceptable length and format for the oral defense of the proposal and to choose an agreeable date and time for this defense. After agreeing on a date and time, the student then notifies the Ph.D. program coordinator at least two weeks before the scheduled proposal defense date. The student must send the date and time, along with an abstract of the proposal. The Ph.D. program coordinator will secure a location for the proposal defense and send an email to the Standing Faculty and PhD listserv notifying them of the defense.
The proposal defense is a discourse between the candidates and the student’s committee built around the contents of the written dissertation proposal and oral proposal presentation by the student. Other faculty and Ph.D. students may attend the presentation and participate in the discussion segment of the defense. The proposal should demonstrate a high level of scholarship and research competence to substantiate the implementation of the planned proposal.

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

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

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

Upon passing the candidacy examination, students must obtain the signatures of all committee members on the Proposal Defense Evaluation Form. This form is available for download here. Students are responsible for printing this form and bringing it to the proposal defense. Students should then submit the completed form to the Ph.D. program coordinator.

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

**Monitoring and Completion of the Dissertation**

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

The Chair of the Dissertation Committee or Director of the Ph.D. Program may also require additional reports from the student to ensure adequate progress is made toward completion of the dissertation.
The length and formatting of the final dissertation should be reviewed with and approved by each student’s Chair and committee members. The student should discuss any substantive formatting changes with the Chair and committee members prior to implementing these changes. Additional University-wide requirements for basic formatting can be found in the Dissertation Manual, available here.

Defending the Dissertation

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

Like the proposal defense, students are responsible for working with the Dissertation committee Chair and all members of the student’s chosen committee to agree on a date and time for the dissertation defense. Only one member of the committee may attend “virtually” (e.g., via Zoom); the majority of the committee must be present in-person. Once a date and time are agreed upon, the student must notify the Ph.D. program coordinator about the defense at least two weeks before the scheduled defense. The student must send the names of the committee members, the date, and time along with an abstract of the dissertation to the Director of the Ph.D. Program and copy the program coordinator. The Ph.D. program coordinator will reserve a room for the defense and then send an email to the standing faculty and all-doc listserv notifying them of the defense.

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

Voting is conducted in a closed meeting of the Committee. Decisions about acceptability are based on majority vote of the committee. The Chair reports, within three days of the defense, the results of the vote to the Director of the Ph.D. Program.

At the time of dissertation defense, the student will have the following forms signed by the Committee and the Director of the Ph.D. program: (1) Form 152, which documents the approval of the dissertation by the Committee; and (2) Form 153, which certifies a copy of the dissertation as the approved copy. The forms can be obtained here.

Two original copies of the title page must also be signed at this time for the candidate to bring to the dissertation deposit.
If significant revisions are to be made, the Chair may decide to delay signing until revisions are made.

A copy of each of these forms must be given to the Ph.D. program coordinator. The originals will be submitted by the student when the dissertation is deposited.

**Applying for Graduation**

The degree candidate must apply for graduation to the Graduate Division of the School of Arts and Sciences by the deadline designated for the particular semester (e.g., usually mid- to late-September for December graduation and usually by mid-April for May graduation). Application for graduation does not obligate the student to finish at the designated date and can be made before the dissertation defense. Submission of the application registers the student for graduation. Upon registering for graduation, the candidate is provided information about relevant administrative processes including procedures and policies for depositing the completed approved dissertation.

Students are expected to consult the University calendar for the specific dates and to meet the deadline. The degree calendar and information about other requirements is provided [here](#) and [here](#) tuition waiver.

**Depositing the Dissertation**

Candidates for the Ph.D. in Social Welfare are required to adhere to the guidelines of the Graduate Division of the School of Arts and Sciences. The Dissertation Manual for the University provides specific information about formatting and depositing the final copy of the dissertation. It can be found [here](#).

After a successful dissertation defense, completing any revisions requested during the defense, and obtaining the approval of the Committee members, the Ph.D. candidate is responsible for providing the required documentation and for depositing the dissertation to the Graduate Office. Deadlines for filing the dissertation are provided in the University’s graduation calendar.

Candidates must make an appointment to deposit with the Graduate Division by telephone (215-898-7444), and dissertations are deposited at this office **in person** at the appointed date and time. For more information about depositing the dissertation, view the Dissertation Manual, which can be found [here](#).

**Other Graduation Requirements**

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

It is beneficial for Ph.D. students to have teaching experience. Therefore, attempts will be made to arrange for Ph.D. students to become Teaching Assistants and, if possible, class instructors of record.

All Ph.D. student teaching assistantships must be arranged through consultation with their Advisors and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

Students may not arrange paid or unpaid teaching assistantships independently with faculty members at the University of Pennsylvania.

The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will solicit letters of interest and CVs from eligible students, and assignments will be made in consultation with faculty and the Director of the Ph.D. program.

The assignment procedure will follow these guidelines:

- Students in the 1st year of the Ph.D. program are not eligible for teaching assistantships.
- Students in the 2nd year of the Ph.D. program are generally not considered for teaching assistant positions. However, a student may petition the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs to request a teaching assistant assignment. Compensation for these positions are considered part of the student’s Ph.D. program stipend unless teaching is undertaken in the summer semester.
- Students, in consultation with the student’s Advisor, in and after the 3rd year of the Ph.D. program are eligible for teaching assistant or instructor positions. Applications are submitted to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs for approval in consultation with faculty and the Director of the Ph.D. program. Compensation for these positions are considered part of the student’s Ph.D. program stipend unless teaching is undertaken in the summer semester. Compensation for summer teaching is done according University guidelines.
- Students in or beyond the 5th year of the Ph.D. program will be compensated according University guidelines.
Tuition, Fees, and Financial Support

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

All full-time students accepted into the Ph.D. program (Fall 2007 and after) and who meet all course and examination requirements will receive four years of full funding. Full funding includes tuition, a stipend, and individual health insurance coverage. Full funding is contingent upon the student working as a research assistant with a faculty member or with one of the school’s research centers.

After three years of full-time study, students are placed on dissertation status with reduced tuition and fee amounts. The fourth year of fellowship covers individual health insurance through student health services, but after the fourth year of fellowship health insurance is available through the University to be paid by the student. All students must be covered by the University’s health insurance or provide proof of alternate, equivalent health coverage.

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

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

Research Assistant Requirement

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

Students who are admitted without guaranteed funding will not be required to serve as research assistants but may volunteer to do so.
Registration, Billing and Fee Payments

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

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

Professional Development Allocation

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

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

Travel/Research Reimbursement

For Travel Reimbursements

- Once the student has returned from travel, the student is required to complete a request for reimbursement by preparing and submitting an online report via Concur (http://cms.business-services.upenn.edu/penntravel/expense-report.html).
- The student should keep the original receipts for all travel expenses and should upload and submit scanned copies along with the Concur report. If there is a flight included in expenses, student should include boarding passes. Students should also be prepared to provide documentation of written approval for travel from the Director of the Ph.D. Program to the staff member reviewing the Concur report upon request.
- Any meal receipts must have an itemized list of exactly what was ordered. Students will not be reimbursed for purchases of alcoholic beverages.
The student should also provide documentation that provides a description of the attended event (i.e. a conference registration confirmation or scanned copy of cover of conference brochure or the student’s talk listing in brochure).

Students must prepare and submit all Concur travel reimbursement reports within 180 days of travel to be eligible for reimbursement. Students should contact the Financial Administrative Coordinator in the McNeil Building at 3718 Locust Walk (fifth floor) with questions about the reimbursement process or Concur.

For Other Reimbursements (Expense Reports)

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

Student Financial Obligations to the University

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

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

Even students with full funding should check the student billing system regularly, as students are responsible for such charges as late library fees, parking tickets, student health services charges not covered by the student health insurance plan, meal charges to student account, etc. The student is responsible for any late fees due to such charges.
Policies on Refunds of Tuition and Fees due to Program Withdrawal or Absence

For students who no longer receiving tuition and fee support from the School (i.e., those who are beyond the fourth year in the program). See here

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

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

- A written appeal of the Director of the Ph.D. Program’s decision may be made through the Dissertation Chair to the Dean of the School of Social Policy & Practice, who will determine if a review by the Committee on Academic Standing is warranted. If dissatisfied with the decision of the Dean or the Academic Standing Committee, the student may then appeal to the Provost of the University.
- When differences between a student and Advisor, Chairperson, or Committee are such as to require consideration by the Committee on Academic Standing, the student may select a student representative to present the student’s case to the committee and to speak or intervene on the student’s behalf during the appeal process. The representative will be free to intervene on the student’s behalf at any point in the appeal process. The representative will attend meetings of the committee only if explicitly requested to do so by the appealing student. It is the appealing student’s responsibility to request the services of the representative. The representative will serve only in an advisory and advocacy role and will not have a vote on the final committee decision.
- The Director of the Ph.D. Program may not vote on a committee decision if the Director a member of the appealing student’s Dissertation Committee.
Additional Policies

**FERPA**

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

**Discrimination Policies and Violence Prevention**

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

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

- Sexual Harassment Policy
  [http://provost.upenn.edu/policies/pennbook/2013/02/15/sexual-harassment-policy](http://provost.upenn.edu/policies/pennbook/2013/02/15/sexual-harassment-policy)

- Racial Harassment Policy
  [http://www.upenn.edu/affirm-action/policies-handbooks.html](http://www.upenn.edu/affirm-action/policies-handbooks.html)

- Office of Student Disabilities Services
  [http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/lrc/sds/](http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/lrc/sds/)

- Gender Neutral Restrooms
  [http://www.facilities.upenn.edu/sites/default/files/pdfs/gender_map_5_3_lr.pdf](http://www.facilities.upenn.edu/sites/default/files/pdfs/gender_map_5_3_lr.pdf)

- Penn Violence Prevention
  [https://secure.www.upenn.edu/vpul/pvp/definitionsandpolicies](https://secure.www.upenn.edu/vpul/pvp/definitionsandpolicies)

- Reporting Responsibilities for Sexual Violence
For a Complete List of University Policies and Regulations
http://www.upenn.edu/services/policies.php.

Confidential Resources

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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