

**University of Houston – Graduate College of Social Work
Ph.D. Program**

STUDENT STANDARDS POLICY CONTRACT

I have received, read, and comprehend the University of Houston - Graduate College of Social Work Student Standards Policy, and agree to be bound by the provisions therein. I understand that my enrollment in the Ph.D. Program is contingent upon my signing and submitting this contract.

STUDENT NAME (PRINT): _____

STUDENT SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

STUDENT ID NUMBER: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

Each student must deliver this signed Contract to the GCSW Ph.D. Academic Advisor's Office no later than the 12th class day of the student's first semester enrollment. Failure to do so may result in a \$50 late fee.

**University of Houston – Graduate College of Social Work
Ph.D. Program**

PH.D. STUDENT STANDARDS POLICY

Adopted May 5, 2000, revised 3/1/2002, 2/6/2004, 3/5/2004, 1/9/2012, 3/11/2014, 4/8/2014, 12/12/2014, Spring 2015

The Graduate College of Social Work (GCSW) faculty and professional staff are responsible for determining whether students demonstrate the required level of classroom, professional, and ethical achievement appropriate for professional interactions with colleagues, faculty, research and teaching internship supervisors, students, research participants, administrators and staff.

The College is committed to the treatment of students with fairness and equity throughout the program. This policy is applied to students' enrollment in the Ph.D. program at any point in time, from admission to program entry, program entry to candidacy, and candidacy to graduation. Each admitted student is required to read, comprehend and complete the Student Standards Policy Contract. Students are required to adhere to Ph.D. program policies, as well as the GCSW, Graduate School and University of Houston (UH) policies.

1.1 STUDENT STANDARDS

The purpose of the Ph.D. in social work is to prepare students to be scholars who function as “stewards of the discipline.”¹ In order for the GCSW to meet its responsibilities to provide quality professional social work education and ensure that its graduates are able to function in a broad array of professional activities related to in-depth knowledge of social work as a profession and discipline, research and scholarship, and teaching, GCSW faculty evaluate the academic performance of students in five general areas: professional readiness, professional commitment and ethical conduct, professional behavior, scholastic performance, and attendance and punctuality. Meeting the criteria for scholastic performance is necessary, but not sufficient to ensure continued enrollment in the program. Demonstration of professional and ethical behavior, commitment, and readiness are also required. Below are the fundamental requirements for successful completion of a doctoral degree from the GCSW.

1.2 Professional Readiness

Students of the GCSW should demonstrate generally accepted standards of personal integrity, health and emotional stability, self-care, stress management, communication skills, interpersonal skills and self-awareness.

- a) Personal Integrity: Is open to learning and is honest with oneself and colleagues.
- b) Health & Emotional Stability: Uses thoughtful judgment in professional situations. Responsibly addresses one's own health and emotional challenges that may interfere with scholastic and professional performance.
- c) Self-Care & Stress Management: Seeks and effectively practices self-care, uses help, and demonstrates ability to deal with current life stressors through the use of appropriate coping mechanisms or supports.
- d) Communication Skills: Communicates responsibly, sensitively and with respect toward colleagues, faculty, field instructors, administrators, staff, clients, and research participants.
- e) Interpersonal Skills: Expresses ideas and feelings which can be heard and understood by others. Demonstrates willingness and an ability to listen to others.
- f) Self-Awareness: Exhibits knowledge of how one's values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions, and past experiences affect thinking, behavior and relationships. Accurately assesses one's own strengths, limitations, and suitability for professional practice on an ongoing basis. Shows an intermediate to advanced level of self-awareness and insight regarding how one is perceived by others. Reflects on one's own limitations as related to professional capacities. Is willing to examine and change behavior when it interferes in working with others.

1.3 Professional Commitment and Ethical Conduct

- a) Exhibits a strong commitment to the essential values of social work and the pursuit of promoting social, economic and political justice:
- b) Proactively and consistently demonstrates responsible and ethical conduct of research.
- c) Adheres to the NASW Code of Ethics.
- d) Appreciates the value of diversity. Works with and relates to others who are different from oneself, regardless of the student's own personal, religious, and/or cultural values.

- e) Comprehends other individuals' ways of life and differing values.
- f) Shows respect for the rights of others.
- g) Maintains the professional standard of confidentiality as it relates to classroom and research activities and research internships.
- h) Demonstrates consistent honesty and integrity by being truthful about one's own background, experiences, and qualifications.
- i) Demonstrates clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries. Refrains from sexually harassing others, making verbal or physical threats, being involved in sexual relationships with students who they teach, abusing others in physical, emotional, verbal, or sexual ways, or participating in dual relationships where conflicts of interest may exist.
- j) Refrains from imposing personal biases during interactions with others.

1.4 Professional Behavior

- a) Exhibits behaviors that are in compliance with program policies, institutional policies, and professional ethical standards in classroom, research internship, teaching internship, and community settings.
- b) Shows appearance and demeanor that are appropriate to the roles and settings encountered during the doctoral educational experiences.
- c) Shows potential for responsible and accountable behavior by knowing and practicing within the scope of social work ethics, research ethics, respecting others, being punctual and dependable, prioritizing responsibilities, observing deadlines, completing tasks on time, and keeping appointments or making alternate arrangements.
- d) Works effectively with others, regardless of level of authority or academic position.
- e) Advocates for one's self in a constructive manner and first uses established channels for conflict resolution.
- f) Shows a willingness to acknowledge constructive feedback or supervision, as well as uses such feedback to enhance professional development.
- g) Takes responsibility in following through with referrals to campus resources to enhance the probability of academic success, professional development and self-care.

1.5 Scholastic Performance

- a) Demonstrates and maintains a professional standard of writing in all courses, does one's own work, gives credit for the ideas of others, and provides proper citation of source materials.
 - a. Adheres to the UH "Academic Honesty Policy":
<http://www.uh.edu/provost/academic-affairs/policy-guidelines/honesty-policy/Academic%20Honesty%20Policy%20FA2014.pdf>
 - b. Adheres to the explicit Academic Honesty policies detailed on the College website:
<http://www.uh.edu/socialwork/current-students/policies/index.php#Plagiarism>
- b) Maintains a 3.0 grade point average (GPA) and satisfactory performance in all courses, including internships and independent studies. Failure to meet this standard will result in academic probation. Written recommendation from the Ph.D. Program Director and approval from the GCSW Dean is required for continued enrollment.
- c) Understands that removal from academic probation is granted when the student's GPA is raised to B (3.0) or above. The student has 9 semester credit hours to raise the G.P.A. to a 3.0. Failure to meet the G.P.A. requirement at the end of the academic probationary period will result in dismissal from the doctoral program.
- d) Understands that any course in which a grade of less than C- or a U is received does not earn credit towards a degree and must be repeated.
- e) Automatic Academic Dismissal: Whether or not in repeated courses, a student is automatically dismissed from the program for the following reasons:
 - a. Receives a grade of C+ or lower or Unsatisfactory (U) in 6 semester credit hours of doctoral level course credit;
 - b. Fails to pass comprehensive examinations after 2 attempts, in accordance with the examination criteria/policy; or
 - c. Does not successfully defend and pass the dissertation within 10 years of first enrollment in the doctoral program according to the regulations and requirements of the University of Houston. See: <http://catalog.uh.edu/content.php?catoid=9&navoid=1628&hl=%2210+years%22&returnto=search>

- f) Knows that the University of Houston will not award or honor a degree with a cumulative GPA below 3.0, despite completion of coursework.
- g) Understands that the grade of I (Incomplete) is a conditional and temporary grade given when students are passing a course but, for reasons beyond their control, have not completed a relatively small part of all requirements. Students are responsible for informing the instructor immediately of the reasons for not submitting an assignment on time or not taking an examination as scheduled. The grade of I must be changed by fulfilling the course requirements by the deadline set by the instructor, but no more than one year from the date awarded; or, in conformance with university policy, it will be changed automatically to F or U (in S-U graded courses).

1.6 Attendance and Punctuality

All courses will be attended and students will be punctual.

- a) This expectation is a reflection of the student's professional responsibility to the social work profession, their own training, fellow students, and professors, as well as to the seriousness with which they take as stewards-in-training of the profession.
- b) All doctoral students must adhere to the attendance/make up and participation policies stated in each course syllabus.

2.1 VIOLATIONS OF STUDENT STANDARDS

2.2 In-Person Meeting

When a faculty member or research supervisor has a concern regarding a doctoral student's professional readiness, professional commitment and ethical conduct, professional behavior, scholastic performance and/or attendance and punctuality, an in-person discussion should be held with the student and the faculty member or research supervisor expressing the concern. Faculty or research supervisors should inform the Academic Advisor or Director of the Ph.D. program when there is a concern that needs monitoring, but does not require an Action Plan.

2.3 GCSW Student Plan of Action

- a) When a faculty member has a serious concern in the classroom regarding a doctoral student's professional readiness, professional commitment and ethical conduct, professional behavior, scholastic performance, and/or attendance and punctuality, the faculty member must inform the Academic Advisor. The faculty member or Academic Advisor may initiate a Plan of Action in consultation with each other, if applicable.
- b) When a research supervisor has a serious concern about a doctoral student's professional readiness, professional commitment and ethical conduct, professional behavior, scholastic performance, and/or attendance and punctuality, the research supervisor must inform the Director of the Ph.D. Program. The research supervisor or Director of the Ph.D. Program may initiate a Plan of Action in consultation with each other, if applicable.
- c) The individual who initiates a Plan of Action is required to meet with the student to discuss and document the plan. All parties must sign the Student Plan of Action Form (see Appendix I3). This form must be filed in the Ph.D. Academic Advisor's office.
- d) A Plan of Action will establish formal conditions that must be met by the student. These may include, but are not limited to: reduced course load; resource or support referrals; delayed enrollment; leave of absence, probation or suspension; or termination from the program.
- e) Student-Initiated Appeal: the student may appeal the written Plan of Action through the Student Grievance Policy as outlined in the GCSW Doctoral Student Handbook.
- f) Should the student fail to meet the specified outcomes identified and agreed to in the Plan of Action, the faculty member, research supervisor, Academic Advisor or Director of the Ph.D. Program will make a recommendation to the Dean to establish formal conditions for the students' continuance or to dismiss the student. The Dean will notify the student, the faculty member, the Academic Advisor and the Director of the Ph.D. Program of the decision in writing.

2.4 Direct Referral to the Dean

In some instances, a Student Standards violation may result in direct referral to the Dean. Situations which may result in direct referrals to the Dean include, but are not limited to, racial or sexual harassment, use of firearms or other weapons on University property or in a research internship/community setting, damage or destruction of University property, and behavior that threatens the health, safety, or well-being of any University student or

employee, research participant, or internship agency staff or client.

- a) If a referral is made to the Dean, the student will be notified.
- b) The Dean may establish formal conditions for the student's continuance or dismiss the student.

2.5 Automatic Dismissal

As stated in section 1.5, students will be automatically dismissed from the program on academic grounds for receiving a grade of C+ or lower or Unsatisfactory (U) in 6 semester hours of graduate credit.