

## **DISSERTATION PROCESS**

Updated March 13, 2018

Committees are comprised of five members (effective June 1, 2015): The Core Committee includes a Chairperson and two formal members. The Full Committee includes the Core Committee plus two readers. The student chooses all core members of the committee and one reader, according to the specification outlined in the Manual for committee selection. The second reader is assigned by ICSW's Chair of Research. All members of the Full Committee have a vote on the committee. All Chairs and committees must be approved prior to the student's proposal hearing (see requirements for the selection of the Chair). The process as described below was effective June 1, 2015 for all students who had not passed their proposal hearing by that date.

The dissertation process unfolds in the following stepwise format:

1. Student chooses a Chair and in conjunction with the Chair chooses the other two members of the Core Committee and one reader. This will typically happen in the fourth year of the student's academic work. Once consolidated the student submits the Dissertation Chair form and the Dissertation Committee form to the Registrar for approval. At this point ICSW's Chair of Research will assign a second reader to the committee.
2. Once a full committee has been approved (signed by Dean and Chair of Research) the student and committee (minus readers) will meet as a team in order to discuss a plan, roles (e.g., literature review, methodology), and ways of proceeding. The Chair of the committee will convene this meeting, and will be responsible for keeping a record of what is decided. The Chair will submit notice (via form sent by email) of this meeting to the Registrar.
3. Readers are considered members of the Full Committee, and enter the process on two occasions: 1) prior to the proposal hearing; 2) prior to the final defense. Readers should be considered "a pair of fresh eyes," and though not part of the draft and response system, they are voting members at both the proposal hearing and final defense hearing.
4. The Chair calls the proposal hearing. No hearing should be held without dialogue between the Chair and rest of the team affirming the readiness of the document for a hearing. The proposal hearing must be approved by the Registrar prior to scheduling in order to ensure that all ICSW requirements are met for holding the hearing. It is the student's responsibility to attain written approval from the Registrar, after which the Chair may work with the Full Committee to schedule the hearing. It is the responsibility of the Chair to inform the Registrar of the date and time of the hearing.
5. In addition to regular meetings/consultations between the student and members of the Core Committee, the student and Core Committee (minus readers) must meet annually

(in person or by webcam) following the approval of the proposal and until the final defense. The student must be prepared to provide updates about the research at this time. The Chair is responsible for convening the meeting, and for giving notice (via appropriate form) to the Registrar that it has occurred.

6. The final dissertation defense must be held within four years of the proposal approval in order to prevent the aging of data. If this deadline passes, the student will need to recollect data and possibly resubmit the proposal for another IRB review and hearing. This decision will up to the dissertation committee and Chair of Research.

7. Once the student has a final dissertation draft ready for review, it is sent to the Chair for approval. Students should allow for 3- weeks for this review. The Chair must provide feedback during that time frame. If grammar editing is required by the Chair in response to the Chair's review, the student will hire and pay for that editing. Any revisions to the document at this point will add time to the dissertation process.

8. Once the Chair gives final approval to the document, the student sends out the document to the other two core committee members. The student should meet with the committee members for feedback and make appropriate changes under the guidance of the Chair. It is also possible (depending on the Chair's direction) that all feedback from the core committee will be given directly to the Chair.

9. Once all three members of the committee concur that the document is ready for defense, the student sends the document out to the readers. Depending on the committee's wishes, the final document may be copied and loose bound for committee members, and shipped to the address of their choosing. If a committee member prefers an electronic copy of the document, it will not be necessary to bind and ship in this case. The student should plan for the committee to have the final document for up to one month prior to the final hearing. The committee including readers, must provide feedback to the student during that time.

10. The student must receive ICSW approval from the Registrar to schedule the hearing. It is the student's responsibility to schedule a meeting with the Registrar to go over the student's file. The Registrar will let the Chair know when the student is approved for a final hearing.

11. Students should prepare a final abstract to bring to the final hearing.

12. Approval of both research proposals and dissertations require affirmative votes by four out of five Full Committee members.

13. Committee members are required to attend the final defense in person. If an exception must be made this should be done with approval of the Dean. Any committee person who is absent must provide written commentary on the proposal or dissertation to the student and Chair. It is rare that a hearing can take place without all members present. Students must prepare for this in the timing of their final defense.

14. Following the final defense the student must submit their fully approved dissertation to the ICSW style editor. All dissertations must be written according to ICSW's Style Manual from the beginning; the ICSW editor will simply check the document for style compliance before sending it back to ICSW for uploading to the UMI database.

**15. Students should be aware of the time required for review, editing, and approval processes in relation to dissertation work. A dissertation should be in final draft form to give to the Chair three to four months prior to the final defense (which does not guarantee full committee approval by any particular deadline). The time the process will take after this is variable and will depend on committee feedback, and the quality of the student's work.**

### **Suggested Dissertation Timeline**

*(these are the suggested latest possible times for ensuring you'll be fully approved in time for graduation)*

#### June Graduation

November 1: Final dissertation draft to Chair for approval

January 1: Chair-approved and hearing-ready document to full committee

March 1: Dissertation approval by full committee

#### January Degree Conferral

July 1: Final dissertation draft to Chair for approval

September 1: Chair-approved and hearing-ready document to full committee

October 15: Dissertation approval by full committee