



FACTOR-INWENTASH
FACULTY OF SOCIAL WORK
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

PhD PROGRAM MANUAL

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FACTOR-INWENTASH FACULTY OF SOCIAL WORK ADMINISTRATION

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FIFSW PHD PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work (FIFSW) at the University of Toronto offers a unique opportunity to learn within a thriving community of social work researchers, educators and practitioner who are deeply engaged with the interdisciplinary community of the University of Toronto. As one of the leading schools of social work in Canada and North America, FIFSW faculty, staff, and students come from a range of cultural, personal, and professional backgrounds which inform their research and teaching expertise. As we strive to bridge the gap between research and practice, FIFSW faculty, staff and students work in partnership with community-based, government, and grassroots leaders to address pressing social justice, economic, and health concerns towards advancing the welfare of people in Canada and around the world. Mindful of the Indigenous peoples, histories, and relationship to the territory upon which the University of Toronto is situated, we embrace the Calls to Action put forward by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada through engaging with local Indigenous communities while working collectively to understand and address the continued impacts of colonization and systemic racism for Indigenous, Black racialized and marginalized communities.

Our Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) program is designed to cultivate high-calibre scholars and leaders in social work research, education, policy, and practice. Our Faculty is committed to mentoring students to deepen their knowledge, broaden research capacities, and develop strategies to enrich social work's commitment to promoting human rights, dignity, and social justice. Through coursework, research, and teaching opportunities, doctoral students are challenged to grow personally, scholarly, and professionally in a supportive environment. Beyond FIFSW, students are also encouraged to tap into the wealth of activities and resources offered by the greater University of Toronto Community. These opportunities enable doctoral students to form community bonds while developing a comprehensive lens and skillset that enhances their independent research and scholarly goals.

This program manual provides an overview of the PhD program requirements, related course work, program milestones, and resources to support your learning. Please check the FIFSW website for up-to-date information on the PhD program, teaching, research, and funding opportunities.

1.1 Overview of the FIFSW PhD Program

The PhD program at the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work is available on a full-time basis. Minimum period of registration is 12 academic sessions of full-time enrolment (i.e., Fall, Winter, Summer sessions).

The PhD program is structured to support the completion of all degree requirements within four years. However, students can register for up to a cumulative total of six years following their admission into the program to complete their degree requirements.

Students have four major milestones to accomplish in the program: (1) required courses and seminars, (2) the comprehensive exam, (3) the thesis proposal defense, and (4) the thesis.

1.2 PhD Program – Timeline at a Glance

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Years 4-5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Required Courses & Electives ▪ First Year Seminar ▪ Select Supervisor (by June 1st) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete 9 of 10 required courses (including electives) ▪ Comprehensive Exam Proposal ▪ Comprehensive Exam 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Form Thesis Supervisory Committee ▪ Complete remaining course requirement (if applicable) ▪ Thesis Proposal Defense ▪ PhD Candidacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Thesis Research Ethics Protocol (if applicable) ▪ Thesis Research ▪ Final Oral Exam ▪ Final Thesis ▪ PhD

PHD COURSEWORK & PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

2.1 PhD Coursework and Program Requirements

Doctoral students complete **ten** graduate level half-credit (0.5 full-credit equivalent or FCE) courses in addition to two social work seminars as a requirement of the PhD program in Social Work.

The **ten** graduate half-credit courses are comprised of:

- **five** required courses in social work (one of which has a pre-requisite) and
- **five** elective courses.
- **two** required PhD seminars include:
 - First-Year Doctoral Colloquium (no course code, Spring session)
 - SWK 7000H - Thesis Seminar (half-credit, CR/NCR)

2.2 Program Prerequisite

Successful completion of coursework for the doctoral program requires knowledge of statistics at an introductory level. All incoming students to the PhD program are, therefore, required to take [SWK 4506H](#), Applied Quantitative Data Analysis for Social Workers (typically offered during the fall session of year 1 in the PhD Program).

Alternatively, students can take an equivalent competency exam but will have to obtain a grade of B+ or higher in this exam (to be scheduled at the start of the fall session).

NOTE: If a student chooses to or has to take SWK 4506H, please note that this course will not count towards PhD course requirements, however, the grade for this course will be included in the calculation of the overall GPA.

2.3 Required Courses in Social Work:

The 5 required credit PhD courses include:

1. SWK 6301H: Intermediate Statistics and Data Analysis (half-credit)
*Prerequisite: Passing grade in SWK 4506 or statistics competency exam
2. SWK 6302H: Epistemology and Social Work Research (half-credit course)
3. SWK 6307H: Designing and Implementing Qualitative Social Work Research (half-credit course)
4. SWK 6308H: Designing and Implementing Quantitative Social Work Research (half-credit course)
5. First Year Doctoral Colloquium: Required/Non-Credit

2.4 Elective Courses

Elective courses provide students the opportunity to choose among methodological, theoretical, or substantive courses to support their individualized learning goals. Elective courses may be taken within the graduate courses offered the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work or from graduate-level courses offered in other departments of the University of Toronto. Students may also request to take courses offered at another university.

Requirements for the five required elective half-credit courses:

- At least one elective must be taken at the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work.
- At least one elective must be taken outside the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work (i.e., another graduate department at the University of Toronto).
- Up to two independent reading courses may count towards the five graduate elective half-credit course requirement.

Elective courses offered at the FIFSW are listed on the PhD Timetable or on the MSW Year Two and Advanced Standing timetable. MSW practice courses listed are not typically available to PhD students to count as electives for the PhD Program.

Students are encouraged to review course offerings in related departments at the University of Toronto, including collaborative programs. Students may also inquire with the PhD Program Assistant [phdprogram.fifsw@utoronto.ca] for a list of courses in which PhD students in social work have previously enrolled.

2.5 Course Enrollment Procedures

Enrolling in a PhD course offered in FIFSW

Students will use ACORN, the University's Accessible Campus Online Resource Network, to enroll in PhD courses offered in the Faculty. Check fees, finances, and other records and registration tasks, such as making updates to address and contact information.

Enrolling in an MSW graduate course offered in FIFSW

PhD Students are **not permitted** to enroll directly in MSW graduate courses through ACORN, unless the course is cross listed with the PhD Program. PhD students who are interested in enrolling in an MSW graduate course must first obtain permission and signatures from the course instructor and the PhD Director using an the Add/Drop Course form (Appendix 2). Completed forms should be submitted to the FIFSW Registrar.

Procedures to Request an Exemption from a Required Course

1. Students who wish to seek an exemption from taking a required course must have taken course(s) previously, for another degree, that demonstrate competency in the area of the required course. Course instructors will determine competency, and the student will need to substitute an alternate elective graduate-level course for each exempted course. This is done in close consultation with the PhD Program Director. Transcripts will note exemptions.
2. The student is expected to contact the PhD Program Director and provide evidence of having covered the content previously (e.g., transcripts, course syllabus). The PhD Program Director will consult with the appropriate instructors to inform a decision.
3. If a course exemption is approved, the student discusses with the PhD Program Director a suitable course substitute. **The course requirements for the PhD degree of at least ten half-credit courses are not reduced.**
4. On the recommendation of the PhD Program Director, the student completes the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) [Transfer Credit and/or Course Exemption form](#) (see Appendix 1). Please check the form for requirements.

NOTE: For course exemption, the requirements of the overall course credit for the degree are not reduced. The form is submitted to the PhD Program Director for signature and is then forwarded to the FIFSW Registrar for further processing and forwarding to the School of Graduate Studies. A copy of the paperwork is kept in the student record at the Faculty. Please note that the School of Graduate Studies makes the final decision on whether to allow a course transfer/exemption or not.

Graduate Courses Offered in Other Departments

Most graduate departments do not allow students from other departments to enroll in courses through ACORN. Before attempting to add a course outside the FIFSW, please check with the host department on availability and registration procedures. The Add/Drop Course(s) form should include a short course description and include required signatures of the host department and the PhD Program Director. Please refer to the [Course Enrolment Information](#) page for more details.

Request for Independent Reading/Research Courses

[Reading/research courses](#) are intended to meet the needs or interests of a student. The course can be offered on a specific topic not covered in other approved courses at the Faculty and must not be offered in other graduate departments at the University. It could involve a student meeting periodically with an instructor to seek direction and for feedback

on the submitted assignments. We encourage student initiative in identifying course topics that will support the development of their comprehensive exam or thesis proposal.

To arrange for these courses, a student will need to contact the concerned instructor directly to develop the reading course's learning goals, selected reading, assignments, and meeting frequency equivalent to those of a regular graduate level course. A reading/research course may be developed in concert with one or more students. Students may work with any faculty at the University of Toronto who holds an appointment with the School of Graduate Studies or an equivalent appointment at another University; course instructors (PhD students) and sessional instructors cannot supervise a directed reading course. A maximum of two 0.5 credit courses will be accepted toward degree requirements. Students who work with a faculty member outside of social work, will need to follow the course enrollment procedures for graduate courses in other departments or

Students enroll by submitting the following to the Registrar:

- A request for Reading and/or Research Course form (Appendix 3)
- An Add/Drop Course(s) form (Appendix 2).
- A copy of the Reading Course Syllabus

Please enter course number SWK 6501H, Special Studies 1 or SWK 6502H, Special Studies 2 for course number and description. The [forms](#) are located on the SGS website under Current Students/Registration & Enrolment section, or at the end of the Manual. Submit the completed form, with instructor and PhD Program Director's signatures, before submitting to the FIFSW Registrar's office.

Approved Graduate-Level Courses in Other Universities

Students may take approved graduate-level courses from other universities in Ontario. They will need to complete the Ontario Visiting Graduate Student (OVGS) Agreement. This agreement form can be found on the SGS website within the [Exchanges & Agreements section](#).

If you are considering taking a course at the graduate level outside Ontario, you will require permission to do so from the PhD Director and from the host University. Please see the FIFSW Registrar for further information.

Collaborative Specializations

The Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work offers several collaborative interdisciplinary specializations. Information about each program is available on the [Faculty website](#). Please review programs specific to PhD students. Students apply directly to these programs. Please note that students who take part in these interdisciplinary programs must meet all the requirements of the collaborative specialization in addition to the doctoral degree requirements of the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work in order to graduate.

Checking/Modifying Course Status

Students are responsible for the accuracy of their timetable through [ACORN](#). Students may cancel or withdraw from individual courses using the web service up to certain dates. These deadlines are set annually by the School of Graduate Studies and published under [Dates and Deadlines](#) page on the FIFSW website. Students are advised to consult with their Interim Academic Advisor or Thesis Supervisor before withdrawing from courses.

Final Grades

Final grades can be accessed through ACORN. The dates for viewing grades for a session are posted under [Dates and Deadlines](#) page. Students will be able to view their grades online approximately 6-7 weeks after the session ends. If a grade is not available, contact your instructor or the graduate unit offering the course.

2.6 Recommended Course Load & Timeline

Students are required to register for each successive session, including summers, on a full-time basis unless granted a leave of absence.

Below is the recommended course progression to complete all program requirements within the SGS timeframe for PhD programs.

Program Year	Session	Recommended Course Load & Program Timeline
YEAR 1	Fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWK 6302H • SWK 6307H • SWK 4506H (or passing grade on competency exam; by early Sept.) • (Optional, 1 elective for those not enrolled in SWK 4506H)
	Winter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWK 6301H • SWK 6308H • 1 elective • Doctoral Colloquium (2.5 days in March and/or April)
	Spring/ Summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 electives • Due by June 1st - Selection of the Thesis Supervisor in the Annual Progress Report
YEAR 2	Fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWK 7000H • 1-2 electives • Draft Comprehensive Exam Proposal & Annotated Bibliography
	Winter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-2 electives • Submit Approved Comprehensive Exam Proposal & Bibliography (if taking Winter Comp Exam) • SWK8000H Comprehensive Exam (if applicable) • Must have completed 9/10 required courses enrolling in Comprehensive Exam
	Spring /Summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Approved Comprehensive Exam Proposal & Bibliography (if taking Summer Comp Exam) • SWK8000h Comprehensive Exam (if applicable) • Must have completed 9/10 required courses enrolling in Comprehensive Exam • Due by June 1st - Annual Progress Report
Program Year	Session	Recommended Course Load & Program Timeline

<p>YEAR 3</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elective (if student has one remaining required course) • Finalize Selection of Thesis Committee • Thesis Proposal and Oral Thesis Proposal Defense <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All required courses must be completed before the Oral Thesis Defense ○ The Thesis Proposal must be approved by the Supervisory Committee by August 31st of the third year of the program for the student to achieve candidacy and maintain good standing. • Due by June 1st - Annual Progress Report <p>NOTE: Students who do not achieve candidacy by the end of Year 3, must submit an Request for Extension to Achieve Candidacy in order to remain registered.</p>
<p>YEAR 4</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thesis Research & Writing • Due by June 1st, Annual Progress Report
<p>YEAR 5</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thesis Research & Writing • Due by June 1st, Annual Progress Report • Thesis Completion & Oral Defense <p>NOTE: Students should prepare to defend their thesis by the end of Year 5. Students who have not completed all degree requirements at the end of Year 6, must request a Program Extension, in order to remain registered.</p>

*Students who need to submit an extension to achieve Candidacy or Program Extension are advised to submit all required documents to the PhD Program for approvals, at least four weeks prior to the start of the respective session to avoid delays in registration.

2.6.1 Coursework Extension Policies

FIFSW Coursework Extension Policies for PhD students apply to course assignments in FIFSW courses, independent reading/research courses, and the comprehensive exam (SWK8000H0).

Academic considerations or accommodations can be applied to these coursework types and program requirements. For more details on how to apply for a coursework extension within the academic session or after the academic session go to [Coursework Extensions under Current Students on the FIFSW website](#).

2.6.2 Time Limit for Completion of Program Requirements

The time limit to complete all requirements for the PhD degree (courses, Comprehensive Exam and Thesis) is **six years**.

See the [SGS website](#) regarding tuition and fees after Year Five, as there is no funding commitment beyond Year Five of the program.

Requesting a Program Extension

Students who do not complete all degree requirements within the PhD program's six-year may request a program extension. Doctoral students may apply for a maximum of four one-year extensions. The first two extension requests require the approval of the graduate unit; the second two require the approval of both the graduate unit and SGS.

To seek an extension, complete a [Program Extension \(Current Regulations\) form \(PDF\)](#) and submit it to the PhD Director for approval, along with an explanation for the delay and evidence that the remaining degree requirements may be completed within the period of the extension request.

Final Program Extension Requests

Third or fourth (FINAL) program extension requests for doctoral students require additional approval from the School of Graduate Studies (SGS). To obtain this approval, the student, supervisor, and graduate chair / coordinator must provide additional information in a separate letter of support to SGS. This can be a single letter co-signed by all parties, or separate letters, that outline the following:

- a reflection on the progress to date, including progress in the previous extension periods.
- detailed plan or timeline for completion, a confirmation that the degree requirements can be met within one year of the final program extension, and

- a confirmation that the student has been made aware of support services that are available to help the student complete their thesis.

Once approved by the graduate unit, the graduate administrator will submit the form and supporting documents to SGS for final review and approval.

For more information see [Time Limits for Program Completion on the SGS Website](#).

2.7 Accommodations for Students with Disabilities or Medical Conditions

Graduate students who have a documented disability or medical condition may be eligible for an academic accommodation (which refers to any service, equipment, or special arrangement that is put in place to support students who are completing course work, doing field research, or preparing a dissertation or completing an oral exam).

Students are encouraged to contact [Accessibility Services Central Services](#) for more information. Students who are registered with Accessibility Services can also access drop-in advising hours at the School of Graduate Studies.

Students who require one or more program extensions should discuss your accommodation request with your Accessibility Advisor. If required, the student may submit a letter from the Accessibility Advisor to support a further program extension.

Students who receive an extension approval for more than one academic session should work with their supervisor and provide the PhD Program Director a progress update by the end of each session (i.e., Fall, Winter, and Summer).

Additional information is available in the [Graduate and Professional Program Student Handbook](#) (PDF).

2.8 Annual Progress Report

At the end of each program year student's program, at the end of the Winter session, the student and the supervisor collaborate to submit an Annual Progress Report (Appendix 5). The report is submitted to the PhD Program (phdprogram.fifsw@utoronto.ca). In some cases, a meeting may be arranged to discuss a student's progress and possible issues related to supervision, resources, and any other concerns. The student, the supervisor, or the PhD Program Director can initiate this meeting.

Students in Year 1 should identify and work with their supervisor to complete the sections of the Annual Progress Report that apply to Year 1 students. Year 1 students who have questions or have not identified their supervisor by the Annual Progress Report submission deadline should contact the PhD Program Director.

2.9 Program Termination or Program Withdrawal

A candidate for the PhD degree may be denied further registration in that program and will have the candidacy terminated at the end of the third year of registration if by that time, either of the following:

- the candidate has not completed all requirements for the degree exclusive of thesis research—including course requirements, language requirements, qualifying departmental examinations—i.e., Comprehensive Exam.
- the candidate does not have an approved thesis topic, supervisor, or supervisory committee.

Students may withdraw voluntarily from their programs at any point before the termination. A student may decide to withdraw from the program before the Chair/Director submits the recommendation to SGS for termination of registration or before the SGS Vice-Dean, Students, approves the Chair/Director's recommendation. In such cases, SGS will record the withdrawal on the student's academic record and transcript, and SGS will not act on the recommendation for termination of registration.

Students may appeal a decision to terminate their program by formally requesting a reconsideration or change to an official academic decision made by the University. For more information on academic appeals visit the [SGS website](#).

As program withdrawal is a voluntary action, it is a final decision and cannot be appealed

COMPREHENSIVE EXAM

3.1 Overview

The comprehensive examination is a pivotal milestone in a student's PhD journey, designed to assess their breadth and depth of knowledge in their chosen area of social work scholarship.

Successfully completing the Comprehensive Exam enables students to develop and demonstrate their capacity for independent critical analysis, research, and writing by showcasing the following:

- a) A comprehensive understanding of the broader research area related to their specialization.
- b) The relevance and potential contribution of their proposed dissertation topic to the field of social work.
- c) The ability to articulate an independent, critical perspective on the chosen area.

This critical assessment of theory and research serves as a foundation for formulating the research question(s) to be addressed in the dissertation.

NOTE: See additional details below regarding the submission timeline, procedures and guidelines for the Comprehensive Exam Proposal, the Annotated Reading List and Comprehensive Exam.

3.2 Guidelines for Completing the Comprehensive Exam

The Comprehensive Exam is typically a year-long endeavor, comprised of the following phases: 1) development of the comprehensive exam proposal in consultation with the thesis supervisor, 2) a take-home test that is written independently by the student, and 3) assessment of the exam with potential revisions, under the guidance of the thesis supervisor.

The guidelines below provide details on the requirements and procedures for preparing for and completing the Comprehensive Exam.

Overview of Comprehensive Exam Procedures

- [Completion of Comprehensive Exam Prerequisites](#)
- [Selection of Second Reader who will assess the exam with the supervisor](#)
- [Enrollment in SWK8000H](#)
- [Submission of the Comprehensive Exam Proposal and Annotated Bibliography](#)
- [Submission of the Comprehensive Exam for assessment](#)
- [Assessment of the Comprehensive Exam by the Supervisor and Second Reader](#)
- [Revision and Final Submission of the Final Comprehensive Exam](#)

Comprehensive Exam Prerequisites

Students must complete the following program requirements, before they are eligible to enroll in SWK8000H to complete the Comprehensive Exam:

- the First Year Doctoral Symposium
- the Comprehensive Exam Seminar (SWK 7000H)
- at least 9 of the 10 half-credit PhD course requirements

Second Reader Selection

- Prior to enrolling in SWK 8000H, the student must notify the PhD Program of their selection of the Second Reader (to be identified in consultation with the student's supervisor).
- The second reader provides a formal assessment of the final comprehensive exam paper and thus, must be a faculty member at FIFSW who is a full or associate member of the School of Graduate Studies (e.g., tenured, tenure-stream, teaching-stream, status-only, visiting, adjunct).
- The second reader should be selected based on their knowledge of the student's area of practice, policy, and/or research interests. Although it is not required, faculty who serve as a second assessor are often invited to be a member of the student's Supervisory Committee, as their involvement in the Comprehensive Exam process can support the student in the development of their thesis research.

NOTE: See Comprehensive Exam Supervisor and Second Reader Membership Form.

Enrolment in SWK8000H

- Students must enroll in SWK 8000H to take the Comprehensive Exam during the second or third semester of Year Two (e.g., Winter or Summer session).
- To enroll in the Comprehensive Exam, students must submit the completed and signed [SGS Add/Drop Form](#) AND the completed Comprehensive Exam Supervisor & Second Reader Membership Form to the attention of the [FIFSW Registrar](#).
- Once the enrollment has been approved by the School of Graduate Studies, the PhD Program Assistant will set up a Quercus shell for the student to submit the comprehensive exam proposal, annotated reading list, the comprehensive exam for assessment, and the final approved version of the comprehensive exam.

NOTE: The comprehensive exam period typically extends beyond the length of an academic session, thus, students may be required to submit a course work extension form, to provide additional time for the assessment and revision period.

Submission of the Comprehensive Exam Proposal & Annotated Reading List

- To prepare for the Comprehensive Exam, students work closely with their thesis supervisor to develop a Comprehensive Exam Proposal and Annotated Reading List, which will serve as a guideline for the Comprehensive exam.
- Students will have an opportunity to develop a draft of their comprehensive exam proposal in SWK 7000H during the fall of Year 2 with guidance from the course instructor and in consultation with the student's thesis supervisor.
- Receiving approval from the supervisor and submitting both a) the comprehensive exam proposal and b) annotated reading list marks the beginning of the independent period of the comprehensive exam.
- The second reader may provide feedback on the approved comprehensive exam proposal and annotated reading list, within two weeks of when they are submitted.

NOTE: See additional requirements for Comprehensive Exam Proposal below. See also policies for requesting coursework extensions or accommodations below.

Submission of the Comprehensive Exam

- Students will have a maximum of three months from the date they submit the approved comprehensive exam proposal, to complete the comprehensive exam paper.
- During the independent period of the exam, the supervisor and second reader may not provide further guidance on the scholarly writing or scope of research for the Comprehensive Exam.

Assessment of the Comprehensive Exam

- The supervisor and second reader will independently assess the Comprehensive Exam and submit their assessment within three weeks from the date they receive the exam from the PhD Program Office.

NOTE: See Comprehensive Exam assessment criteria and the Assessment of the Comprehensive Exam Form

Final Submission of the Comprehensive Exam

- The PhD Program Director will notify students of the Comprehensive Exam Results, with details regarding whether the exam “passed” or “failed” and if further edits or changes are required.
- Students who fail the Comprehensive Exam will be informed of the courses of action available to them, including the procedures for review, appeal, or retaking the exam.

3.3 Comprehensive Exam – Enrollment & Submission Timeline

The Comprehensive Exam is offered in Winter or Summer session of Year 2 in the PhD Program. All deadlines are 11:59 pm Eastern Standard Time on the designated date.

Winter 2025 – Comprehensive Exam Enrollment & Submission Dates

Dates	Activity
December 20, 2024	Enrollment deadline and submission requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADD/Drop form for SWK 8000H • Comprehensive Exam Supervisor & Second Reader form
January 20, 2025	Deadline to submit approved Comprehensive Exam Proposal And annotated reading list
April 21, 2025	Date to submit final Comprehensive Exam
May 16, 2025	Deadline for assessors to submit the evaluation of the Comprehensive Exam*
TBD	The deadline to submit final comp exam will be determined following the outcome of the assessment.

Summer 2025 – Comprehensive Exam Enrollment & Submission Dates

Deadline	Activity
April 14, 2025	Enrollment and submission requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ADD/Drop form for SWK 8000H - Comprehensive Exam Supervisor & Second Reader form
May 5, 2025	Date to submit approved Comprehensive Exam proposal AND annotated reading list
August 4, 2025	Date to submit final Comprehensive Exam
August 29, 2025	Deadline for assessors to submit the evaluation of the Comprehensive Exam*
TBD	The deadline to submit final comp exam will be determined following the outcome of the assessment.

3.4 Comprehensive Exam Proposal Requirements

The Comprehensive Exam Proposal serves as a structured plan that guides the student in conducting a thorough and focused critical analysis of a selected topic within social work. This proposal outlines the key elements and scope of the exam, helping the student to articulate a clear and coherent approach to the examination process.

Following the selection of a topic area and a preliminary review of the pertinent literature, the student develops a proposal for the Comprehensive Exam with an accompanying annotated reading list.

The suggested format of the Comprehensive Exam Proposal is as follows:

Comprehensive Exam Proposal – Outline

1. **Introduction:** Provide a clear statement of the issue, policy, or problem area that you plan to examine. Provide a brief overview of the selected topic. State your rationale for pursuing this topic of interest, relevance to social work practice, policy, and research, and provide an overview of your comprehensive exam. Include the specific scope, parameters, or factors that will be included in your critical analysis of the literature.
2. **Analyses of Theoretical Perspectives:** Provide a summary of the main concepts and/or theoretical perspectives that you plan to review and analyze. Provide a rationale for choosing these perspectives. Indicate what will be excluded from your critical analysis of theoretical perspectives and why.
3. **Analyses of Research Literature and Methodology:** Provide a summary of the main research studies related to your chosen topic of interest. Provide a rationale for the research studies that will be included in your analyses. Also indicate the areas of and scope of research literature that will be included and excluded and why.
4. **Discussion and Conclusions:** Briefly indicate the theoretical model that will emerge from the critical analyses of the theoretical and research literatures. Outline and explain your planned approach to the discussion and conclusions that will validate your theoretical model. Indicate implications for social work practice, policy, and research.

Format and Length of the Comprehensive Exam Proposal

The Comprehensive Exam Proposal should be no longer than 10-12 pages, excluding references. The text should be formatted according to Publication Manual of the American

Psychological Association, Seventh Edition (APA 7th Edition) guidelines, with 12-point font, double-spaced, and left-justified, with 1” margins on all sides.

Annotated Reading List Requirements

The student will submit an annotated reading list with a minimum of 30 empirical and theoretical articles or books that are relevant to the topic of their Comprehensive Exam. Students are expected to begin to work on this list in the Fall session of the second year, while working on the draft of the Comprehensive Exam Proposal during the Comprehensive Exam Seminar (SWK7000H).

The annotated reading list should consist of three sections:

1. Works related directly to the topic of the Comprehensive Exam, its significance, and other relevant background information.
2. Works related to the main theoretical perspectives in the Comprehensive Exam.
3. Works related to the empirical studies in the Comprehensive Exam.

Using annotations, the student will explain, in one paragraph, how each item on the reading list is related to one of the three sections above and how the reading will be used in preparation of the Comprehensive Exam.

Approval of the Comprehensive Exam Proposal and Annotated Reading List

Students are expected to work closely with their supervisor to develop and revise the comprehensive exam proposal and annotated reading list, until the supervisor grants approval that the proposal and reading list are complete.

Students may wish to consult with the second reader for their comprehensive exam, prior to submitting the final approved proposal, however, the second reader is not formally involved in the approval process at this stage.

After the student has submitted the approved version of the comprehensive exam proposal and reading list, the second reader is provided up to two weeks to provide any further feedback that may assist the student in completing the comprehensive exam.

After this two-week period, however, neither the supervisor nor the second reader is permitted to provide further feedback to the student as they develop and write the Comprehensive Exam (i.e. what theories to include, structure of the paper, or selection of empirical research).

3.5 Comprehensive Exam Requirements and Guidelines

The Comprehensive Exam is due within **three** months of the submission of the approved Comprehensive Exam Proposal and annotated reading list.

The objectives, scope, and structure of the Comprehensive Exam must align with the approved outline developed for the Comprehensive Exam Proposal. While the Comprehensive Exam should heavily draw upon the annotated reading list, the student may include reading beyond what is covered in the list.

The Comprehensive Exam should include the following:

1. The introduction of the final paper followed by a logical ordering of the reviewed literature.
2. The synthesis and critical analyses of both theoretical and research perspectives of the problem, presented in a coherent, concise fashion.
3. Evidence throughout the paper of the relevance and developed arguments for advancing knowledge in the field of the social work profession and social welfare.
4. In the discussion section of the paper, the student articulates a theoretical model, theoretical framework, or conceptual model based on their critical analyses of the literature.
5. The conclusion section provides direction for future study of the problem area.

Format and Length of the Comprehensive Exam

The Comprehensive Exam should be **no longer than 40-50 pages**, excluding references. The text should be formatted according to APA **7th Edition** guidelines, with 12-point font, double-spaced, and left-justified, with 1" margins on all sides.

In addition, the title page of the Comprehensive Exam **must include** the following statement:

"This Comprehensive Exam is an independent piece of work submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements to be met prior to formal approval of a doctoral proposal for a doctoral thesis in social work."

The Comprehensive Exam should be carefully edited prior to submission. The student are encouraged to work with the [Health Sciences Writing Centre](#), or may engage an editor for this purpose.

Submission of the Comprehensive Exam

The Comprehensive Exam is due on the specified deadline. The student will submit the final version of the Comprehensive Exam by uploading it on University of Toronto's learning management platform, Quercus, by 11:59 PM in Eastern Time.

- **Winter 2025 Session Deadline:** Monday, April 21, 2025
- **Summer 2025 Session Deadline:** Monday, August 4, 2025

Plagiarism Detection Tool

Students are required to submit the comprehensive exam proposal, annotated bibliography and the comprehensive exam to the University's plagiarism detection tool (i.e. Turnitin) for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their work to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).

Students can upload their papers to Turnitin as many times as they wish to review their work before submitting a final version to the two assessors and the PhD Program Director. In doing so, students allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they are used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. Please notify the PhD Program office, when your comprehensive exam is reading for assessment.

Use of Generative AI including ChatGPT

Students who plan to use generative AI tools in researching or writing their comprehensive exam must seek and document in writing unambiguous approval for the planned uses in advance from their supervisor. Unauthorized use of generative AI tools for scholarly work at the University of Toronto may be considered an offence under the [Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#), and research misconduct as defined in the [Policy on Ethical Conduct in Research](#) and the [Framework to Address Allegations of Research Misconduct](#).

3.6 Assessment of the Comprehensive Exam

The supervisor and the second reader will provide the evaluation results and assessment, reports within 3 weeks from the time of submission of the Comprehensive Exam unless otherwise specified.

The PhD Program Director serves as the Comprehensive Exam coordinator and oversees the process and implementation. The PhD Program Director assigns the final standing of credit (CR) or no-credit (NCR) after the supervisor confirms that the student has completed the requirements of the Comprehensive Exam.

The assessment criteria for the comprehensive exam include the following (Appendix 7):

1. The logical development and presentation of the salient aspects of the topic selected.
2. The selection and use of relevant theoretical literature from a variety of knowledge areas and/or disciplines.
3. The critical assessment of related research literature.
4. The analysis and synthesis of conceptual material.
5. The articulation of a theoretical model which integrates the salient issues identified through the critical analysis of the literature.
6. Quality and organization of writing.
7. Relevance to social work practice, policy, and research.

Possible Results of the Comprehensive Exam

Assessment of the Comprehensive Exam is on a “pass/fail” basis.

- Pass without changes
- Pass with minor revisions
- Pass with major revisions
- Fail

Pass without changes.

If the student receives an assessment of passed “without changes” from both assessors, they have successfully completed the Comprehensive Exam. The student must submit the final version as a PDF to the PhD Program Director, who will submit the standing “CR” upon the receipt of the final PDF copy.

Pass with minor or major revisions.

If one or both of the assessors evaluate the Comprehensive Exam as passed with minor or major revisions, the PhD Program Director will notify the student in writing that the student has passed the comprehensive exam with conditions, and that they must complete the revisions within the respective revision timeframes.

- Pass with minor revisions – Revisions are due within **3 weeks** from receiving the notification
- Pass with major revisions – Revisions are due within **8 weeks** from receiving the notification

The student should work with their supervisor during the revision process and receive the supervisor's approval prior to submitting the final approved version as a PDF to the PhD Program Assistant and cc the PhD Program Director, who will submit the standing "CR" upon the receipt of the final PDF copy.

In these two scenarios, the student must file an Extension to Complete Coursework form if they cannot complete the revisions and have an unconditionally approved Comprehensive Exam paper by the time the grades are due for SWK8000H. Students will receive a temporary non-grade report (SDF; Standing Deferred) for SWK8000H when the extension request is approved by the PhD Director. Following the submission of the revisions, the supervisor is required to send an email message to the ACA confirming all changes have been approved. The student will send the final PDF copy to the PhD Program Office, who will catalogue the paper. The PhD Program Director will notify the student in writing that the student has successfully met the Comprehensive Exam requirement, and the PhD Program Director will submit the standing "CR" upon the receipt of the final PDF copy.

Students who fail to submit the final, unconditionally approved version of the Comprehensive Exam to the PhD Program Office following the above assessment options will not receive a credit and will not be permitted to proceed to the Thesis.

Fail

If the student does not pass the Comprehensive Exam (i.e., both assessors indicate a failing evaluation), the student will receive the assessors' reports and an NCR grade for SWK 8000H.

The student will have the opportunity to retake SWK 8000H in the following academic session. Students are encouraged to work with their supervisor, to revise the Comprehensive Exam Proposal as needed. Students may work with the same second reader, or elect to change the second reader at this time. The student is required to enroll in SWK8000H and go through the steps to complete the comprehensive exam as outlined above, the comprehensive exam, before the end of their third year in the program.

For students who write the exam a second time, if one or both assessors do not recommend approval on the second exam, the student will receive an NCR for SWK8000H and will be notified in writing by the PhD Program Director. The Faculty will submit a request to SGS for termination of the student's registration for those who receive an NCR twice for SWK8000H Comprehensive Exam.

3.7 Comprehensive Exam Grading

This is a credit (CR)/no credit (NCR) exam. The grade standing will be submitted by the PhD Program Director. **The credit will only be given when the final approved version of the Comprehensive Exam is submitted to the ACA.** Students who pass the Comprehensive Exam but fail to submit the final version within the respective timeframes (i.e., 3 weeks for minor revisions, and 8 weeks for major revisions) to the ACA will not receive a credit.

The temporary non-grade report (SDF; Standing Deferred) will be assigned to those students who have an approved course extension. Students who are unable to complete the Comprehensive Exam during the extension period will receive an NCR for the course by the PhD Director unless there is an approved second coursework extension.

The Faculty will submit a request to SGS for termination of registration in the PhD Program for students who do not complete the requirements for SWK8000H after two attempts. The Faculty will also submit a request to SGS for termination of registration for students who do not take SWK8000H by the end of the third year unless there is an approved Extension to Achieve Candidacy.

3.8 Comprehensive Exam Extension Policies

Student should communicate with the PhD Program Director about extension requests for the submission of the comprehensive exam proposal and annotated reading list, the comprehensive exam, or revisions to the exam in advance of assigned due date and agree upon the extension length.

Coursework extensions can be requested for:

- Non-disability related reasons: sudden/acute/temporary illness; emergency situation; religious observance
- Disability related reasons: accommodations approved by Accessibility Services

For detailed information on extension requests submitted within vs. beyond the academic session, please go to the FIFSW Website for [Coursework Extensions/Late Assignments](#)

3.9 Academic Appeals

Graduate students registered in the School of Graduate Studies (SGS), may appeal substantive or procedural academic matters, including grades, evaluation of comprehensive examinations and other program requirements; decisions about the student's continuation in any program; or concerning any other decision with respect to the application of academic regulations and requirements to a student ([SGS General Regulations 11.1](#)).

The purpose of Academic Appeals is to provide the student with a process of inquiry regarding grades received on assignments or exams, while respecting the academic responsibility of the assessors. Students may appeal substantive or procedural academic matters. These procedures do not cover instances of academic dishonesty, academic misconduct, discrimination or harassment (see for example [Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#)).

For guidelines on how to submit an academic appeal for the assessment of the comprehensive exam, please refer to the [FIFSW Website for Academic Appeals](#).

THE THESIS

4.1 Thesis Overview

The Thesis is an original piece of scholarly research on a topic that has been selected by the student and approved by the supervisor and the student's Supervisory Committee. The thesis is a major undertaking that reflects the highest standards of scholarship and that makes a significant contribution to knowledge and practice in the field of social welfare and the profession of social work.

The organization of the entire PhD program (required courses, elective courses, and Comprehensive Exam) is intended to guide the student in pursuing areas of social work theory and research, which will provide the background for the formulation of the Thesis Proposal. The student works closely with the supervisor in selecting a thesis topic that can be feasibly researched within a one- to two-year time frame.

The Thesis Proposal is generally developed in consultation with the supervisor and is subsequently submitted to the Supervisory Committee to their review and feedback. Once the thesis proposal is ready for formal approval, the supervisor convenes a meeting for the Thesis Proposal Defense. Students will then advance to candidacy once they have successfully completed of the Thesis Proposal Defense.

Once approved, the student carries out the proposed thesis research with the support and guidance of the supervisor and the Supervisory Committee. When completed, the Supervisory Committee approves the thesis and then an application for its defense at an Oral Examination is made through the office of the PhD Program Director. Completion and successful defense of the Thesis are required before the doctoral degree can be conferred.

When the Thesis is completed and has met the approval of the Supervisory Committee, the student proceeds to the Oral Examination that is administered by the School of Graduate Studies. Copies of the completed dissertations are housed in the FIFSW and may be signed out. Please see the Administrative Coordinator, Admissions and Programs (ACA), Angela Umbrello, for assistance in this regard.

4.2 Thesis Proposal Guidelines

The thesis topic follows from the literature research conducted for the Comprehensive Exam. This means that most students develop a feasible study question in conjunction with the analysis of the research literature examined for the Comprehensive Exam. Consultation with the supervisor enables the student to refine the question and prepare a Thesis Proposal.

In developing the thesis study question and method(s), the student should give careful attention to the time required to complete the project. The student should estimate that 3 to 4 months may be necessary to develop the proposal, select and pretest data collection instruments, obtain human ethics approval, and negotiate suitable sites for sample selection and implementation of the data collection procedures. A draft of the Thesis proposal is submitted to the supervisor for feedback and revision prior to convening a meeting of the Supervisory Committee for review and approval of the Thesis Proposal. **The supervisor is expected to provide feedback on the draft of the Thesis Proposal within a 2-week time frame.**

Thesis Proposal Format Options

Students must clearly indicate which of the following Thesis Formats they will use in the Thesis Proposal.

1. A Traditional Dissertation (i.e., a monograph with chapters)

OR

2. Three Paper Dissertation (i.e. with three publishable quality journal articles)

The student should specify the selection of the thesis format in the Thesis Proposal. Each option is described in the next section. **The proposal should not exceed 20 pages.** The text should be formatted according to APA 7th Edition guidelines, with 12-point font, double-spaced, and left-justified, with 1” margins on all sides.

In addition, the title page of the Thesis Proposal **must include** the following statement:

“This Thesis Proposal is an independent piece of work submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements to be met for a doctoral thesis in social work.”

Thesis Proposal Outline

1. Title: The thesis title should give a clear indication of the topic being studied.
2. The Problem: A description of the study problem includes specification of the study question(s), justification for their selection vis-à-vis previous research, and the potential relevance of addressing these questions for the advancement of social work knowledge.
3. Theoretical Framework and Background Information: The major theoretical premises that underlie the problem are articulated, and the salient concepts are defined. Following a concise, critical review of the theoretical and research literature, a

theoretical model or framework is proposed in support of the selected research question.

4. **Design and Methods:** Research questions and/or hypotheses are formulated clearly such that all study constructs and/or variables and their anticipated relationships are specified. The selected research design is detailed (survey, archival, descriptive, interpretive, experimental, etc.). The reasons for selecting the design are given, including its merits and limitations. Where applicable, the operational definitions of each study variables are defined.

Participant and the sampling procedures are specified including the inclusion/exclusion criteria for study participants, justification for selecting the population, or database, from which the sample is to be drawn. Sample size, or extent of database, is specified and justified.

Data collection methods are described in detail. Interview schedules, procedures for analyses of databases, coding methods, recording methods, instruments, or any other proposed data collection techniques are to be described, including the psychometric properties where applicable.

5. **Data Analysis:** The methods of analyses appropriate for the study design are described. The specified procedures are consistent with the nature and quality of the data. Pilot testing of the analytic procedures may be required when these procedures have not been previously tested. The results of the pilot study are reported, including the identification of potential problems.
6. **References:** Only items cited in the text are included.
7. **Work Plan:** At the end of the proposal the student attaches an addendum, which provides a detailed work plan, including estimates of the time needed to complete each phase of the proposed research.

4.3 Thesis Proposal Defense

The supervisor, as the Chair of the Committee, and the Supervisory Committee members have the responsibility of adjudicating the merits of the Thesis Proposal. The student proceeds to the collection of data and preparation of the thesis only after approval of the Thesis Proposal has been obtained from the Supervisory Committee.

Thesis Proposal Defense Meeting

Following revisions of the Thesis Proposal based on feedback from the supervisor, a Thesis Proposal defense meeting of the Supervisory Committee is convened. The student submits copies of the Thesis Proposal to each member of the Committee at least 2 weeks prior to

the proposal defense. The student attaches to each copy of the proposal the Thesis Proposal Assessment Criteria Form (Appendix 8).

The Thesis Proposal defense meeting is required in adjudicating the merits of the student's Thesis Proposal. To obtain candidacy, students are required to complete their Thesis Proposal defense by the end of the third year. The following criteria will be considered for assessing the Thesis Proposal during the proposal defense:

- To what extent is the research question focused and researchable?
- To what extent has a coherent and relevant theoretical model been developed in support of the research question?
- To what extent are the design and methods appropriate and clearly articulated?
 - Are the sampling strategies and other sources of information well thought out and appropriate?
 - Are the information-collecting strategies clearly stated, including psychometric properties where appropriate?
 - Are the planned analyses of the collected information clearly outlined and appropriate?
- Is the proposal work plan feasible?

During the meeting, the student is expected to give a brief summary of the Thesis Proposal to the committee and respond to questions raised. Based on the assessment of the written proposal and the student's responses to these questions, the committee makes specific recommendations as to corrections, modifications, or substantial revisions.

The supervisory committee members record the recommendation on the Thesis Proposal Recommendation Form (Appendix 10). The supervisor writes a Summary Report of the Committee's review of the Thesis Proposal addressing each of the assessment criteria.

Final Submission of Thesis Proposal

The supervisor completes the Summary Report of the Supervisory Committee's review of the Thesis Proposal. The Summary Report is appended to the completed Thesis Proposal Recommendation Form and copies are sent to the student, each committee member, and the PhD Program Director. The PhD Program Director forwards the reports to the Administrative Coordinator, Admissions and Programs (ACA), for recording on ACORN and filing in the student file.

Possible results of the Supervisory Committee's review of the Thesis Proposal include:

- **Approved** __Without changes
 __With minor corrections
 __With minor modifications
- **Not Approved**

If the Thesis Proposal is approved, the student makes corrections or modifications to the proposal as recommended by the Supervisory Committee and submits a copy to the supervisor, each committee member, and the PhD Program Director. Following the initial notification of the approval status, students who receive “Approved with Minor Corrections” are required to submit the final copy within 1 month, and those who receive “Approved with Minor Modifications” are required to submit the final copy within 3 months.

If the Thesis Proposal is not approved and major revisions have been recommended, the student revises the proposal accordingly. The Supervisory Committee is reconvened, and a second adjudication of the proposal proceeds as described above. When final approval has been obtained, the student proceeds with data collection.

4.4 Thesis Format

The format for the title page, acknowledgments, abstract, and table of contents is consistent with a standard set by the University. The title page **must include** the following statement:

*“A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy”*

Traditional Dissertation

For the main body of the Traditional Dissertation, the sequencing of the chapters follows the following format set for the Thesis Proposal:

1. Introduction (includes statement of problem)
2. Review of Background Literature (theoretical and empirical)
3. Design and Methods
4. Findings
5. Discussion (includes relevance to Social Work)
6. References
7. Appendices
8. Style for Citations, References, Headings and Tables

For citing published work in the body of the thesis students are to use the format prescribed by the APA 7th Edition Manual. The “Expression of Ideas” and the “Editorial Style” chapters of the APA Manual will be helpful for arriving at a standard usage of terms and punctuation style. The APA Manual specifies five levels of headings which should be followed for formatting headings in the thesis. Also, students are to use the APA Manual for the format of tables and figures. Tables and figures may be included in the text or may be

appended at the end of the manuscript. The reference list is to be prepared according to the APA style.

Students writing a thesis using historical research methods should follow the format recommended in The Chicago Manual of Style. **In addition to following the guidelines of the specified manuals for formatting the thesis, it is essential that the student follow The School of Graduate Studies' [guidelines for submission of ETDs](#) (Electronic Theses and Dissertations).**

Three Paper Dissertation

The three paper dissertation option allows students to write three related papers in a given topic or area of interest in which they have conducted research as required for the PhD program. While each paper is a stand-alone piece of scholarly work, containing its own literature review and associated article components, the three independent pieces, taken together, form a cohesive exploration of the specific topic area under study. Papers may use the same data set (to explore different questions or apply different methods) or different datasets. The introduction and conclusion sections of the dissertation describe how each of the papers fits together. Conclusions and implications that are common across the three papers can be described in the dissertation introduction and conclusion.

Guiding Principles for the Three Paper Dissertation

The three-paper dissertation is an alternative to the traditional format for those students who would find it a benefit. The three-paper option is based on the same fundamental principles of student independent work and scholarly rigor. The student's committee has the major responsibility for maintaining the rigor of the dissertation and for negotiating issues as they arise. They are to determine the content and quality of each of the papers and the dissertation as a whole.

Three Paper Thesis Guidelines

1. Students should specify in their proposal that they are choosing the three-paper option.
2. The three-paper dissertation needs to be approved by the supervisor and committee, taking into account the kind of work the student is proposing and the best way of presenting and organizing the results that will be produced in the dissertation research.
3. The dissertation should be comprised of three papers.
 - a. The dissertation must include an abstract that synthesizes the papers (Chapters 2, 3, 4), as well as an introduction (Chapter 1) and a conclusion (Chapter 5).

- b. The papers should form a cohesive body of work that supports a theme or themes that are expressed clearly in the introduction of the dissertation.
 - c. The need for three papers (as opposed to just two) should be clear and approved by the dissertation committee, and not merely represent minor variations of a work that would be more appropriately reported in just one or two papers.
4. The literature review for each paper is distinct and highlights a unique aspect within a topic area. That said, a certain amount of overlap is acceptable. For example, portions of the literature review may need to be cited in the various papers because it delineates the entire historical background of the study's focal topic. Redundancy can be carefully reduced by citing one's own work. However, self-plagiarism – reusing one's own previously written work or data in a 'new' written product without letting the reader know that this material has appeared elsewhere – is prohibited.
5. The introduction should function as the cord that weaves the three manuscripts together and briefly describes, for the reader, their 'collective meaning' and 'combined contribution' to the field. It should include:
- a. A definition or statement of the problem.
 - b. The importance of the problem (i.e., why it is worth researching, why it matters to the field of social work).
 - c. The theoretical foundation(s) supporting the problem/issue.
 - d. An overview of the important literature (overview, because each paper will have its own unique literature review).
 - e. The research questions in each paper.
 - f. The methodology to be used to answer each question in each paper.

NOTE: The dissertation proposal should reflect these items as well, though the introduction may contain far more detail.

6. At least two of the papers should be based on data that are analyzed by the student. If the third paper is conceptual in nature or based on a synthesis of the literature that is not a systematic review, it must be connected to the theme or themes of the dissertation without overlapping heavily with the contents of either of the other papers. Whether the extent of any overlap is excessive will be determined by the student's dissertation committee.
7. The conclusion chapter should present/discuss research imperatives, or knowledge gaps, not visible when each manuscript is considered individually, describe in detail the 3 papers' combined contribution' to the field, and should articulate an agenda for

future research on the issues addressed in the dissertation. The conclusion (Chapter 5) will include:

- a. Summary of the dissertation's major findings
- b. Limitations
- c. Discussion (including implications for social work)
- d. Recommendations.

The conclusion chapter 'ties' everything together and helps the reader see how the three manuscripts, taken together, contribute to the knowledge base regarding the problem. In both the introduction and the conclusion, the student also will present and discuss linkages (i.e., similarities and differences) among the separate manuscripts that are included in the dissertation, striving as much as possible to present the document as representative of a coherent body of work.

8. All papers must represent work undertaken while the student is enrolled in the PhD program, and each must be approved by the committee at the time of the student's proposal defense. It is acceptable for a student to include a previously published journal article in the three paper dissertation, as long as (a) all authorship requirements in our School's guidelines are adhered to; (b) the dissertation committee agrees to the manuscript's inclusion as an integrated and substantial chapter of the dissertation; and (c) the article was not submitted for publication prior to the dissertation proposal.
9. As with any other dissertation, students must submit their manuscripts in accordance with the SGS guidelines. If an article is published after the dissertation proposal is accepted and prior to the dissertation defense, the student will be responsible for securing necessary permissions to use the article as part of their dissertation from the copyright holder and other authors.
10. Students should decide as early as possible, in concert with their dissertation chair, whether to pursue the three-paper format. However, they may switch from one format to the other at any time provided that their dissertation committee approves the switch.

4.5 Thesis Co-Authorship Guidelines

Co-authorship of papers in a dissertation raises several serious issues that must be addressed by the dissertation committee in a manner that both protects the student's intellectual contribution and also ensures that the student is conducting their own work.

1. Absolutely no student co-authors are allowed. A paper can be submitted for only one dissertation. Limiting authorship in this way ensures that this is the case.

2. While students are permitted to consider adding a co-author to one or more papers, they are not required or particularly encouraged to do so. For example, members of the committee should not expect to be co-authors on any of the papers. Some examples of acceptable co-authorship are:
 - Use of data generated by a Principal Investigator.
 - Community members that, as part of a process of inclusion in the research, are secondary authors.
3. In the case of co-authorship on any individual paper within the dissertation, the student must indicate the percentage of effort and description of the role played by each author in the introductory chapter to the dissertation. Students must also gain prior authorization from their supervisor and committee members before pursuing the option of including a co-author in any of the three papers of their dissertation.
4. With the exception of #1 above, the Faculty will defer to the judgment of the dissertation committee as long as there is cohesiveness of the three-paper dissertation with sufficient explanation as needed regarding the student's contributions in the case of co-authorship on a given paper.

4.6 The Final Oral Examination

Candidates complete a thesis that constitutes a distinct contribution to knowledge in the field of social work and must be based on research conducted while registered for the PhD Program. **Copies of the completed Thesis must be submitted to all final oral examination committee members and to SGS at least 8 weeks before the candidate's final oral examination to allow enough time for the appraisers to review the Thesis and provide feedback.** The candidate shall successfully defend the Thesis at a final oral examination which is administered by SGS. The student can refer to Guidelines for Review of Doctoral Dissertations (Appendix 12).

When the Supervisory Committee has approved a final draft of the thesis, the Supervisory Committee Chair (supervisor) arranges with the PhD Examinations Office of the School of Graduate Studies a date and time for the Oral Examination. This request must be made at least 8 weeks prior to the desired examination date. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to decide, in consultation with the student, which scholar is appropriate as external examiner for the oral examination. See SGS website for regulations.

NOTE: In August 2006, the School of Graduate Studies stated that only defense committees consisting of five members will be approved; four persons must be present at the time of defense (either in-person or via zoom).

The Final Oral Examination Committee Must Include:

- Up to three members of the supervising committee.
- One to three examiners who have not been closely involved in the supervision of the Thesis. Those eligible would include the external appraiser, members of the graduate faculty of the University in other departments, and other faculty members from the candidate's Department.
- A non-voting Chair appointed by SGS. SGS will provide the Department with the name of a suitable Chair and will notify the Chair by letter.

The Examination Committee, exclusive of the Chair, will not normally be composed entirely of members of one department.

Submission of the Thesis for Assessment

The student submits an electronic version of the Thesis in both Word and PDF to the Administrative Coordinator, Admissions and Programs (ACA), **who will distribute the thesis by email to each of the Final Oral Examination Committee members at least 8 weeks in advance of the examination date.**

Appointment of a Final Oral Examination Committee

With the exception of the External Appraiser, each member of the Final Oral Examination committee must hold a Graduate Faculty Membership at the University of Toronto.

1. The Examination Committee shall consist of four to six voting members. Because quorum is four voting members, SGS recommends including at least five voting members to ensure the exam proceeds as scheduled. The Committee must include:
 - a. At least one member, but not more than three members, of the Candidate's supervising committee.
 - b. At least two examiners who have not been closely involved in the supervision of the Thesis. Those eligible include: the External Appraiser, members of the faculty appointed to the Candidate's graduate unit, and members of the faculty appointed to other graduate units of the University.
 - c. A non-voting Chair appointed by SGS. The Doctoral Examinations Office will inform the graduate unit when a Chair for the examination has been appointed. Note that the graduate unit is not required to include the name of the Chair of the Examination Committee on the Examination Committee Nomination Form, which the graduate unit should submit to SGS as soon as possible by requesting approval on ACORN.

2. The Examination Committee may also include up to two non-voting members. These members must also be listed on the nomination form and approved by the Vice-Dean, Programs.

NOTE: Proposed exceptions to the above must be approved by the Vice-Dean, Programs.

4.7 Producing and Submitting Your Electronic Thesis

After your thesis supervisor has approved your final thesis, see [SGS guidelines](#) for producing and submitting an Electronic Thesis/Dissertation (EDT) to the [digital library repository](#).

Publishing Your Thesis

For information about publishing the dissertation, please refer to the [University of Toronto Libraries Guide on “Publishing Your Thesis.”](#)

In select cases, students may choose to embargo the thesis to postpone distribution and publication for a period of up to two years from the date of acceptance of the thesis. For information about embargo, please see the [University of Toronto Libraries Guide on “Thesis Embargo.”](#)

SUPERVISION

5.1 Interim Academic Advisors

Upon admission, students are assigned an Interim Academic Advisor. The Interim Academic Advisor is not expected to become the student's supervisor but will meet with the students to:

1. Assist them in course selection.
2. Connect them with other faculty and students with similar interests; and,
3. Identify faculty who might serve as potential supervisor, or supervisory committee members.

5.2 Thesis Supervisor

Selection

Students must select a supervisor by **June 1st of the first year in the program** and notify in PhD Annual Report, the, the PhD Program, PhD Program Director, and the Administrative Coordinator, Admissions and Programs (ACA) of this selection. Please note that it is the student's responsibility to consult with the supervisor to design a study plan and fulfill the program requirements.

Expectations of Supervisor

When a faculty member assumes the responsibilities of supervising a doctoral student, it is expected that the supervisor will be available for the duration of the student's program, including during the final Thesis Oral Examination process. This means that the supervisor is accessible and responsive to student's needs and makes arrangements for supervisory tasks during sabbatical or research leaves.

The matching process seeks to maximize opportunities for the student and aims for a good and viable relationship for the faculty. This match is not binding, however. As students become involved in designing their individual programs, some shifts in areas of interest may take place and thus a shift to a new supervisor may be necessary. Similarly, other considerations such as personality, work style, and shifts in methodology may dictate the selection of an alternate supervisor. The student and supervisor may wish to involve the PhD Program Director to facilitate this transition. In any case, the Administrative Coordinator, Admissions and Programs (ACA) is to be informed of the change in supervisor and a record of the transition is to be placed in the student's file and recorded on ACORN.

PhD students and graduate faculty supervisors are expected to refer to these guidelines for information about program requirements and procedures for addressing each component of the PhD program, e.g., course requirements, Comprehensive Exam Proposal, Comprehensive Exam, Thesis Proposal, Thesis, the Final Oral Examination, and the expected timelines for the completion of each of these components.

Reporting procedures by both the student and the supervisor form an important part of the supervisory process. Following each meeting with the supervisor, the student is expected to write a brief report on the decisions made during this meeting. A copy of this report is sent to the supervisor.

For the Thesis Proposal, the supervisor will complete a report on the Supervisory Committee's deliberations using the format outlined in this PhD Manual. A copy of the report is sent to the student, committee members, and to the Administrative Coordinator, Admissions and Programs (ACA) for inclusion in the student's file.

Supervision includes:

- In consultation with the student, developing a suitable timetable for the completion of all the requirements of the PhD program.
- Assisting the student with course selection.
- Helping the student with developing a focus for the Comprehensive Exam.
- Assisting the student with the selection of a Thesis research topic which can be completed within the timetable of the PhD program.
- Assessing and supplying constructive responses to student's concerns and/or material submitted.
- Responding to student's submissions within specified timeframes.
- Assisting students with applications for research scholarships.
- Encouraging students to present papers at conferences and to publish articles in the appropriate refereed academic journals; and,
- Introducing the student to members of the academic community involved in similar research areas within and outside the University.

Responsibilities of the Student

The student chooses a supervisor on the basis of research interests that are compatible with the supervisor.

For incoming students and those who have not yet advanced to the Thesis stage, the student is expected to:

- Establish a timetable for the completion of the program in accordance with the guidelines of PhD Program.
- Use these guidelines to understand all the requirements of the PhD program, including the number of course credits, required courses and electives.

- Consult with the supervisor when choosing elective courses and deciding on a topic of research.
- Develop an in-depth understanding of the Comprehensive Proposal and Paper.
- Become familiar with the Thesis Proposal, Thesis completion and Final Oral Examination guidelines.
- In collaboration with the supervisor, structure the membership of a Supervisory Committee.
- Discuss any concerns regarding participation and progress in the program.
- Initiate contact with the supervisor, at minimum, once each session for the duration of the program.
- Prepare for meetings with the supervisor by organizing materials and a general outline of what the student wishes to discuss.
- Maintain a record of the focus of the discussion and decisions made at each meeting.
- Prepare a report on the meeting and send a copy of the report to the supervisor following each meeting (can be used for Annual Progress Report); and,
- Make a concerted effort to present her/his research at conferences and publish articles in the appropriate refereed academic journals.

After the student advances to the Thesis stage, the student is expected to:

- Prepare materials for distribution to the Supervisory Committee at least 2 weeks prior to each meeting.
- Set an agenda for the Supervisory Committee meetings in collaboration with the Supervisor and provide all committee members with a draft copy of the minutes of the meeting within a reasonable time frame following the meeting.
- Be responsive to the mutually agreed upon recommendations of the supervisor and Supervisory Committee with regard to the design and implementation of the thesis research.
- Submit draft chapters to Supervisory Committee members at least 2 weeks prior to the date on which feedback is expected; and,
- Allow sufficient time for the Supervisory Committee Members to read all parts of the Thesis in its final form.

Please note that the final review of the Thesis takes a minimum of 3 to 4 weeks. If this review is successful and the Thesis is approved, the student will advance to the Final Oral Examination stage. It is the student's responsibility to proofread the final copy of the completed Thesis, and the student is permitted to engage an editor for this purpose.

5.3 Supervisory Committee

Appointment

The School of Graduate Studies requires that from the commencement of thesis supervision, all PhD students should have a Supervisory Committee in place, and that committees meet with the students at least once a year thereafter. The supervisor selects members of the Supervisory Committee and can consult with the student regarding how to best resource the student's committee. Committee members are chosen on the basis of their known expertise in the student's area of research. Up to four members can be selected for the student's Supervisory Committee.

As stated earlier, the second member is usually the faculty member who has earlier assessed the Comprehensive Exam. A third member is chosen from outside the Faculty but must be a Member of the School of Graduate Studies of the University of Toronto. It is possible to appoint a committee member from another university who has similar graduate faculty status at the committee member's university. In this instance, the supervisor obtains a copy of the outside member's CV and forwards it to the Administrative Coordinator, Admissions and Programs (ACA). The CV is reviewed by the internal FIFSW, comprised of the Dean, Associate Dean, Academic, and PhD Program Director. If approved, the individual is recommended to SGS for a three-year Graduate Faculty appointment. The Chair of the Supervisory Committee is to record all committee meetings, dates, and times. The minutes of the supervisory meetings should be included in the Annual Progress Report (Appendix 5). This information must now be recorded on ACORN and is tracked by SGS.

When all committee members have been selected and have agreed to serve, the supervisor completes the Supervisory Committee Membership form (Appendix 9), a copy of which is forwarded to the PhD Program Director and subsequently placed in the student's file.

Responsibilities of the Supervisory Committee

The Supervisory Committee is responsible for the assessment and approval of the student's Thesis Proposal. The student consults with the supervisor as well as the committee members during the preparation and various revisions of the Thesis Proposal. When a final version of the Thesis Proposal has been produced, the student distributes copies, along with the copies of the Thesis Proposal Assessment Criteria Form (Appendix 8), to the supervisor and each of the Supervisory Committee members. These will be reviewed prior to convening a Supervisory Committee meeting to discuss the proposal.

The supervisor assumes the responsibility for arranging this meeting and chairs the meeting during which the student responds to committee members' questions about the proposal. Where necessary the committee members make recommendations for specific revisions to the proposal. If the revisions are considered to be minor corrections or modifications, the committee may approve the proposal without reconvening a meeting. If

the revisions are considered major, then the proposal is revised by the student and redistributed to the committee members for a second review. A second meeting is convened for final approval of the proposal.

It is the responsibility of the Supervisory Committee Chair (the supervisor) to prepare a *Summary Report* of the Supervisory Committee's discussion that includes the specific recommendations made to the student. The Supervisory Committee Chair is also responsible for the completion of the Thesis Proposal Recommendation Form. Copies of the Summary Report and the completed Thesis Proposal Recommendation form are distributed to the student, the committee members, and the PhD Program Director. **It is the responsibility of the student to distribute to all committee members a copy of the final revised and approved copy of the Thesis Proposal.**

The Supervisory Committee is convened by the Chair (supervisor) to meet with the student to discuss the progress. **These meetings occur, at minimum, once each academic session.** The student provides progress reports to the committee members prior to the meeting and comes prepared to discuss progress and problems with the thesis research. The committee members provide consultation, suggestions, and specific recommendations for dealing with the problems.

The committee members assess drafts of chapters of the Thesis as they are prepared by the student. They provide feedback with regard to the quality of the document. **The Supervisory Committee Chair and the Committee members provide feedback on individual chapters of the Thesis within a 2-week time frame.**

The committee members evaluate the final draft of the Thesis and provide specific feedback to the student as to the revisions needed prior to the oral defense.

It is the responsibility of the Supervisory Committee Chair (supervisor) to write a Supervisory Committee Progress Report (Appendix 11) of each Supervisory Committee Meeting; to distribute copies of the report to the student and the committee members; and to place a copy of each report in the student's file.

Three of four supervisory committee members function as examiners at the Final Oral Examination of the Thesis.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

6.1 FIFSW PhD Funding Package

Overview

The Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work (FIFSW) offers a minimum level of financial support for PhD students during the first five years of study in the PhD program.

This funding policy outlines the value of the minimum funding package for domestic and international students, who are eligible to receive the minimum funding package, and composition of funding for students at different stages in the program. This policy described below is in effect for 2024-2025 academic year and may be revised on an annual basis, in accordance with the [School of Graduate Studies guidelines for funding for research-stream graduate programs](#).

PhD Minimum Funding Package

The FIFSW funding package is designed to cover a student's tuition and provide the student with awards, scholarships and paid opportunities to support their research and teaching professional development.

For the 2024-2025 academic year, the minimum funding package is **\$19,600** plus tuition and fees.

The value of this funding package with tuition and fees is:

- \$27,952 for domestic students
- \$28,708 for international students (which includes UHIP fees)

Eligibility for the Minimum Funding Package

PhD Students in FIFSW are eligible for the minimum funding package if they are:

- Registered Full-time in academic years 1 to 5 of the PhD Program.
- Maintaining good academic standing as described in the PhD Program Manual and School of Graduate Studies, by completing program requirements and achieving the milestones as defined by the program.
- Completing the annual Funding Declaration Form and PhD Progress Report.

- Applying for major/external awards (e.g., SSHRC, CIHR, OGS) for which they are eligible.

Note: External awards are considered part of the financial support package. Students who receive a major government-funded award may be eligible for top-up funding if the value of their award is less than the value of the minimum funding package.

NOTES:

- Starting in 2024-2025, the Faculty will pay the University of Toronto Fellowship (UTF) portion of the funding package through ACORN and apply it first to outstanding tuition and fees for students who are eligible for the minimum funding package. The UTF will be paid in mid-September and January each year.
- Registered students who are beyond the funded cohort are responsible for paying tuition and fees directly through ACORN.
- Students may request to register without payment (i.e., make a fee deferral) through [ACORN](#) if they have no outstanding fees from a previous session and are the recipient of one of the following, which exceeds the Minimum Payment to Register amount on your [ACORN](#) invoice: 1) University of Toronto Fellowship, 2) Ontario Student Assistance Plan (OSAP) loan, other provincial government loan, or 3) a USA government loan. [Please see SGS guidelines for Fee Deferral more details.](#)
- Registered students are eligible for research and teaching positions but are not eligible for the minimum funding package.
- For students who are planning to complete all program requirements before the end of the academic year, please see [SGS guidelines](#) for final-year fees for doctoral students.

See below for more details on the funding package breakdown, sessions, conditions, and the payment process.

6.2 PhD Funding Package Breakdown

The FIFSW minimum funding package is comprised of funds from the University of Toronto Fellowship (UTF) and a combination of internal sources of funding from FIFSW internal awards, scholarships, research or teaching fellowships; Canadian government-funded (i.e. external) awards or scholarship (e.g., SSHRC, CIHR, OGS, Vanier); and employment income within FIFSW as a research assistant, teaching assistant, or course instructor. International students also receive funding for the University of Health Insurance Plan fee.

Table 1 illustrates the breakdown of the FIFSW minimum funding package for domestic and international students who do not hold a major external award. Students in the funded cohort, who have achieved candidacy will receive an adjusted package.

Table 1: Breakdown of the Minimum Funding Package for YRS 1-5

Year	UTF	+	Internal Sources	+	Tuition & Fees*	=	Total Funding	Funding after Tuition & Fees
YR 1 to Candidacy (Domestic)	\$10,000	+	\$9,600	+	\$8,351.53	=	\$27,952	\$19,600
Cand. to YR 5 (Domestic)	\$12,000	+	\$7,600	+	\$8,351.53	=	\$27,952	\$19,600

* Tuition and Fees listed above are for Domestic Students. UTF funding for international students will include the UHIP fee, for a total of \$9,107.53 in tuition and fees and total funding of \$28,708.

- For students who have not achieved candidacy by January 31, 2025:**
 Students who are pre-candidacy will receive a University of Toronto Fellowship (UTF) stipend of \$10,000 which is disbursed in two equal instalments at the start of the fall and winter sessions. The remaining \$9,600 from the funding package will consist of a combination of employment income and other internal funding sources (e.g., teaching assistantships, research assistantships, or internal awards and bursaries).
- For students who have received their candidacy by January 31, 2025:**
 Students who have achieved PhD candidacy by January 31st of the academic year, will receive up a UTF Stipend of \$12,000, which is disbursed in two equal instalments at the start of the fall and winter sessions. The remaining \$7,600 from the funding package will consist of a combination of employment income and other internal funding sources (e.g., teaching assistantships, research assistantships, or internal awards and bursaries).

Funding Package for Students who Hold an Ontario Graduate Scholarship

For students who receive an Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS), the value of this award is factored into your minimum funding package. OGS recipients are eligible for UTF Top-Up funding, with award value adjusted based on the student's progress in the PhD Program.

- UTF Top-Up funding is **\$6,800** for students who have **not** received candidacy by January 31, 2025.
- UTF Top-Up funding is **\$8,800** for students who **have received** candidacy by January 31, 2025.

Table 2: Breakdown of Top-Up PhD Funding for Students with an OGS

Year	OGS	+	UTF Top-Up	+	Internal Sources	-	Tuition & Fees*	=	Funding after Tuition & Fees
YR 1 to Candidacy (Domestic)	\$15,000	+	\$6,800	+	\$9,600	-	\$8,351.53	=	\$23,048
Cand. to YR 5 (Domestic)	\$15,000	+	\$8,800	+	\$7,600	-	\$8,351.53	=	\$23,048

**Tuition & fees are subtracted from the Total Funding amount

Funding Package for Students who hold a higher valued External Award

For students who receive a higher valued major external award (e.g., SSHRC, CIHR, CGS, SSHRC, or Vanier award, the award amount is factored into your base funding. As the award value exceeds the Faculty's minimum funding package after tuition and fees (i.e. \$19,600), students who receive one of the higher value major external awards, are not eligible for UTF Top-Up funding.

Table 3: Breakdown of Funding Package for Students with a SSHRC, CIHR, or CGS

Year	Award Funding	+	Internal Sources	-	Tuition & Fees*	=	Funding after Tuition & Fees
PhD Students YRS 1-5	\$40,000	+	\$9,600	-	\$8,351.53	=	\$41,248

*Tuition & fees are subtracted from the Total Funding amount. All PhD students in the funded cohorts, Years 1-5, who receive a higher value external award will be eligible for up to \$9,600 funding from internal sources.

NOTE: Vanier award recipients (not shown in table) receive \$50,000 in award funding, and a total funding of \$51,248 after tuition and fees.

6.3 Eligibility for the PhD Funding Package

1. To be eligible for the FIFSW PhD minimum funding package, students are required to be engaged in full-time studies for the academic year so that they can pursue their education within the necessary time requirement and commit fully to their education. Full-time is defined as being registered as a full-time student each academic session.
2. Students are required to make satisfactory progress through the program as defined by the [School of Graduate Studies](#). A PhD student by the end of August of the third year is expected to have completed all program requirements exclusive of the Thesis (i.e., course work, Comprehensive Exam Proposal, Comprehensive Exam and Thesis Proposal approved by their committee). The research, writing and oral examination of the Thesis should be completed by the end of the fifth year of the program. Students on file with the University Accessibility Services follow a specific plan that is appropriate. Students who are on a leave of absence (health, parental, or other) in Years One through Five are not eligible for funding during the time absent. The time to completion clock will stop for students who are on approved leave until they return to full-time study.

Note: If a student has a disability or medical condition impacting their timeline, they may register with Accessibility Services and speak to their assigned Advisor regarding an appropriate, specific plan to complete their program.

3. Students must demonstrate evidence of applying for major/external funding.
4. Starting from the second year, all PhD students are required to complete an annual progress report with their supervisors, typically due June 1st. The annual report documents the student's progress towards completing major milestones in the PhD program (e.g., coursework, comprehensive exam, thesis) which are required to maintain "good standing" in the program.
5. Students are required to apply for research assistantships and/or teaching positions and other internal funding opportunities that are advertised within the Faculty in order to maintain eligibility for internal sources offered by the Faculty as part of the minimum funding commitment.
6. Students who are unable to secure the minimum value of their funding commitment from internal sources by the start of the winter session (e.g., typically the first week in January) should submit a request to the PhD Program Director by the end of January, so they can assist the student in identifying suitable internal sources of funding.

7. Students who do not apply for research assistantships, the Royal Bank Fellowship and/or internal funding opportunities for which they are eligible will receive UTF funding only and forfeit the remainder of the Faculty's minimum funding commitment.
8. Some research and/or teaching fellowships or assistantships require students to remain in geographic proximity to FIFSW. The Faculty, therefore, cannot guarantee the full portion of the Faculty's minimum funding commitment from internal sources for students do not remain in geographic proximity of the Faculty, or those who are unable to come to campus on a regular basis.

6.4 PhD Student Declaration of Funding

In June of each academic year, students who are entering Years One through Five in subsequent academic year, submit a declaration of funding form. Information from this form will be used to determine students' eligibility for the Base Graduate Funding Package in the following academic year.

The declaration form will be sent via email the FIFSW PhD Program. In this form the student should indicate sources of internal and external funding (OGS, SSHRC, and CIHR) they have applied for or have received, as well as expected sources of internal funding (e.g. FIFSW awards, scholarships, fellowship, or employment income as a research assistant, teaching assistant, or course instructor from within the Faculty).

Students who are interested in applying for awards or fellowships that require students to on demonstration of financial need (e.g. RBC (Royal Bank of Canada) Fellowship or other awards that are funded by the Ontario Student Opportunity Trust (OSTOF)), must complete the online Needs [SGS Financial Need Assessment form](#).

FIFSW Conference Bursary

The FIFSW Conference Bursary provides support for FIFSW students presenting at academic conferences. Students can apply for this bursary prior to receiving confirmation that their conference submissions have been accepted.

The maximum bursary amount is \$500, as provided as a form of reimbursement after conference attendance. It is meant to offset the expenses to participate in the conference rather than to cover full expenses.

For more details on how to apply for the Conference Bursary, please go to the [Financial Information](#) page on the FIFSW website.

SGS Conference and Research Travel Grant Links

The School of Graduate Studies (SGS) also offers grant opportunities for conference and research travel for PhD students. Please refer to the following links.

- [SGS Conference Grant](#)
- [SGS Research Travel Grant](#)

Doctoral Completion Award (DCA) – Year 6

The purpose of the DCA is to support full-time PhD students who are beyond the funded cohort but still within the time limit for completing their degree. Registered students will

be required to pay tuition and fees if enrolled in Year 6 and continue to be eligible for research and teaching positions.

To be eligible, students must be in Year 6 of the PhD Program and be in good academic standing. The amount will vary from year to year based on the funding allocation and number of eligible students. Funding can begin in the first month of the first session in which the student enters year 6 of their PhD studies (e.g., September, for Fall session; January, for Winter session, May for Summer session). If the student completes all degree requirements before the end of year 6, they will only receive the award for the sessions in which they are registered.

NOTE: As a reminder, students may also apply for OGS for the sixth year of the PhD Program.

FIFSW INTERNAL AWARDS & INITIATIVES

7.1 Internal Awards

FIFSW offers a number of internal scholarships/bursaries to full-time PhD students. A typical award value for PhD students ranges from \$1,000 to \$4,000. Students indicate their application to awards on the Declaration of Funding form each summer.

For a full list of internal scholarships and awards visit the [University of Toronto Award Explorer](#). All internal awards and fellowships are considered part of the Faculty's funding commitment to PhD students.

7.2 Royal Bank of Canada Graduate Fellowships in Applied Social Work Research

The Royal Bank of Canada Graduate Fellowship in Applied Social Research (RBC Fellowship) is jointly sponsored by the Royal Bank of Canada, the University of Toronto, and the province of Ontario. RBC fellowships are designed to

- provide research training and experience to FIFSW PhD students
- provide financial support to students in financial need; and
- support faculty research

The Faculty awards up to six RBC Fellowships each year. The value of the RBC Fellowship ranges from \$10,000-15,000, based on available funds.

Award eligibility and application deadlines are sent to students via email in early summer. Students will have the opportunity to review faculty research project submissions and indicate/rank which projects best meet their research interests. Students submit their application to the [PhD Program](#).

NOTE: Two-thirds of RBC fellowships are specifically designated for students who demonstrate financial need in accordance with the Ontario Student Opportunity Trust Fund (OSOTF) guidelines. The RBC Fellowship are factored into the minimum funding commitment for students in year 1 to 5. Fellowship funds are disbursed in two installments, with half disbursed in mid-September and half in early January.

FIFSW offers the following faculty initiatives for PhD students to work with Faculty to develop research and teaching experience and skills.

7.3 FIFSW Doctoral Research Fellowship (DRF)

The FIFSW Doctoral Research Fellowship (DRF) is a matching program, supported by the Faculty and a faculty member's research funding as part of the Faculty's minimum funding commitment to PhD Students. Students who have not yet received a minimum funding from internal sources or who have not received a major external award are eligible to apply.

Students who are matched through the DRF will receive up to \$10,000 in funding and will be expected to contribute approximately 200 hours on the designated faculty research project. The work period for the DRF program is from October 1, 2024, to August 31, 2025.

NOTE: The FMP (Faculty Matching Program) award amount may be adjusted in relation to the student's minimum funding package.

DRF Eligibility

Doctoral students who do not have a major internal award (e.g., entrance scholarship) or external award (e.g., OGS, SSHRC) are eligible to apply. Students who are awarded an FMP will not be matched with an RBC Fellowship in the same academic year.

DRF Selection Process

Faculty projects will be made available to doctoral students to review and rank according to their research interests. The Selection Committee, consisting of the PhD Director, Associate Dean Research, Research Services Officer, and Faculty Registrar, will identify potential faculty-student matches. Once potential matches are identified, we will notify both faculty members and students.

Faculty members **will have the opportunity to set up a face-to-face interview with the student(s)**. After reviewing the applications and interviewing the student(s), faculty members will provide their input to the Selection Committee. The committee will finalise the match based on faculty input and student preferences.

Students will have the opportunity to review faculty research project submissions and indicate/rank which projects best meet their research interests. Students who are matched will receive a research allowance of up to \$10,000, which is typically disbursed in equal monthly installments during the fellowship period. Because it is not employment income, no taxes will be deducted from this allowance by the University.

8.4 Teaching Opportunity Initiative (TOI)

The Teaching Opportunity Initiative (TOI) provides interested PhD students the opportunity to teach one 3-hour class in the MSW program with the support of a faculty member. This opportunity can take place at any point in the PhD program but is intended for students who have not had teaching opportunities at the Faculty. If desired, students will be able to make this request to more than one Faculty member.

The goal of this teaching opportunity is to contribute to the student's development as a social work educator through observing and offering educational experiences. The student should have expertise in the subject area of their chosen internship site. TOI provides an experiential component under the direction of a faculty member with professional expertise and teaching experience in the student's area of interest.

TOI Eligibility

All registered PhD students are eligible.

Responsibilities of the Student

The student is expected to:

- Approach a faculty member teaching a course in an area of interest to the student and propose to teach one three-hour class during the session in which the course taught
- Review the syllabus and, with the Professor, identify the lecture that would be appropriate.
- Attend one or two classes of the course prior to the lecture.
- Present the plan for the lecture at least 1 week prior to the scheduled class
- Meet with the Professor after the class and discuss the lecture.

Responsibilities of the Faculty Member

The faculty member is expected to provide:

- Time to meet with the student to identify appropriate class.
- Observation of the student.
- Feedback upon completion of lecture.

TOI Guidelines

Each student and faculty member will decide together how much preparation meeting time with the faculty member is required. It is suggested that there be 1 session for planning.

NOTE: This opportunity is optional and not-for-credit.

Expected Outcomes

Upon completion of the teaching opportunity, the PhD student should emerge with the following competencies:

- The awareness of how to prepare an educational activity including materials such as an outline for a class session, teaching notes, handouts, exercises, and cases.
- The awareness of how to deliver an educational activity such as a lecture, workshop, or tutorial in ways that enhance the students' learning and development as social workers.
- The ability to interpret and use feedback from participants (students) and observers (faculty members).

7.4 Teaching Apprenticeship Initiative (TAI)

The Teaching Apprenticeship Initiative (TAI) is a paid apprenticeship, which supports PhD students' development as social work educators through engaging in course preparation as well as observing and offering educational experiences. The apprenticeship provides students with an opportunity to gain valuable hands-on experience and develop competence in teaching a particular subject area in social work.

TAI is intended for doctoral students interested in teaching social work in higher education. It provides an experiential component under the direction of a faculty mentor with professional expertise and teaching experience in the student's area of interest.

TAI Eligibility

Eligible students need to meet all the following criteria:

1. The PhD student must have an approved Comprehensive Exam. Priorities will be given to those who have achieved candidacy (i.e., the student's Thesis Proposal has been approved by the supervisory committee).
2. The PhD student is registered as a full-time student.
3. The PhD student has not been a course instructor (CI).

Students who have previously been a teaching apprentice are allowed to apply, although priority will be given to those who have never served as a teaching apprentice at FIFSW.

TAI Guidelines

The PhD teaching apprentice will be matched with a course in the MSW program at the University of Toronto, or an undergraduate course taught by an FIFSW faculty member. The faculty member serves as the mentor for the apprentice. The mentor and apprentice meet prior to the beginning of the course and develop a learning plan. The typical learning plan **may** involve the following:

- The mentor engages the apprentice in course development.
- The mentor invites the apprentice to participate in faculty-level teaching-related activities, such as student advising sessions, discussion of course design, or curriculum development meetings.
- The apprentice observes the classes taught by the mentor. The apprentice learns to complete classroom observation notes designed to identify skills and concepts used in the class. The apprentice analyzes the observation notes with the mentor.
- The mentor and the apprentice review and discuss literature on teaching in the field of social work.
- The apprentice attends the workshops and/or the Teaching Fundamentals Certificate programs (<http://tatp.utoronto.ca/certificate-program/>) offered by the Centre for Teaching Support and Innovation (CTSI).
- The apprentice takes SWK6006H Theory & Practice of Teaching Social Work.
- The apprentice may prepare a lesson plan in consultation with the mentor and leads 1 to 2 course sessions (in part or in full). The mentor will provide feedback to the apprentice and review session evaluations with the apprentice.
- Towards the end of the apprenticeship, the teaching apprentice develops a teaching portfolio that includes at minimum a teaching philosophy and an analysis of the apprentice's teaching evaluations. The mentor will review the portfolio and provide feedback.

TAI Application and Matching Processes and Procedures

The application and matching processes and procedures are detailed below:

1. Faculty Mentor Proposal

Invitation for proposals will be announced to faculty members two to three times per academic year, depending on the number of eligible students. Interested faculty members should submit the following to the Director of the PhD Program:

- a. Name of the proposed course and draft course outline. The course can be offered in Fall, Winter, or Summer session.
- b. A preliminary learning and mentoring plan for the teaching apprentice.

2. Teaching Apprentice Application

The Director of the PhD Program will compile faculty mentor applications and distribute to eligible PhD students. Those students who would like to apply will submit the following to the Director of the PhD Program:

- a. A detailed Curriculum Vitae outlining education, professional experiences, research, publications, and other scholarly activities.
- b. A short statement (no more than one page) describing the areas of the student's teaching interest.
- c. A ranking of the Apprenticeship opportunities available based on the student's teaching interests.

3. Matching

The Director of the PhD Program will work with the Associate Dean, Academic, and the Administrative Coordinator, Admissions & Programs (ACA) to identify potential mentor-apprentice matches. The potential matches will be notified by the PhD Program Director. Faculty members will receive the applications of the potential match(es) and set up a face-to-face interview with the student(s). After the interview, the faculty members will provide their input to the Director of the PhD Program, who will finalize the matches based on faculty input and student preferences.

4. Finalized Learning and Mentoring Plan

The faculty mentor and teaching apprentice match will meet and finalize the learning and mentoring plan. Both the faculty mentor and the teaching apprentice are required to submit the completed and signed TAI Learning Plan (Appendix 13) to the PhD Program Director.

Expected Outcomes

Upon completion of the teaching apprenticeship, the PhD student should emerge with the following competencies:

- The knowledge and skills required to prepare a course from beginning to end.
- The ability to prepare a lesson plan about a particular substantive topic or area.
- The ability to deliver an educational activity such as a lecture, workshop, or tutorial in ways that enhance one's learning and development.
- The ability to interpret and use feedback from students and the mentor.
- The capacity to reflect on and develop one's teaching style and pedagogy.

TAI Financial Support

This is a paid apprenticeship but not a course. While the teaching apprentice will not receive a course credit, they will receive a \$3,500 stipend from FIFSW paid monthly. The stipend is considered as part of the faculty's financial commitment to Ph.D. students. Should any of the commitments from the student or supervisor change before the end of the academic session, the supervisor should advise the PhD program Director and the funding may be adjusted or terminated.

ADDENDUM - COMPREHENSIVE PAPER

NOTE: This addendum only applies to students who began their PhD Program in September 2018 or earlier

The Faculty changed the Comprehensive Paper requirement to a Comprehensive Exam for students who began their PhD study in September 2018. Students who began their studies prior to September 2018, were given the option to complete a Comprehensive Paper, under the guidelines listed below. Students who began their studies in the Fall of 2018 or after are required to following the guidelines for the Comprehensive Exam.

Overview

An examination of the Comprehensive Paper is required in order to evaluate the student's mastery of theory and research in a selected area of social work. The Comprehensive Paper is an independent endeavor; that is, the student selects the topic, conducts the literature research, and prepares the final paper independently. The Comprehensive Paper cannot be submitted for assessment until all course requirements have been completed. However, students typically begin the research on their selected research area immediately following admission to the program. It is expected that students will choose courses and develop course papers in their selected area of research. In researching the literature for course assignments, students will select topics that are in the general area of their research interests and which subsequently will be reflected in the proposal for their Comprehensive Paper.

During the Fall session of the second year, the student begins to initiate the formulation of a Comprehensive Paper Proposal in consultation with the supervisor and another FIFSW Faculty member (second reader), who typically will become a second member of the student's supervisory committee. According to this framework, the student should submit the Comprehensive Paper Proposal by the Winter or Summer session of the second year of the program. Following approval of the Comprehensive Paper Proposal by the supervisor, the student is required to work independently to complete the Comprehensive Paper and should submit the paper in the Summer session of the second year, and/or Fall session of the third year. It is strongly recommended that students submit their Comprehensive Paper by November of the third year in order to have sufficient time to develop and complete their Thesis Proposal. The supervisor and the second reader function as examiners of the Comprehensive Paper. When approved, the student proceeds with work on the Thesis Proposal.

Purpose

The Comprehensive Paper requires the student to develop a critical capacity in research and writing which is fundamental to scholarship. In selecting a topic, the student chooses an issue, policy, or problem area in the social welfare field which will contribute to the critical assessment of theory and research and which will form the underpinnings of the

research question to be addressed in the Thesis. In other words, the literature research conducted for the Comprehensive Paper advances the preliminary work necessary for formulating the Thesis question.

The goal of this major analytic and conceptual paper is to assess the student's ability in the following areas:

1. The logical development and presentation of the salient aspects of the topic selected
2. The selection and use of relevant literature from a variety of areas of knowledge
3. The critical analysis and synthesis of relevant theories
4. The critical analysis and synthesis of relevant research studies
5. The development of an extended, revised, or new theoretical model/framework of understanding the selected topic. This would emanate from the critical analysis of the theoretical and research literatures on the mentioned topic.

Role of Supervision During Preparation of Comprehensive Paper

The Comprehensive Paper constitutes an independent piece of work where the student is responsible for developing the proposal and writing the paper. However, the student is encouraged to discuss the overall plan for the paper with the supervisor and the second reader. It is expected that these consultations will assist the student in developing a focus for the analysis of the identified issue, policy, or problem that the student wishes to study. The student discusses general ideas with the supervisor. Drafts of the Comprehensive Proposal may be discussed with the supervisor prior to approval of the final copy of the proposal. However, drafts of the Comprehensive Paper are not to be formally reviewed by the supervisor or the second reader. This is especially important since the supervisor and the second reader are faculty members with the responsibility for assessing and making recommendations about the merits of the Comprehensive Paper. However, it is recognized that writing a comprehensive paper over several months can be an isolating experience. In order to ensure that this does not impede a student's progress, supervisors and students may meet for the purpose of monitoring the latter's progress.

Comprehensive Paper Proposal

Following the selection of a topic area and a preliminary review of the pertinent literature, the student develops a proposal for the Comprehensive Paper. Its purpose is to require the student to develop a focus for addressing the critical analysis of relevant research materials. The format for the Comprehensive Paper follows:

Comprehensive Paper Outline

1. **Introduction:** Provide a clear statement of the issue, policy, or problem area that you plan to examine. Provide a brief overview of the selected topic. State your rationale for pursuing this topic of interest.
2. **Study Focus:** Provide a concise summary of the theoretical framework within which the issue, policy, or problem will be examined. Include the specific dimensions, parameters, or factors that will be included in your critical analysis of the literature.
3. **Analyses of Theoretical Perspectives:** Provide a summary of the main theoretical perspectives that you plan to review. Provide a rationale for choosing these perspectives. Indicate what will be excluded from your critical analysis of theoretical perspectives and why.
4. **Analyses of the Research Literature:** Provide a summary of the main research studies that relate to your chosen topic of interest. Provide a rationale for the research studies that will be included in your analyses. Indicate which areas of the research literature will be excluded and why.
5. **Discussion and Conclusions:** Indicate briefly the theoretical model or framework that will result from the critical analyses of the theoretical and research literatures. Summarize your planned approach to the discussion and conclusions which will validate your theoretical model/framework.

The Comprehensive Paper Proposal **may not exceed 10 pages**, typed double-spaced, excluding the references.

Evaluation of the Comprehensive Paper Proposal

The proposal is submitted to the supervisor for approval. The supervisor examines the merits of the proposal and either approves it as presented or asks the student to rethink and revise some aspects of the paper. It usually takes about 2 weeks for the supervisor to provide feedback on the Comprehensive Paper Proposal. While not required, the student is recommended to submit the proposal to the second reader for feedback and comments before the student provides the final copy to the supervisor.

Once the student revises the proposal and provides a final copy to the supervisor, the supervisor will send an email to the student, PhD Program Director, and Administrative Coordinator, Admissions and Programs (ACA) indicating approval of the Comprehensive Paper Proposal. The student is asked to submit a copy of the Comprehensive Paper Proposal to the ACA. FIFSW doctoral students and faculty can sign out a copy of the proposals previously written and approved. They are available through the ACA.

Preparation of the Comprehensive Paper

The Comprehensive Paper is due within 4 months of the approval of the Comprehensive Paper Proposal. The student develops the Comprehensive Paper according to the outline developed in the Comprehensive Paper Proposal. A logical ordering of the reviewed literature follows the introduction of the study topic. The synthesis of both theoretical and research perspectives of the problem is presented in a coherent, concise fashion. The relevance of the developed arguments for advancing knowledge in the field of social welfare and the social work profession must be made evident throughout the paper. In the discussion section of the paper the student articulates a theoretical model or framework which is validated from the critical analyses of the literature. The concluding summary provides direction for future study of the problem area.

NOTE: The Comprehensive Paper **may not exceed 70 pages** (excluding references), typed double-spaced. The paper should be carefully edited prior to submission. The student may engage an editor for this purpose.

The title page **must include** the following statement:

“This Comprehensive Paper is an independent piece of work submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements to be met prior to formal approval of a doctoral proposal for a doctoral thesis in social work.”

Two copies of the Comprehensive Paper are to be submitted to the Administrative Coordinator, Admissions and Programs (ACA), Angela Umbrello. These will be distributed to the supervisor and the second reader. The two examiners will independently assess the merits of the paper. The student must verify with the two readers if they are willing to accept an e-copy. If yes, the student needs to forward the e-copy to the ACA (angela.umbrello@utoronto.ca) and indicate who the two readers are. If no, submit two copies of the Comprehensive Paper directly to the ACA, 2nd Floor General Office with a note indicating the name of the second reader. The ACA will distribute the Comprehensive Paper to the two members and assign a 4-week deadline for receipt of the Comprehensive Assessment. The second reader will be added to your Supervisory Committee.

The PhD Program Director will be notified by Angela Umbrello that the Comprehensive Paper has been submitted.

Assessment of the Comprehensive Paper

As mentioned earlier, the Comprehensive Paper is assessed by the student’s supervisor and a second faculty member. The second assessor is selected by the supervisor in consultation with the student. The second assessor needs to be a Continuing Member of the School of Graduate Studies of the University of Toronto and is selected on the basis of the knowledge of the student’s area of substantive and research interest. Also, since the second assessor is often invited to be a member of the student’s Supervisory Committee, the assessment of the Comprehensive Paper provides an introduction to the background for the thesis research.

The ACA distributes the Comprehensive Paper to the two examiners who are required to write an assessment report following specific guidelines. The assessors are asked to complete their reports within a period of 3 weeks and submit them to the ACA.

The form for the Assessment of the Comprehensive Paper (Appendix 6) is distributed with each copy of the Comprehensive Paper.

If the paper is approved (Without Changes; Minor Revisions; Major Revisions), the ACA notifies the student, examiners, and PhD Program Director by email that the Comprehensive Paper requirement has been satisfied. Copies of the assessment reports are attached to the email message. If Approved with Minor Revisions or Major Revisions, the email will advise the student to discuss corrections with the Supervisor and when all changes are completed and approved by the supervisor, to submit a final bound copy to the ACA. Following the initial notification of the approval status, students who receive “Approved with Minor Revisions” are required to submit the final copy within 3 weeks, and those who receive “Approved with Major Revisions” are required to submit the final copy within 8 weeks. The supervisor is required to send an email message confirming all changes have been approved.

If the Comprehensive Paper is not approved by both assessors and is judged to require substantial revisions, the student is notified in writing by the PhD Program Director. The assessors’ reports are included with the letter. The student is advised to consult with the supervisor to discuss the assessors’ reports. The student is then given the opportunity to revise the paper for resubmission. The paper must be resubmitted within a period of 4 months following the initial notification that the paper was not approved. The same assessors review the paper a second time. If the paper is approved, the PhD Program Director notifies the student in writing that the Comprehensive Paper requirement has been satisfied. If one or both assessors do not recommend approval, the student may not proceed to the thesis and is notified in writing by the PhD Program Director.

Following notification that the Comprehensive Paper requirement has been satisfied, the student submits to the ACA one bound copy of the final Comprehensive Paper. This copy is catalogued and is subsequently available for reference purposes, and can be signed out by FIFSW doctoral students and faculty. A student who fails to receive unconditional approval of the Comprehensive Paper following the above assessment options will not be permitted to proceed with the thesis.

KEY CONTACTS & RESOURCES

9.1 FIFSW Contact Information and Resources

FIFSW is located on the University of Toronto's St. George Campus at 246 Bloor Street West. For general inquiries, please contact our Main Office at 416-978-6314.

For detailed information, go to [FIFSW Key Contacts](#).

FIFSW Registrar

If you have any questions regarding administrative matters such as registration, enrollment, grades, fees, financial support, and awards, please feel free to contact registrar.fifsw@utoronto.ca. The FIFSW Registrar offers drop-in in-person meetings as well as virtual and in-person by appointment.

FIFSW PhD Forms

For links to forms associated with progress and milestones in the PhD Program visit the FIFSW Website under [Current Students—Forms](#).

9.2 University of Toronto Resources

ACORN – Student Web Service

The Accessible Campus Online Resource Network (ACORN). ACORN will be your main online resource for updating contact information, student account information and student life resources. Access ACORN using your UTORid and password. Use ACORN to defer fees; view tuition invoices and financial accounts; update contact information; order transcripts; print tax forms; access information on housing, health and support, cocurricular programs and more. Visit the ACORN website for more information, including frequently asked questions and how-tos.

Health and Wellness

[Student Life Health & Wellness](#) a range of health services for your physical and mental health, wellness programs and information to help support you in achieving your personal and academic goals.

International Student Resources

The SGS International Portal, [Before You Arrive](#), provides information on immigrating and studying in Canada (SIN, taxes, Health insurance, etc.).

The Center for International Experience (CIE): <https://internationalexperience.utoronto.ca/>

CIE offers a range of programs and services to support international students and global learning for all. The student immigration advisors at CIE are the only people on campus who are authorized to give immigration advice.

Quercus

Quercus (<https://q.utoronto.ca/>) is U of T's online course communication system. Some instructors will use Quercus for their course websites. Those courses will become active on Quercus before the first week of classes. Login to Quercus using your UTORid.

9.3 School of Graduate Studies (SGS) Resources

SGS Forms and Letters

For SGS forms and letters regarding registration, course add/drop forms, and program status requests, visit the SGS Forms and Letters Website:

<https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/current-students/student-forms-letter-requests/>

SGS GradHub

Grad Hub is designed to help you navigate grad life at U of T and connect you to workshops, social events, campus services and resources. It provides community through programs where you can gain balance, build skills, seek support and connect with other graduate students across disciplines.

SGS Supports for Program Progress and Mentorship

Graduate Centre for Academic Communication: <https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/resources-supports/gcac/>

Centre for Graduate Mentorship and Supervision: <https://www.cgms.utoronto.ca/> Centre for Graduate Professional Development: <https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/resources-supports/cgpd/>

TCard

The TCard is the campus ID card, which provides access to services and facilities such as libraries, athletic facilities, exams, meal plans, printing services. Once students have their TCard, they can also enable their UTORid, U of T email address, and access U of T Wi-Fi. As of May 1, 2024, students can initiate their TCards by uploading a photo for their TCard. More information is available at <https://tcard.utoronto.ca>

University of Toronto Graduate Student Union

UTGSU (University of Toronto Graduate Student Union): <https://utgsu.ca/> Health and Dental Plan: <https://utgsu.ca/health-and-dental/>