

Northwestern

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
AND SOCIAL POLICY

**Doctoral Program in
HUMAN
DEVELOPMENT
AND SOCIAL
POLICY**

Student
Handbook
2026-2027

This Student Handbook details information about HDSP program requirements (including the core curriculum, trial research, guided literature review, and dissertation), arranged chronologically from what students should know before entering the program, through a hypothetical five-year course program, to what happens after students graduate. The appendices expand upon these topics with a list of professional conferences and fellowship opportunities, the annual Student Progress Report, and relevant courses outside of the department. The handbook also details HDSP academic requirements and expectations in line with those of The Graduate School.

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The Doctoral Program in Human Development and Social Policy

The doctoral program in Human Development and Social Policy (HDSP) focuses on understanding human development from infancy through adulthood, with an emphasis on the role of the contexts, programs, policies, and politics that influence the course of human lives, and how an understanding of human development informs programs and policies.

HDSP is one of three doctoral programs in the School of Education and Social Policy on the Evanston campus of Northwestern University. The SESP Doctoral Student Affairs Team is in Room 6427 of 2001 Sheridan Dr., Evanston, IL, 60208 consists of Jigbie Aguirre, Program Administrator (jigbie.aguirre@northwestern.edu) and Ella Silvers, Program Assistant (ella.silvers@northwestern.edu).

Learning Objectives for the PhD in Human Development and Social Policy

By the time HDSP students receive their PhD, they will:

- 1 HAVE DEVELOPED AN ACADEMIC IDENTITY AS A DISCIPLINARY AND/OR INTERDISCIPLINARY SCHOLAR.** Upon graduation, students will have come to see themselves as independent scholars with enthusiasm for research, concomitant modes of thinking and inquiry, and openness to ideas and unexpected findings. Further, HDSP students will have developed an identity as a disciplinary or interdisciplinary scholar. This disciplinary or interdisciplinary identity will be accompanied by a sense of belonging to a particular community or communities, an understanding of how that positions oneself in relation to existing scholarship, professional organizations, publishing outlets, and the job market.
- 2 EXHIBIT DEPTH AND BREADTH OF METHODOLOGICAL EXPERTISE.** HDSP students will have developed depth of expertise in a specific set of methods (including both quantitative and qualitative methods) in addition to a broad understanding of the limitations, affordances, and assumptions of other widely used methods related to their chosen research topic. HDSP students will have developed an understanding of how different methods can complement each other and how to triangulate multiple methods.
- 3 HAVE DEVELOPED THE CAPACITY TO DESIGN AND UNDERTAKE RIGOROUS, ANALYTICAL, ETHICAL, AND INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO IMPORTANT ISSUES IN THE SOCIAL WORLD.** HDSP students will be able to design and conduct an independent research study from start to finish, adjusting their research as necessary in response to changing or unexpected circumstances. When doing so, HDSP students may combine and execute methodological and (inter-)disciplinary expertise in novel ways in service of a research question. Skills include the ability to develop relevant research questions, synthesize and build on existing literature, build a conceptual framework, negotiate data/site access, clean data, and manage data in a field-expected way. HDSP students will understand the ethical aspects of doing research, how their positionality affects their scholarship, the ways in which their scholarship may serve to reproduce or interrupt existing structures of inequality, and the impact of their scholarship on the communities they are working with.
- 4 HAVE DEVELOPED THE POTENTIAL TO TAKE THE STUDY OF THEIR CHOSEN TOPIC OF INTEREST IN NEW DIRECTIONS BY BRINGING DIVERSE**

PERSPECTIVES, METHODS, AND FRAMEWORKS TOGETHER. HDSP students will develop expertise in the theories, research literature, epistemological assumptions, history, limitations, and appropriate methods for their chosen discipline or disciplines. They will have an awareness of how their chosen topic of study fits in with the core tenets of human development and social policy, the affordances and constraints of different disciplinary approaches for investigating their topic of interest, and how other human development and social policy approaches might investigate their topic differently. If they are working at the boundaries of multiple disciplines, they will be able to flexibly bring more than one discipline together to productively investigate their topic. They will be able to critique their own and others' approaches and methods to studying their questions, to engage with topics or fields within HDSP where they don't necessarily have expertise. They will be able to recognize and interrogate existing systems of inequality and the role that their own and others' research might play in producing or interrupting inequities for individuals and communities across the life span.

- 5 **HAVE DEVELOPED A FOUNDATION TO UNDERTAKE THE FULL RANGE OF PROFESSIONAL TASKS OF A PROFESSIONAL RESEARCHER.** Students will have some experience with many of the tasks that are part of being a professional researcher, including writing conference proposals, presenting at conferences, navigating academic publishing, writing grants, identifying collaborators, serving as grant and paper reviewers. They will also have developed the capacity to expand their skills in these realms post-PhD
- 6 **HAVE THE FOUNDATION TO BECOME A FLEXIBLE, INNOVATIVE AND SUPPORTIVE TEACHER AND/OR MENTOR.** HDSP students will develop the foundation to construct and teach courses in their areas of expertise, including a foundation for effective pedagogy, providing meaningful student feedback, and DEI competencies as they relate to classroom instruction. They will begin to develop skills at mentoring less experienced researchers, including the ability to empower their future students or less-experienced researchers to navigate uncertainty and develop a stance as a life-long learner. They will be able to represent themselves as an educator in oral and written form, including teaching statements.
- 7 **BE STRONG COMMUNICATORS, WHO CAN EFFECTIVELY SHARE THEIR WORK TO DIVERSE AUDIENCES IN A RANGE OF MODALITIES.** HDSP students will develop the ability to communicate findings in written and oral fashion to diverse audiences. These audiences might include: other researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and/or the public. For some students, it may be important to be able to situate their work in and communicate findings to international audiences. HDSP students will be able to leverage their interdisciplinary training to communicate their findings to researchers across disciplinary lines. They will be able to communicate through a range of modalities (including social media) the relevance and importance of findings in non-technical language to policymakers, practitioners, and the public.
- 8 **BE COMMITTED TO THE VALUES OF CURIOSITY, ETHICAL RESEARCH, RESPECT, REFLECTIVENESS, HUMILITY, AND ONGOING LEARNING.** HDSP students will deepen their intellectual curiosity, humility, openness, reflectiveness, and respect of multiple disciplinary approaches and forms of knowledge. They will be committed to ongoing learning throughout their career. They will also cultivate a deep commitment to being an ethical person and scholar. These qualities will be reflected in the research questions that they pursue, the methods they choose to use, the ways they critique and build upon existing research, the ways they engage with each other, with the communities with whom they collaborate, and the social world more broadly. For those who have strong social/political commitments, they will have grappled with the lines

between these commitments and their scholarship and developed an understanding of how they position themselves and their work in relation to this issue.

Things to Know Before You Begin

ORIENTATION

The Graduate School (TGS) and HDSP have separate orientation dates. Information regarding the Graduate School's Orientation can be found in the [Admissions](#) section of the Graduate School's website. Information regarding the HDSP new student orientation will be sent by email.

Additionally, information regarding HDSP students' WildCARD, U-Pass and other graduate student services can be found in [Community and Campus Life](#) section of the TGS website.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Upon arriving on campus, students must enroll in the student health plan or provide proof of their own health insurance. More information about dental and health Insurance, including start dates and enrollment procedures, can be found in the [Health Insurance](#) section of the TGS website.

COMMUNITY

HDSP students and faculty arrange a variety of activities to build intellectual community and to promote better communication and collaboration on Tuesdays throughout each quarter. Please plan on being available every Tuesday during the regular academic year and regularly attending HDSP colloquia and events. SESP Events are posted on this [Google calendar](#).

Additional events can be found on [Plan it Purple](#).

HDSP students and faculty also attend regular presentations across campus, including:

[Institute for Policy Research](#) (IPR)

[Multidisciplinary Program in Education Sciences](#) (MPES)

Brown bags/presentations are also hosted by Learning Sciences, Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, Economics, Political Science, etc. Some of these presentations take place weekly, while others occur only once or twice per quarter. Please contact these departments or visit their websites for more information.

Things to Keep in Mind Throughout the Program

INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES AND RESEARCH INTEGRITY

Please familiarize yourself with University offices and their policies.

All HDSP students are expected to adhere to University policies regardless of program standing, and physical presence on/off campus. These policies include, but are not limited to Academic Integrity, Civility Safety at Northwestern, and sexual discrimination, sexual harassment and sexual violence under Title IX. Additional information regarding these and other policies can be found at the [Office of the Provost](#).

From the TGS [Satisfactory Academic Progress page](#), you will also find links to the TGS Academic Integrity Policy, the Office for Research Integrity, and the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access, in addition to the NU Student Handbook.

ADVISING

Every student in HDSP must have an academic advisor(s). All entering students are assigned an initial faculty advisor, and this person usually remains their advisor until the student chooses to work with someone else. In assigning initial faculty advisors to students, we in no way expect that this person will remain the student's advisor for their entire program of study. Indeed, we encourage students to change to advisors that best fit their particular research interests. Co-advising arrangements are also acceptable. A student's advisor must be a tenured or tenure-track member of the HDSP faculty.

Students may change advisors at any time if they find a professor more suited to their intellectual interests. Students should discuss these changes with their current and new advisor. The approval of both the current advisor and new advisor must be given ahead of the student making this change. Students must have an advisor at all times in order to continue in the program; a new advising relationship must be in place prior to terminating a relationship with a current advisor.

To officially change their advisor, a student must email the Faculty Program Coordinator (cc'ing) the current advisor and future advisor as well as Jigbie Aguirre. Then the student should log into GSP and officially make the change.

Students should meet with their advisor(s) often, especially at the beginning of each quarter, to plan their courses and research and to discuss their progress. Regardless of who the official advisor is at any particular time, all HDSP faculty members can give intellectual and career advice, and graduate students are encouraged to seek this out. Students and faculty should refer to the "[Guidance for Positive Graduate Student and Faculty Adviser Relationships](#)" document written by The Graduate School.

ANNUAL REVIEWS

The HDSP faculty meets annually to review the progress of all students who have not yet advanced to candidacy. One basis for this review is the Student Progress Report (see [Appendix I](#)), which students complete and discuss with their advisors near the end of each academic year. Students will be notified in writing about the results of the annual review by the end of spring or beginning of summer quarter.

FUNDING

All students receive funding as outlined in their official offer letters. Typically, this involves a guarantee of funding for five years (20 quarters) of doctoral study through a combination of graduate fellowships, teaching assistantships, and research assistantships. You can read more

about SESP student funding and frequently asked questions [here](#).

- First year students are supported on fellowships.
- Beyond the first year, students should meet with their advisors in the Winter of each year to determine the nature of their funding (RA, TA, or internal or external fellowship) for the subsequent year. A letter confirming funding for the subsequent academic year will be sent each summer.
- Students interested in being considered for dissertation year funding in their fifth year should alert the SESP Doctoral Student Affairs Team by the Winter quarter of their fourth year. To qualify, the student must meet The Graduate School's prospectus milestone prior to the beginning of the first quarter of dissertation fellowship funding.
- Please refer to the [TGS milestone requirements](#).
- Students are encouraged to apply for external funding opportunities. Search for fellowship opportunities through The Office of Fellowships [Fellowship Finder](#). The possibility of funding after the fifth year is determined on a case-by-case basis. (See [Year 6 and Beyond](#) for further information.)

TEACHING REQUIREMENT

The HDSP program requires that students complete two quarters of training as a Teaching Assistant (TA). Many students choose to fulfill this requirement during their second or third years (although they may fulfill it at any time after the first year). Most students will TA more than the two required quarters as a source of their funding.

Students should speak with faculty about their undergraduate courses and decide which one interests them the most. Preferred TA assignments may not always be available.

Together, the student and course professor will determine the TA's responsibilities which require about 15-20 hours per week. [You can read more about guidelines and requirements here](#).

Students who are funded for the quarter on a TGS graduate assistantship will be assigned TA duties in fulfillment of their funding requirements. Other students may be eligible to earn a stipend supplement to TA.

Upon completion of the TA requirement, students should note this in their annual self-assessment.

EXTERNAL EMPLOYMENT POLICY

Graduate students are expected to be full-time students conducting their studies and research. On occasion, another funding opportunity may arise. When that situation occurs, permission to receive remuneration must be requested.

A [Graduate Student Permission to Work Request Form](#) is required when students are receiving additional pay. The form must be submitted BEFORE the work begins. More information on outside employment can be found [here](#).

TRAVEL GRANTS AND RESEARCH FUNDS

SESP Conference Travel Grant

HDSP students receive \$400 per academic year from years 1-5 (September 1 – August 31) to use for conference travel expenses. Unused funds are rolled over to the next academic year.

TGS Conference Travel Grant

This internal grant is available on an annual basis to students beyond their first year of study. The grant funds travel to conferences in which students have been invited to present. Funding must be partially covered through other university sources (e.g., departmental support). Maximum grant is \$800. Students are eligible for only one Conference Travel Grant award per fiscal year with a maximum of two grants over the entire course of their graduate career. Grants are awarded on a rolling basis. [Additional details regarding this grant can be found here.](#)

SESP Milestone Funds

SESP offers additional funds to support your research. Students who entered the program in fall 2024 and earlier will receive \$1,000 upon passing their qualifying milestone and an additional \$2,000 after passing the prospectus. These funds will be carried forward year to year for your duration in the program. [Here is a link to the description](#) of the funds.

TGS Research Grant

The Graduate Research Grant (GRG) is awarded to students beyond the first year (with exceptions) by application. The maximum award amount is \$3,000. [More information and application can be found here.](#)

Requirements for the PhD in Human Development and Social Policy

COURSE WORK REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS ENTERING FALL 2023 AND AFTER

Course work in the Human Development and Social Policy (HDSP) doctoral program includes a core curriculum and electives.

- A total of 21 courses are required for students entering without a master's degree, including 13 required courses and 8 electives.
- For those who have obtained a master's degree prior to entering HDSP, a total of 18 courses are required, including 13 required courses and 5 electives. No more than 3 electives may be independent studies (HDSP 499).

Many HDSP courses are offered only every other year. Students with completed master's degrees must take this into consideration if they wish to complete their coursework in two years. Contact the SESP Doctoral Student Affairs Team for a rough list of courses to be offered each quarter.

*Note: Please see appendix for prior years' curriculum. Students enrolled prior to 2023 have the option of doing the new 2023 requirements or the requirements in place when they entered the program.

HDSP Integration Courses (2 units)
HDSP 401 Proseminar in Human Development and Social Policy HDSP 414 Research Design
Foundations in Human Development (3 Units)
Three of the following courses. One of the Courses must be a developmental stages

course (indicated by a *) HDSP 402 Child Development and Social Policy(*) HDSP 403 Adolescent Development(*) HDSP 404 Adult Development and Aging(*) HDSP 406 Diversity Science in Psychology HDSP 407 Culture and Development HDSP 408 Emotional Mysteries HDSP 415 Society, Stress and Development: Implications for Intervention HDSP 482 Methods in Social Psychology HDSP 489 Identity and Motivation
Foundations in Empirical Research Methods (5 Units)
HDSP 410 Quantitative Methods I: Probability and Statistics HDSP 411 Quantitative Methods II: Regression Analysis HDSP 412 Quantitative Methods III: Empirical Tools for Causal Quantitative Analysis HDSP 432 Field Methods HDSP 435 Advanced Qualitative Methods
Foundations of Social Policy (3 units)
Students must take 3 courses from the following: HDSP 424 Intersectionality, Measurement and Public Policy HDSP 425 Economics of Health, Human Capital, and Happiness HDSP 426 Organizations, Institutions and Society: Persistence and Change Among Public, Private Institutions HDSP 427 Sociology of Education HDSP 428 Education Policy: Design, Implementation and Effects HDSP 430 Economics of Social Policy HDSP 442 Social Policymaking and Implementation HDSP 451 Role of Research in Policy and Practice HDSP 451 Culture, Learning and Poverty
Electives
8 Electives for students entering without a master's degree 5 for student entering with a master's degree
Note: The list of approved courses in Foundations for Human Development and Foundations in Social Policy will shift over time as professors develop new courses.

OBTAINING A COURSE SUBSTITUTION

When can a course be substituted?

It is the strong expectation that course substitutions will be rare. The curriculum requirements as of Fall 2023 provide a high level of flexibility for students to take classes outside of HDSP but there may be rare instances when a course substitution is necessary. Students should plan ahead to ensure that they are able to satisfy course requirements as they meet program milestones.

Guidelines for what “core” courses can be substituted:

Courses in the opportunities for integration sequence: HDSP 401-0 (Prosem) and Research Design) cannot

be substituted with other courses.

Courses in the methods sequence: There is a strong recommendation that HDSP 410 (Quantitative Methods 1), HDSP 411 (Quantitative Methods 2), HDSP 412 (Quantitative Methods 3), HDSP 432 (Field Methods), and HDSP 435 (Advanced Qualitative Methods) should not be substituted. We recognize that some students may have taken similar courses in other programs, but we strongly encourage all students to use these courses as an opportunity to master the material, connect and learn with their cohort, and develop a new understanding of the content in relation to their evolving research interests. Substitutions also cannot be used to avoid particular types of methods classes (e.g. substituting quantitative classes for qualitative classes or qualitative classes for quantitative classes).

HD Courses and SP Courses: It is recommended that students fulfill the requirement to take three HD courses and three SP courses using courses taught by core and affiliated HDSP faculty listed on the “approved courses list.” There may be conditions when one of these courses will need to be substituted: (1) when HDSP core or courtesy faculty introduce a new course that is not yet listed on the “approved courses list,” (2) when extenuating circumstances arise that prevent HDSP core or courtesy faculty from offering a course regularly enough to satisfy degree-completion TGS requirements, or (3) when students are seeking to deepen their understanding and study of a particular topic in their research. For this third category, students may substitute no more than 1 course from each bucket of courses (HD and SP).

Previous coursework: courses taken prior to enrolling in the HDSP program cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements for students following the 2020 and 2023 curriculum.

The process for requesting a substitution:

Students seeking a substitution for course in the methods sequence or HD and SP buckets to meet HDSP requirements must submit their request via email to the Program Coordinator and copy their advisor and the Program Assistant for doctoral student affairs. The request should include the following information: 1) the corresponding course names and 2) an explanation of the reasons for the requested course substitution. 3) the substitution (e.g. the course is key for developing expertise in an area of research). Core course requirements may only be substituted when a student makes a compelling argument in support of the request.

GRADE POINT AVERAGE AND COURSEWORK COMPLETION

In keeping with Graduate School requirements, all students enrolled in a doctoral program must maintain a grade point average of “B” or better for all credit bearing graduate courses not taken on a pass/no credit (P/N) basis. Failure to maintain a “B” average will result in TGS placing the student on Academic Probation. More detailed information regarding the [TGS grading system](#) and [Satisfactory Academic Progress](#) can be found on the TGS website.

The HDSP Program follows [TGS’ guidelines for PhD coursework and registration](#). A student who enters a doctoral program must successfully complete at least nine quality letter-graded course units (ABC, not P/NP or S/U) [authorized for graduate credit](#). Students must maintain a 3.0 cumulative GPA. The Graduate School does not accept transfer credit in lieu of the nine letter-graded minimum unit requirement

Should a student fail to maintain a “B” average, or does not complete required coursework in a timely manner, the student shall, along with the approval of his/her advisor, submit in writing to the Program Coordinator a plan of remediation that will detail the steps the student will take in order to restore the student to “good standing”. Failure to comply with the Graduate School’s timeline for resuming satisfactory academic standing after at most two probationary quarters (excluding summers) the student will become ineligible to receive financial aid and will be excluded (dismissed) from TGS.

BEYOND THE CORE CURRICULUM

Students will also specialize in their area of interest (taking classes both within and outside of HDSP) in order to develop a strong intellectual identity that is recognized by specific aspects of the job market. This should be done in consultation with students' advisors, other faculty, and more advanced students. See [Appendix VII](#).

In addition to courses listed above, students may choose to enroll in supervised independent studies to conduct their own research, to learn about a specific topic or methodology, or to complete a specific set of requirements or milestones. There are two options for this before a student reaches candidacy.

1. **Supervised Independent Study (HDSP 499):** Students have the option of enrolling in and completing a supervised independent study (HDSP 499) when they want to deepen their learning or understanding of a specific topic or methodology. The purpose of HDSP 499 is to work with a faculty member to learn a new substantive topic or skill. For instance, a student might enroll in HDSP 499 to read and digest a new set of literature or learn a new method that is not offered by a course and/or is in service of developing a student's research interests or milestones. In either case, the goal should be to deepen knowledge about a research interest. Students must follow the procedures below to enroll in HDSP 499.

Procedure: HDSP 499 supervised independent studies are to be taken under the supervision and guidance of a HDSP faculty member and must be approved by the faculty member prior to signing up for the independent study. Students should meet with the faculty member prior to the beginning of the term of enrollment in HDSP 499 to determine: (1) the goal for the supervised independent study, (2) a plan for completion during the term, (3) the frequency with which the student and faculty member will meet, and (4) what the anticipated output of the independent study will be (e.g. a memo, article draft, cleaned dataset, etc.).

A first-year graduate student may take no more than one-half of the total credits in any one quarter in 499 Supervised Independent Study. A maximum of three credits from HDSP 499 courses can count towards the 5 elective courses required for students entering with a masters degree or the 8 elective courses required for students entering without a masters degree.^[1] HDSP 499 Supervised Independent Studies can earn either A/B/C or P/NP grades.

2. **Independent Student Research (HDSP 590):** In some cases, students may need to allocate time they might otherwise devote to classes to working on their independent research (e.g., collect data, draft a paper or GLR) while maintaining three credits for full-time enrollment. In such cases, students may sign up for HDSP 590, which *does* count toward enrollment, but *does not* count toward fulfilling the units required for the degree. In other words, unlike HDSP 499, enrollment in HDSP 590 does not count toward the fulfillment of elective course requirements for degree completion. HDSP 590 course enrollments are reserved for independent student research and do not require the same amount of direct faculty supervision as a HDSP 499. However, enrollment in HDSP 590 still requires a HDSP faculty supervisor, and students should discuss with their faculty advisor before enrolling. A HDSP 590 enrollment results in a P/NP grade.

^[1] For students who entered the program prior to Fall 2020, no more than one-third of the total units presented for the master's degree may be from HDSP 499 (6 courses for those entering with a masters and 7 entering without a masters).

After completing coursework, all students must maintain full time registration until completion of the program. Advanced students who are funded should register for TGS 500 in order to maintain their full-time student status. Students can continue to take additional courses, but if they are taking fewer than 3 courses per quarter, they must also register for TGS 500 to be considered a full-time student.

WHAT TO DO IN SUMMER

Students do not take coursework during the summer quarters, but if they are receiving funding, they must register one of the following to maintain their full-time student status:

- HDSP 590 Research (for the summers following the 1st and 2nd years of coursework)
- or*
- TGS 500 Advanced Doctoral Study (all summers after the 3rd year)

Students should work with their advisors and be involved in research over the summer.

TGS and HDSP Milestones

There are four major program milestones that all students must successfully meet:

1. Trial Research
2. Guided Literature Review (qualifying exam)
3. Dissertation Proposal Defense (prospectus)
4. Dissertation (final exam)

Milestone	Suggested timeline to complete
Coursework	Years 2-3
Trial research	End of year 2
Guided literature review	End of year 3
Dissertation prospectus	End of year 4
Dissertation	End of year 5

Students wishing to schedule their dissertation proposal defense (prospectus) must notify both the HDSP Chair and Program Assistant at least two weeks in advance of the prospectus defense date. Only after the student receives signed approval by the Program Chair may the prospectus defense take place.

Successful completion of the Trial Research and Guided Literature Review admits a student to PhD candidacy.

Students should rely on the HDSP Handbook and [TGS website](#) for information regarding milestone deadlines. Please note TGS' summer 2020 [letter](#) about milestone extensions. Students should be aware that they might be placed on academic probation if deadlines are missed.

WHAT TO DO IN SUMMER

Students do not take coursework during the summer quarters, but if they are receiving funding, they must register one of the following to maintain their full-time student status:

- HDSP 590 Research (for the summers following the 1st and 2nd years of coursework)
- or*

- TGS 500 Advanced Doctoral Study (all summers after the 3rd year)

Students should work with their advisors and be involved in research over the summer.

TGS and HDSP Milestones

There are four major program milestones that all students must successfully meet:

5. Trial Research
6. Guided Literature Review (qualifying exam)
7. Dissertation Proposal Defense (prospectus)
8. Dissertation (final exam)

Students wishing to schedule their dissertation proposal defense (prospectus) must notify both the HDSP Chair and Program Assistant at least two weeks in advance of the prospectus defense date. Only after the student receives signed approval by the Program Chair may the prospectus defense take place.

Successful completion of the Trial Research and Guided Literature Review admits a student to PhD candidacy.

Students should rely on the HDSP Handbook and [TGS website](#) for information regarding milestone deadlines. Please note TGS's policies regarding [Satisfactory Academic Progress](#). Students should be aware that they might be placed on academic probation if deadlines are missed.

Any student placed on academic probation will be given at most two quarters (not including summer quarter) to resume satisfactory academic standing. If the student does not resume satisfactory academic standing, the student will be ineligible to receive financial aid, and will be excluded (dismissed) from TGS. Students who have not met the GPA requirement or exceeded their time to degree deadline, qualifying exam or prospectus milestone deadline, may petition [TGS](#) for an extension.

Students should meet with the HDSP Coordinator to discuss extenuating circumstances that may delay progress on their milestone projects (i.e. pregnancy, family emergencies, etc.). If an extended leave is needed, students should use the [Petition for Absence](#) form in GSP. Both the HDSP Coordinator and TGS will review the request before leave is granted. Refer to the [TGS PhD Timeline](#) for definitive TGS Milestone expectations and the [TGS website](#) for more information about leaves of absence. Also, see [Appendix IX](#).

Milestone 1: Trial Research

The purpose of the trial research requirement is to provide evidence that the student has had adequate training and experience in designing and carrying out a research project. The trial research paper should address questions that can be answered through empirical, feasible investigations (please note that neither a critical review of the literature on a topic nor a speculative essay is acceptable). It should be presented in the form of a journal article. The trial research does not need to be publishable. As is the case with journal articles, the length should be 30-60 pages, double-spaced. The trial research may be on a similar or different topic than the dissertation.

Timeline

During the first year: All students are expected to become involved in lab meetings and at least one research program under the supervision of one or more faculty members. During this time, students

should begin to consider the trial research project. What questions might you address? What data sources might you use?

Third quarter of first year: Students enroll in Research Design class. Students may use this class to refine their research ideas and work toward a proposal for their Trial Research project.

Fourth quarter of first year: Over the summer of the first year, students should work on developing a brief proposal for their trial research project. The proposal should propose a research question, provide a description of the data you might use to answer this question, sketch a preliminary research design, and propose a second reader (in addition to your advisor). This proposal is meant to be relatively short (ballpark, 2-5 pages) and tentative. It's meant as a way to start a focused conversation with your advisor that can lead to a refinement of your ideas and help move you to a concrete plan for your trial research. The proposal is due to your advisor on August 31st.

To summarize, the trial research proposal should include:

- A proposed research question
- A description of data you might use to answer this question
- A preliminary sketch of research design
- A proposed second reader, in addition to your advisor
- Length: 2-5 pages
- Should the student have a more fully developed proposal from the Research Design class, they can submit this instead of the brief proposal.

Second year: In their second year, students continue to work on their trial research. Students should work closely with their advisor(s) to hone their research interests and skills.

Eighth quarter: The paper is due in their eighth quarter, at the end of their second year (August 31). The final paper must be approved by both the supervising HDSP faculty member and a second Northwestern faculty member.

The final paper should be 30-60 pages, double spaced in the form of a journal article. It should include:

- Research questions
- Conceptual framework and review of prior literature
- Methods of data collection
- Results
- Discussion, conclusions, interpretations, and suggestions for further research
- Citations, figures, tables.

Many students present their trial research papers at professional conferences and publish revised versions in academic journals. Some have won national awards for their work.

Students may petition the SESP Doctoral Student Affairs Team, with the support of their academic advisor, to submit an M.A. thesis completed elsewhere, or another published or unpublished paper, as their trial research. Together with their advisor, they will determine if this previous work (either as is, or with additional revision) is acceptable. The paper is subject to the same requirements as the trial research. The review of this paper will be identical to that of an original trial research.

Students should successfully complete the trial research by the end of their second year of study, which falls on the last date of the 8th quarter. Upon successful completion of the Trial Research, the student will fill out the "Master's in Primary PhD" form on GSP (see [Appendix VI](#)).

An MA in Human Development and Social Policy may be awarded after completion of the required core courses, and successful submission of the Trial Research paper. An MA may be awarded to students continuing on to completion of the PhD, or to students leaving the program for any reason, provided they have satisfactorily completed the core coursework and Trial Research paper, maintain at least a "B" average, and meet all other TGS and HDSP requirements. See [MA Degree requirements](#).

Milestone 2: Guided Literature Review (TGS Qualifying Exam)

Virtually all PhD programs have a qualifying examination whose purpose is to assure that the student has mastered the broad content of the field and is now ready to proceed to dissertation stage in the program. For some programs, the qualifying examination is an actual in-class or take-home written exam. For other programs, it is a comprehensive review paper that aims to synthesize theory and research in a given area.

Once the coursework and trial research requirements have also been met, passing the GLR serves as completion of the qualifying exam requirement and allows the student to advance to PhD candidacy.

The Graduate School deadline* for the completion of the Qualifying Exam is the beginning of Fall quarter of the student's 4th year in the HDSP graduate program. A student failing to meet this deadline will be considered "not in good standing" and therefore will be placed on probation.

Deadlines are altered in the case of a medical or family leave. Students can learn more about the leave process [here](#). Students can view their TGS deadlines on the "milestones" tab in GSP.

Upon successful completion of the Qualifying Exam, students should complete the "Qualifying exam form" in GSP to notify the program and TGS of their progress.

* See [July 2020 letter](#) regarding Milestone Deadline Extension

GUIDED LITERATURE REVIEW

Once the coursework and trial research requirements have also been met, passing the Guided Literature Review serves as completion of the qualifying exam requirement and allows the student to advance to PhD candidacy.

Guided Literature Review Summary

To pass the Guided Literature Review (GLR) qualifying exam requirement, students must write a paper that demonstrates:

- a. A mastery of the literature pertaining to a key research area within human development and social policy
- b. The ability to synthesize and critique a literature
- c. The ability to craft an argument
- d. An awareness of multiple (within/across disciplines) approaches to this research area

The GLR may overlap with — but must be distinct from — the Trial Research Project and Dissertation. The GLR must reflect on both Human Development and Social Policy in enough depth to demonstrate understanding of each approach to inquiry.

The GLR can be completed at any time, including prior to the completion of the Trial Research. The GLR and Trial Research must be completed before the student proposes their dissertation.

6 Steps to Completing the Guided Literature Review

1. The student will select a topic of relevance to human development and social policy.
 - Research topics should be narrow enough to synthesize a set of relevant literatures in 30 pages, but broad enough to bring together different methodological and disciplinary perspectives from the study of human development and social policy.
 - Examples:
 - a. The role of policy and program interventions in improving the academic outcomes of low-income youth.
 - b. Factors contributing to racial/ethnic or socioeconomic health disparities.
 - c. Integration of linguistic minority students into education systems.
 - d. Relationship between teacher quality and low-income public schools.

- e. Stress in adolescence: Biological sources and consequences for adjustment.
 - f. Socio-emotional development in late life and implications for aging societies.
2. The student will propose a review panel totaling four NU faculty.
 - a. Must include two faculty members who bring diversity in some way to the panel (either being from a different primary discipline than the student, or utilizing very different methodologies or bringing strongly different theoretical perspective)
 - b. Must propose a panel chair.
 - c. At least 3 out of 4 panel members should be from within HDSP.
 - d. The faculty panel composition must be approved by the HDSP Coordinator, with input from HDSP faculty if needed.
 3. The student will submit their literature review topic to the committee for approval. In consultation with the committee, the student will develop a reading list that both addresses a broad range of literature on their topic and allows for a critical analysis of the literature. The reading list will contain at least 40 citations, although this figure may be altered depending on the topic and at the discretion of the committee.
 4. The student will write the paper independently but will consult the panel, if necessary, at critical points in the writing process.
 - a. The essay should be 25-30 pages long (excluding references), double-spaced, with 12-point font and 1-inch margins.
 - b. The student and panel will agree on a submission deadline, with a recommended submission date no later than May 15 of the third year, which will allow enough time for revision as determined by the panel.
 - c. The final date for passing the GLR is August 31 of the third year.
 5. The student will submit the final paper to the SESP Doctoral Student Affairs Team, who will submit the paper, scoring rubric, and assessment sheets to the panel. The review panel will read and review the student's manuscript and issue an assessment, including (if needed) suggestions for revision/remediation. The committee chair will convey the committee decision and recommendations to the student and to the SESP Doctoral Student Affairs Team. The student will undertake any revisions/remediation suggested by the panel, until such a time the committee determines that:
 - The requirement has been met and a passing grade can be issued.
 - or*
 - Further remediation is no longer fruitful, and a failing grade should be issued.

Guided Literature Review Assessment Process

Each member of the faculty panel will read and assess the student's essay based on the rubric listed below, and will submit a set of comments and, if needed, a set of requested revisions. The panel will then communicate and combine their individual impressions into a single combined decision and set of comments and recommendations that will be conveyed to the student. The panel will submit to the HDSP Coordinator an agreed-upon GLR revision form with the panel's recommendation, signed by each panel member.

High pass: Literature review meets all the elements described in these guidelines and does so with a high degree of sophistication that adds insights to our understanding of the topic.

Pass: Literature review meets all of the elements described in these guidelines. Adequate,

but not exceptional; a solid critical review of the literature but doesn't necessarily add new insights.

Revise-resubmit-Minor Revision: Literature review is approaching a passing level, but several points require additional attention or analysis, or some minor re-writing or reorganization of the literature review is required. Minor revisions may be approved by the committee chair.

Revise-resubmit-Major Revision: Student has failed to meet substantial elements of this assignment, and a major revision of the literature review is required. Insufficient interrogation or weak analysis of the literature can be grounds for major revision. Major revisions must be re-evaluated by the committee members.

Fail: After two rounds of revision (or three, if an additional round or revisions is approved by the committee and the HDSP coordinator), the literature review fails to meet the requirements of this assignment.

Remediation Process

In the event the faculty panel determines that the GLR submission fails to meet a combined grade of Pass, the panel chair will submit a remediation form to the HDSP Coordinator and student, with the remediation goals the student must meet in order to complete the GLR requirements. Unless a special appeal is made by the committee, and approved by the HDSP coordinator, allowing a third round of revisions, only two attempts at remediation will be allowed before a final determination of pass vs. fail is made by the committee.

Additional GLR Guidelines

Identify a topic and state a research problem or question (or set of problems and questions) related to this topic and is relevant to human development and social policy.

Discuss the broad social and policy importance of the topic. Explain how the basic science of human development has informed your topic.

Synthesize and analyze the important relevant literature on the topic. Where appropriate, draw from a variety of disciplines. Compare and contrast literatures.

This synthesis should not be a laundry list, nor should it artificially pose literatures as always fitting together or complimentary or telling a seamless story. Rather, it should be a revealing and carefully crafted summary of what we know, how we know it, what we don't know, and why we don't know it. This synthesis must discuss and explain how specific theories and research address this topic/research problem, and what gaps remain to be addressed.

Interrogate the claims and quality of the methods.

Offer critiques regarding the quality of the literature, including suggestions for improvements, and offer specific suggestions for future research that would help to move our understanding of this topic forward.

Attempt to adjudicate, where appropriate, and evaluate the validity of conflicting perspectives and claims. Where such competing claims cross, or occur within disciplines, the student should discuss differences that arise from the different approaches.

Make an argument that is derived from the analysis of the literature. The argument should take a firm stance on:

1. The state of knowledge on the research topic
2. What questions have not been answered

3. How we might be able to credibly answer them

Milestone 3: Dissertation Proposal (Prospectus)

The dissertation prospectus provides an opportunity to propose, discuss, and receive faculty feedback on the theoretical and empirical rationale for and the intended research design of a student's dissertation study (or studies). This marks an important and exciting stage in a PhD student's scholarly career and provides a means to ensure that a student is well prepared to undertake individual research and produce a finished dissertation. The prospectus defense likewise provides a key opportunity to bring faculty advisors and committee members together to focus exclusively on a discussion of a student's proposed research.

The product of the prospectus and prospectus defense should serve as a guide to students as they complete their dissertation and the PhD program. That said, it is still possible to change aspects of your proposed dissertation research after the prospectus defense through subsequent communication with and approval of your advisor and committee members. The proposal is just that—a proposal—and not a contract requiring you to complete the research exactly as laid out in the defended prospectus.

Passing the dissertation prospectus defense is the last milestone that students will need to complete to reach candidacy. This is a critical milestone that allows students to apply for internal and — in some cases — external dissertation funding. Dissertation Year Fellowships are contingent on a successful dissertation proposal defense by the summer quarter of the fourth year. Before working on the dissertation, students must be approved by HDSP faculty and The Graduate School.

Dissertation Prospectus Summary:

To pass the dissertation prospectus, students must:

- a. Form a Dissertation Committee
- b. Write their prospectus under the guidance of the Dissertation Committee Chair (and/or committee members)
- c. Orally defend their prospectus in front of the Dissertation Committee

This is a process that takes more time and effort than many students anticipate, so students are encouraged to start a conversation with their advisor about the dissertation prospectus and the process of forming a committee well in advance of their expected completion target date. For many students, it will be appropriate to begin this conversation during their third year — typically after completion of the Trial Research Project and in conjunction with or near the end of completion of the GLR.

Unlike the GLR process, requirements for a successful completion of the dissertation prospectus are more individualized and are often highly dependent on the student's research interests, the research design of the project, disciplinary norms, and the guidance of the Dissertation Committee Chair and members. For that reason, the guidance herein incorporates a range of possibilities and is not prescriptive. As a baseline, however, the guidelines should help students develop a set of questions and topics of discussion in which to engage with their advisor as they plan for the development of their dissertation prospectus.

Tasks for completing the Dissertation Prospectus

1. Getting started

- Students should use the first two to three years of study in the HDSP program to develop and/or refine a set of research questions that are of interest to them for their dissertation study (or studies). The Trial Research Project and GLR milestones can offer students the opportunity to explore or lay the foundation for some of these questions. However, the dissertation research question(s) and methods may also be a substantial departure from the student's prior research. Students should meet with their advisor during this period, as well as other faculty who may provide different areas of substantive and methodological expertise in helping students think through and develop their research questions and methodological approaches.

2. Establish a committee

- As students consult with their advisor and other faculty members, they should start to discuss the process of forming a Dissertation Committee with their advisor. This Committee is responsible for evaluating the student's dissertation prospectus and participating in the prospectus defense. The Dissertation Committee must include at least three full-time faculty of Northwestern University, two of whom (including the chairperson) must be graduate faculty members. The chairperson of the committee (usually the student's advisor, but not always) must hold a full-time, tenure-line appointment in HDSP.
- Students typically approach faculty members during their third year to ask them to serve on their Dissertation Committee. Committee members have differing preferences regarding how involved they like to be in the research design and conceptual process. Some faculty members are highly involved; some read and comment on the written proposal before submission; others may give most of their feedback at the defense. It is best to discuss these preferences soon after the committee is formed.
- While rare, it is possible in some circumstances to change the committee membership and/or add additional committee members between the prospectus defense and the final dissertation defense. The student must have a strong rationale for doing so and should seek approval of their Committee Chair in making these changes. After discussing with the Committee Chair, students can add or change their dissertation committee members in GSP.

3. Draft the prospectus

- There is significant variation in the length and format of a dissertation prospectus in the HDSP program. The most important guidance for determining what your prospectus should look like is to engage in discussions with your Committee Chair about their expectations on the content and format of the prospectus. Depending on the student's research interests, disciplinary focus, or research approaches, the prospectus may look similar to a grant proposal that rationalizes and proposes a research project or series of several projects to be completed after the prospectus defense, including background literature and proposed methods of data collection and analysis. For others, a prospectus may include preliminary or completed data analysis on some or all of the studies proposed. Because of this, length and format of the proposal can vary widely and early discussions with the Committee Chair and Dissertation Committee members are highly encouraged in order to help define the approach to and scope of the student's particular dissertation prospectus document.
- A dissertation prospectus typically contains the following content:
 - Research question(s)

- Theoretical background
- Literature review
- Methodology
- Source of data collection and design of the study or studies
- Analytic approach
- Potential implications and contributions of the research

Through these sections (and not necessarily in this exact order) the student should: describe the research puzzle to be investigated and include a question statement; explain the motivation for this research (e.g., justify why this question is worth examining, how it is informed by prior literature, and how it is novel or adds to the existing literature); include a theoretical statement and potential hypotheses; and outline how the student plans to approach the proposed research, including potential data sources, data collection (if applicable), and data analysis.

- From project to project, a dissertation prospectus may require varying levels of preliminary data collection and/or analysis, depending both on the fields of study and the type of research project(s) being proposed. For instance, if a student plans to conduct original data collection, it could be the case that the Committee members advise that it is best to collectively meet (via the defense) before data collection begins in order to discuss guidance as a group. On the other hand, there may be conditions under which the Committee may advise the student to provide more developed data analysis for the prospectus. This is an important question to ask in early conversations with the advisor.
- If your research data collection or analysis will require Institutional Review Board (IRB, also known as human subjects) approval, it is important to discuss with your Committee Chair whether you will need to start this approval process during the prospectus process. At Northwestern, graduate students may not serve as PI of human subjects' proposals, so if this step is required, students will need to work with a faculty PI (often their advisor) in submitting or updating an IRB proposal.
- Students should use this process to work with their Committee Chair and other committee members to determine the format of their dissertation. There is variation in style of dissertation, but most dissertations in HDSP fit into either a 3-article dissertation model (which typically consists of an overarching theoretical framework for their research agenda along with three separate studies) or a book dissertation model (which typically consists of an introductory chapter, theory chapter, at least three empirical chapters, and a conclusion). The decision on format will likely be driven by field, student research interests, and student goals after graduation.
- It is also important to consult with your Committee Chair and committee members ahead of time regarding the expected length of your dissertation prospectus. Some faculty recommend a range of 20-30 pages, and some recommend 70-100 pages (again, depending on the fields of study and types of research projects being proposed).
- Students should work with their Committee Chair and other committee members to determine if prior research is permitted to be included in the dissertation itself. This is another place for variance, in part due to field differences. In most cases, students will need to have completed some significant alteration or revision of the prior work (e.g., the Trial Research Project) in order to be included as chapters of their dissertation. Likewise, students should work with their committee to determine if, and how, coauthored work might be incorporated into the dissertation itself. In many cases, students will need to develop a version of the study they have drafted on their own and acknowledge the

contribution or authorship of co-authors in the study (or studies).

4. Dissertation Prospectus Defense

- Once a student has obtained written approval from the Committee Chair and has completed or almost completed a written prospectus document, the student should schedule their proposal defense date. Some committee members need several months' notice to get the prospectus defense on their calendars.
- Students must submit their completed written prospectus to the committee members prior to the oral defense. The student should check with their committee well ahead of time regarding how far in advance they should submit the prospectus document to the committee. Typically, committee members request to receive the document at least 3 weeks prior to the scheduled defense date, though committee members may need more time to review longer documents.
- The prospectus defense process itself takes place in the presence of the full Dissertation Committee (most often in person, but occasionally some may need to attend virtually) and lasts between 1.5 hours to 3 hours. The Committee members will typically confer at the beginning of the defense without the student present. Once the student is in the room, they will be asked to present their proposed dissertation project to the Committee (typically between 10-20 minutes, with slides). The Committee and the student will discuss the proposed research project(s), with Committee members asking questions or making comments on any aspects of the submitted proposal, ranging from the background literature and rationale, to the details of the proposed methods. At the end of the defense, the Committee will again confer without the student present. After, the student will be asked to return, and the Committee will inform the student of the determination and next steps. Students should confirm the length and format of the defense, including expectations for the student presentation, with their Chair prior to scheduling.
- The prospectus defense should be scheduled during the academic year (e.g. Fall, Winter, or Spring quarter). While extenuating circumstances may in some rare cases require a student to schedule a defense over the summer, this is at the sole discretion of the Dissertation Committee members. Students should also make sure to schedule their defense well in advance of any internal or external deadlines for fellowship funding (e.g. TGS fellowship funding in a student's fifth year requires a completed proposal and for students to have advanced to PhD candidacy) and should aim to have a draft proposal completed no later than the end of second quarter of the fourth year.
- In the event the Committee determines that the prospectus is not ready to be approved, the Committee Chair, and with the input of the remaining Committee Members, will provide comments (either oral or written) during the defense outlining the steps the student must take in order to complete the Dissertation Proposal requirements. If a student does not submit a prospectus to The Graduate School that has received Committee approval, they are subject to exclusion (dismissal) from The Graduate School.

5. Submission to TGS:

- After students pass the dissertation proposal defense, they must complete the TGS PhD Prospectus form in GSP. (See [Appendix VI.](#)) The program must approve this form online before The Graduate School enters the final approval. Students are notified via email by The Graduate School of approval of their prospectus form.
- Students must have a prospectus (dissertation proposal) approved by their committee no later than the end of the fourth year of study, which falls on the last date of the 16th

quarter. A student failing to meet this milestone will be considered not in good academic standing and therefore will be placed on academic probation. Deadlines will be altered in the case of an approved leave of absence or parental accommodation. A petition for extension of the Dissertation Proposal deadline may be approved by TGS under certain circumstances, such as medical or family leave. (See [Appendix VI.](#))

DISSERTATION PROSPECTUS SUGGESTIONS:

Things to keep in mind:

- 1) Because there are often varied disciplinary and methodological expectations of dissertation projects, committee members may have different guidance for each student's dissertation prospectus — even for students within the same cohort. If you are uncertain about the expectations for your prospectus, it is a good idea to speak with your advisor, other faculty members, or other students who share the same advisor.
- 2) Developing a dissertation prospectus is a challenging process. Some students find it daunting to narrow their research questions and focus on an area of study. Please know that the faculty have confidence in you to complete this process! Admission into the HDSP Ph.D. program and successful completion of previous milestones is typically a strong signal that students can successfully complete and defend the dissertation proposal.
- 3) The process of proposing new research projects is non-linear. It is difficult to know where a project will lead and whether the research will yield fruitful results. Through the prospectus defense process, students will receive feedback about their work and this can sometimes be hard to take in when engaging in the vulnerable process of trying out new ideas and methods. The faculty get it—in part because they have been through it. Please keep in mind that the goal of the process is to help students develop and complete a successful dissertation — a challenging first-time task for anyone! Constructive criticism is a normal part of academic life and students are encouraged to treat that feedback as guidance for directing and strengthening the work and NOT as a reflection of whether they belong in academia.
- 4) While committee members will likely provide many (sometimes conflicting, sometimes cohesive) points of feedback throughout the prospectus development and defense processes, please keep in mind that each comment is not necessarily determinative, nor “the magic answer” for your study. You will become the expert on your dissertation research and it is your job to take in feedback from multiple sources and integrate it into a compelling dissertation. This means that sometimes committee members may ask for more clarity on what students wish to do or may ask for students to reframe their line of inquiry. Part of the learning process for students completing dissertations is to figure out how to make the case for what you are studying and why it is the best approach under the circumstances.

Some possible questions to ask your advisor:

- 1) How do I select a research topic that is feasible and aligns with my interests and goals?
- 2) Who should be on my committee? What considerations should I make regarding expertise and availability?
- 3) What format makes sense for my dissertation topic/field? (e.g., three paper, book, traditional format)
- 4) What should my dissertation proposal look like? How long should it be?
- 5) Do you expect that I already have data for the projects that I am proposing? Do you have or know of existing data relevant to the questions I am asking that I can access?

- a) Do you expect that I will have conducted preliminary data analyses before the proposal defense?
 - b) Do you expect that I will have results/findings before the proposal defense?
- 6) When do you expect a first draft of the proposal? How many drafts are you interested in and willing to review?
- 7) At what point can I schedule my dissertation defense? How far along should a project be at the defense stage?
- 8) What criteria makes a successful prospectus defense?
 - a) What should the format be?
 - b) How long should I anticipate presenting?
 - c) (For all committee members) How long do you want the prospectus draft before the defense?
- 9) Is passing the dissertation prospectus critical to applying for funding in my field?
- 10) How do I manage the dissertation process, including time management and how to deal with setbacks?

Approvals and Deadlines

Dissertation Year Fellowships are contingent on a successful dissertation proposal defense by the summer quarter of the fourth year.

Students must have a prospectus (dissertation proposal) approved by their committee no later than the end of the fourth year of study, which falls on the last date of the 16th quarter. A student failing to meet this milestone will be considered not in good academic standing and therefore will be placed on academic [probation](#). Deadlines will be altered in the case of an approved leave of absence or parental accommodation. The prospectus must be approved by a faculty committee. A minimum of three individuals must serve on the prospectus committee. At least two members of this committee, including the chair, must be members of the Northwestern University Graduate Faculty. The student must submit the PhD prospectus form through TGS Forms in [GSP](#). The program must approve this form online before The Graduate School enters the final approval. Students are notified via email by The Graduate School of approval of their prospectus form.

In the event the review committee determines that the Dissertation Proposal (Prospectus) fails to meet standards, the committee chair, and with the input of the remaining committee members, shall provide comments (either oral or written) during the formal dissertation defense outlining the steps the student must take in order to complete the Dissertation Proposal requirements. Should the student fail to submit an acceptable Dissertation Proposal, the student is subject to exclusion (dismissal) from The Graduate School.

A petition for extension of the Dissertation Proposal deadline may be approved by TGS under certain circumstances, such as medical or family leave. (See [Appendix VI](#).)

Milestone 4: Dissertation (Final Exam)

The most important project of a student's intellectual career is the PhD dissertation. It is an expanded report and discussion of an original and integrative research program, initiated and carried out by the student in consultation with his or her dissertation committee. In HDSP, the dissertation offers the best opportunity to bring together the different strands of inquiry in human development and social policy within an empirical study or series of studies that addresses an important intellectual issue. The dissertation is the capstone of the graduate-school experience and serves as the student's entrée into a professional career.

DISSERTATION DEFENSE

The final exam must be approved by a graduate faculty committee. Students work closely with their advisor in order to accomplish their dissertation and select members of the student's dissertation defense committee. It is highly recommended that students meet with committee members as well, after consultation with the advisor.

- Per [TGS requirements](#), scheduling the final exam is the responsibility of the candidate and the members of the committee.
- A minimum of three individuals must serve on the final exam committee.
- At least two members of this committee, including the chair, must be members of the Northwestern University Graduate Faculty.
- Once the advisor agrees that the dissertation is ready for a formal defense, the student must schedule the defense so that all committee members can participate.
- Prior to the dissertation defense, students should allow plenty of time (at least three weeks) for the committee to read the final dissertation draft.
- The defense itself usually lasts two or three hours.
- The student and committee assemble in a designated room, and the student is then asked to leave so that committee members can discuss their reactions to the written dissertation.
- When the student re-enters, he/she takes about 10-20 minutes to present the dissertation's design and findings, and then committee members ask questions.
- The student is then asked to leave the room again, so that the committee can decide what course of action should take place. Most dissertation committees request some revisions: some are minor; others can require considerable time. (If your defense is to be held in Annenberg Hall, it is advisable to contact the SESP Doctoral Student Affairs Team as to the availability of an appropriate room for your defense. It is best to check room availability prior to finalizing a defense date with your committee members.)
- Depending upon the views of committee members, either the advisor has full responsibility for signing off on the final dissertation, or individual committee members may request that they read the revisions as well.
- The TGS PhD Final Exam form in [GSP](#) must be signed or submitted virtually by each committee member. The form will not be approved until all classes are graded, a final version of the student's dissertation is submitted in GSP and to the SESP Doctoral Student Affairs Team. [See the TGS website for more details about graduation](#). (See [Appendix VI](#).)
- The HDSP Faculty has approved an option for an "open defense". Each individual student can choose whether they want to have a closed defense or invite family and/or friends. Students can choose who they want to invite. This is not a public event.
- Should a given student choose to have an open defense and invite family or friends, here is the rough schedule for how this would work:
 - Committee meets to confer with no one present (no student and no guest)
 - Student and guests are welcomed into the physical space or zoom.
 - Student presents and is questioned by committee [Guests are not invited to ask questions. Students can also opt to have guests leave after a few general questions so that the question asking is largely private]
 - Student and guests leave the physical space or zoom while committee deliberates

- Student returns to physical space or zoom for conversation and advice from the committee, with no guests present
- Guests are welcome back for a brief celebration

Suggested 5-year Program Overview

YEAR 1

- **Meet with your advisor:** It is highly recommended that students meet regularly with their advisor to discuss courses and professional interests.
- **Get involved in research:** Students should get involved in research with faculty as early as their first years. This may involve working with their advisor on their research projects to gain valuable experience. Students are also welcome and encouraged to explore the research interests of other HDSP faculty by working on research projects and/or attending lab meetings.
- Attend HDSP Brownbags and events
- By the end of the first year, most students will have made substantial progress toward solidifying their research interests with an eye toward their Trial Research Project and submit their Trial Research Proposal to their advisor by August 31 (the end of their fourth quarter).
- Enroll full-time in classes or 3-units of HDSP 590
- **Apply for external fellowships:** While funding (full tuition and stipend) is guaranteed for five years for all HDSP students, students are encouraged to pursue external fellowships and scholarships. Several of these fellowships provide multiyear funding and are extremely competitive and prestigious. Students should research and prepare their applications early. View a [current list](#) of internal and external funding opportunities and speak with your advisor/faculty/fellow students for suggestions. [Fellowship Finder](#) provides a database of internal and external fellowships.
- **Identify internal funding opportunities:** Funding is guaranteed for five years for all full-time students, but the source of that funding may vary from year to year or quarter to quarter. After the 1st year in the program, funding is linked to teaching, learning, or research goals. As such, students may receive funding through teaching assistantships, fellowships, TGS interdisciplinary cluster, or research assistantships. During winter or spring quarter of their 1st year, students are encouraged to discuss funding opportunities for the upcoming academic year with their academic advisor.
- **Attend conference(s):** During the first year, many students attend one or two conferences to help determine which specialty areas best fit their developing research interests. All full-time HDSP students can receive up to \$400 per academic year for such travel. Prior to traveling, students must apply for approval (see the Program Assistant for [form](#)). Afterwards, students need to fill out an [Expense Report](#) (also available from the Program Assistant) and return it with all receipts.
- **Attend workshops/seminars:** There are often seminars and workshops (both within and outside Northwestern) for students who would like to strengthen their methodological skills, or who are interested in using particular datasets. Speak with your advisor and other faculty and students for suggestions.

YEAR 2

- Complete the Trial Research by end of summer of your second year

- Enroll full-time in classes or 3-units of HDSP 590
- Attend HDSP Brownbags and events
- Apply for external fellowships (See Year 1)
- Identify internal funding opportunities (See Year 1)
- **Attend/Present at conference(s):** By the second or third year, many graduate students submit proposals to present a poster or paper at national scholarly conferences. In addition to the \$400 per academic year available from SESP for conference attendance, up to \$800 is available through the [TGS Conference Travel Grant](#) for conference expenses in which students (beyond their first year) present papers or posters (totaling a maximum of \$1200 per academic year).
- **Fulfill Teaching Assistant (TA) requirement**
- **Investigate opportunities at Searle Center:** [The Searle Center for Teaching Excellence](#) provides a number of workshops and opportunities for graduate students and faculty to expand their teaching skills and effectively meet their teaching responsibilities. In addition, the Searle Center offers a Graduate Teaching Certificate Program, as well as a TA Fellows Program, for outstanding graduate TAs.

YEAR 3

- Complete Guided Literature Review by the end of summer of your third year.
- Enroll full-time in classes or TGS 500. NOTE: Students who have obtained an M.A. degree prior to coming to HDSP will likely have completed their coursework. Rather than registering for/taking classes, these students will instead register for TGS 500 each regular quarter indicating that they are working full-time on their research.
- Continue to attend HDSP Brownbags and events
- **Identify internal and external funding opportunities:** At this time, it may be appropriate for students to look for funding specific to their dissertation.
- **Choose dissertation committee:** See information under Year 4 for additional details.
- **Apply for M.A. degree (optional):** The M.A. credential may be obtained en route to the PhD, if desired. To obtain the M.A., students must complete the core curriculum (as described above), in addition to elective courses, totaling 18 courses. In addition, the student's Trial Research project must also be completed.
- **Attend/Present at conference(s):** Continue to attend/present your work at conferences.
- Fulfill TA requirement

YEAR 4

- Defend dissertation proposal by the end of the 4th year
- **Coursework completed:** All students should have completed their coursework. Rather than registering for/taking classes, students will register for TGS 500 each regular quarter indicating that they are working full-time on their research. Should a student wish to take any class other than TGS 500 during the 4th year, it is allowable with permission from the HDSP Chair.
- **Identify internal funding opportunities:** See previous years.

- Fulfill TA requirement
- Continue to attend HDSP Brownbags and events

YEAR 5

- Work on and complete dissertation
- Continue to attend HDSP Brownbags and events, although less frequent attendance is allowed in year 5 and beyond in order to work on dissertation-writing, provided that adequate progress is being made in the program.

YEAR 6 AND BEYOND

- Work on and complete dissertation
- **Funding is no longer guaranteed:** Priority is given to students in their first 5 years in the program, but external and internal funding can continue to be sought in consultation with the advisor.
- **Coursework completed:** All students should have completed their coursework. Rather than registering for/taking classes, students will register for TGS 500 if receiving funding or TGS 512 if unfunded each regular quarter indicating that they are working full-time on their research.
- Doctoral students must complete all requirements for the PhD within nine years of initial registration in TGS. Students who do not complete degree requirements by the established deadlines will not be considered in good academic standing and will not be eligible for financial aid.
- Continue to attend HDSP Brownbags and events, although less frequent attendance is allowed in order to work on dissertation-writing, providing adequate progress is being made in the program.

[View The Graduate School's PhD degree timeline here.](#)

Nondiscrimination Statement

Northwestern University does not discriminate or permit discrimination by any member of its community against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, parental status, marital status, age, disability, citizenship status, veteran status, genetic information, reproductive health decision making, or any other classification protected by law in matters of admissions, employment, housing, or services or in the educational programs or activities it operates. Harassment, whether verbal, physical, or visual, that is based on any of these characteristics is a form of discrimination. Further prohibited by law is discrimination against any employee and/or job applicant who chooses to inquire about, discuss, or disclose their own compensation or the compensation of another employee or applicant.

Northwestern University complies with federal and state laws that prohibit discrimination based on the protected categories listed above, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Title IX requires educational institutions, such as Northwestern, to prohibit discrimination based on sex (including sexual harassment) in the University's educational programs and activities, including in matters of employment and admissions. In addition, Northwestern provides reasonable accommodations to qualified applicants,

students, and employees with disabilities and to individuals who are pregnant.

Any alleged violations of this policy or questions with respect to nondiscrimination or reasonable accommodations should be directed to Northwestern's Office of Equity, 1800 Sherman Avenue, Suite 4-500, Evanston, Illinois 60208, 847-467-6165, equity@northwestern.edu.

Questions specific to sex discrimination (including sexual misconduct and sexual harassment) should be directed to Northwestern's Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equity, 1800 Sherman Avenue, Suite 4-500, Evanston, Illinois 60208, 847-467-6165, TitleIXCoordinator@northwestern.edu.

A person may also file a complaint with the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights regarding an alleged violation of Title IX by visiting www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaintintro.html or calling 800-421-3481. Inquiries about the application of Title IX to Northwestern may be referred to Northwestern's Title IX Coordinator, the United States Department of Education's Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, or both.

Sept 1, 2022

APPENDIX I: HDSP Student Progress Report

Please respond to the following questions, which are designed to provide a comprehensive overview of your progress in the program. The questions were developed by the faculty, in consultation with the Program Coordinator's student advisory group. You should discuss the report with your advisor and then hand it in to the Program Assistant by the specified date. The report will be duplicated, distributed to all faculty members, and discussed at an upcoming faculty meeting.

The Program Coordinator will send you an e-mail concerning this discussion; you should plan to meet with your advisor for more extensive feedback. Please attach a HDSP degree requirement audit form with your progress report.

Begin the report with your name and date. Use the bold, underlined phrases as subheadings to organize your report. The report should not be more than 2 pages or so, single-spaced (it may be slightly longer if you have an extensive list of papers under #3). Whatever your stage in the program, there are probably some questions that can be answered very briefly.

- 1) What are your current **career objectives**? For example, if an academic position is your anticipated first choice, indicate the department(s) in which you would like to obtain a position (e.g., human development and family studies, criminology, educational policy, sociology, psychology) and, if appropriate, the subunit within a department (e.g., developmental program in a psychology department). If two choices are equally attractive to you at present, indicate that.
- 2) Indicate your **progress toward completing your trial research or dissertation**. If you are working on the dissertation, simply list the title of your trial research, and then discuss the current status of the dissertation. If you are very far along in your trial research, you should mostly discuss that, but also add a sentence or two indicating progress toward identifying dissertation topic.
- 3) List any **publications** (in print or accepted), conference presentations (presented or accepted), and grants. Give full citation, including coauthors (in order of authorship). If you are currently writing a paper to be submitted for publication (or are literally on the verge of doing so), list that as well.
- 4) **Other research/policy experiences**. Briefly indicate involvement in research, policy or other relevant activities not reflected above (e.g., summer internship)

- 5) Indicate your progress toward completing the **guided literature review**. If you have already completed this requirement, list the topic of your course.
- 6) Which **required courses**, if any, do you still need to take? [Include here the required number of elective courses.]
- 7) List **professional meetings** or conferences that you attended over the past year.
- 8) Indicate how you have met the **teaching requirement**, or how you would like to satisfy it (i.e., courses you might like to TA for).
- 9) Any **additional comments** or information you might like to add, such as concerns, resources you could use, etc.
- 10) How has being a student in HDSP influenced your **intellectual identity**? Please provide a thoughtful response as the faculty are genuinely interested in understanding program effects in this area.

APPENDIX II: Degree Requirement Audit: HDSP Degree Requirement Audit for Students Enrolled FALL 2020* to Fall 2022

**Current students who began the program prior to Fall 2020 may opt into new requirements at any time.*

Required Courses

- 21 units for students entering without a Master's Degree (14 Required and 7 electives)
- 18 units for Students entering with a Master's Degree (14 Required and 4 electives with no more than 3 coming from Independent Study)

HDSP Overview

HDSP 401 Proseminar in Human Development and Social Policy

Foundations in Human Development:

HDSP 413 Theories of Human Development
AND 3 OF THE FOLLOWING 4:
HDSP 402 Child Development
HDSP 403 Adolescent Development
HDSP 404 Adult Development and Aging
HDSP 415 Nature – Nurture Revisited

Foundations in Empirical Research Methods:

HDSP 410 Quantitative Methods I: Probability and Statistics
HDSP 411 Quantitative Methods II: Regression Analysis
HDSP 412 Quantitative Methods III: Empirical Tools for Causal Quantitative Analysis
HDSP 432 Field Methods
HDSP 435 Advanced Field Methods

Foundations in Social Policy: Students must take four courses from among the following:

HDSP 430 Economics of Social Policy
HDSP 429 Social-Community Interventions
HDSP 451 Organizations, Institutions and Society: Persistence and Change Among Public
HDSP 428 Educational Policy: Design, Implementation and Effects
HDSP 427 Sociology of Education
HDSP 433 Modern Theories of the State and Social Policy
HDSP 442 Social Policymaking and Policy Implementation

Electives (up to 7 units with no more than 3 units coming from Independent Study)

Other Degree Requirements

- Teaching Assistant requirement (2 quarters)

- Trial Research

- Guided Literature Review

Dissertation Proposal Defense

(Prospectus)

- Dissertation

APPENDIX III: Degree Requirement Audit:

HDSP Degree Requirement Audit for Students Enrolled FALL 2013 - 2019

Course work in the Human Development and Social Policy (HDSP) doctoral program includes a core curriculum and electives.

- A total of 27 courses are required for students entering without a master's degree.
- For those who have obtained a master's degree prior to entering HDSP, up to 9 courses may be counted toward the HDSP coursework requirement as electives, leaving students with a total of 18 courses to complete.

Required Courses (14 units), Electives (up to 14 units)

HDSP Proseminar (1 unit)
HDSP 401 - Proseminar in Human Development and Social Policy
Foundations of Human Development (4 units)
HDSP 413 - Theories of Human Development
Students must take three of the four following courses:
HDSP 402 - Child Development HDSP 403 - Adolescent Development HDSP 404 - Adult Development and Aging HDSP 451 - Topics: Nature – Nurture Revisited
Foundations in Empirical Research Methods (5 units)
HDSP 451 - Quantitative Methods I: Probability and Statistics HDSP 451 - Quantitative Methods II: Regression Analysis HDSP 463 - Quantitative Methods III: Empirical Tools for Causal Quantitative Analysis SOCIOL 404 - Designs for Descriptive Causal Research in Field Settings HDSP 432 - Field Methods
Foundations of Social Policy (4 units)
Students must take one course from each of the following groups:
Group I HDSP 430 - Economics of Social Policy
Group II HDSP 429 - Social-Community Interventions HDSP 451 - Topics: Organizations, Institutions and Society: Persistence and Change Among Public, Private and Non-Profit Sectors
Group III HDSP 451 - Topics: Educational Policy: Design, Implementation and Effects HDSP 427 - Sociology of Education
Group IV HDSP 433 - Modern Theories of the State and Social Policy HDSP 440 - The Politics of Social Policy
Electives (up to 14 units)

Students seeking to waive elective course requirements must submit their request in writing to the

Program Coordinator along with the corresponding course descriptions and transcripts. Students must obtain the written support of their academic advisor before requesting a waiver. Core course requirements may only be waived when a student makes a compelling argument in support of such request and has the written support of their academic advisor.

Other Degree Requirements

- Teaching Assistant requirement (2 quarters)

-Trial Research

-Guided Literature Review

Dissertation Proposal Defense

(Prospectus)

-Dissertation

APPENDIX IV: Degree Requirement Audit: HDSP Degree Requirement Audit for Students Enrolled FALL 2013 AND PRIOR

Required Courses (14 units)

Development (4 units)
HDSP 402 - Child Development HDSP 403 - Adolescent Development HDSP 404 - Adult Development and Aging
Students must take two of the following courses:
HDSP 402 - Child Development HDSP 403 - Adolescent Development HDSP 404 - Adult Development and Aging
Methods (4 units)
STAT 330-1: Basic Statistics 1 STAT 330-2: Basic Statistics 2 HDSP 432 - Field Methods and Social Policy SOCIOL 404 - Designs for Descriptive Causal Research in Field Settings
Policy (3 units)
HDSP 430 - Economics of Social Policy
Students must take two of the following courses:
HDSP 429 - Social-Community Interventions HDSP 433 - Modern Theories of the State and Social Policy HDSP 440 - The Politics of Social Policy
Electives (up to 14 units)

Other Degree Requirements

- Teaching Assistant requirement (2 quarters)

- Trial Research

- Guided Literature Review

Dissertation Proposal Defense

(Prospectus)

- Dissertation

APPENDIX V: A Note About Courses Within and Outside HDSP

Students, together with their advisor, should plan a systematic course of study that will help prepare them for preferred post-graduation positions. Many students will seek positions in interdisciplinary academic programs, research institutes, or non-profit organizations. Others may pursue jobs in specific academic disciplines (e.g., sociology) or in an academic unit dominated by a particular discipline. The following are some recommendations for coursework that should provide a stronger set of job-related training credentials. Students should discuss these recommendations with their advisors, other faculty, and fellow students. In addition to searching CAESAR for classes outside of HDSP, other departments frequently list the upcoming year's course schedule and course syllabi or descriptions on their websites.

Qualitative Methods

The following course is recommended for students who wish to become expert qualitative researchers—i.e., those who wish to thoroughly investigate the processes, or the “how,” of social actions, situations, and contexts.

- HDSP 435: Advanced Qualitative Methods: This course is most appropriate for students who are in the process of analyzing their own qualitative data. Students will explore different theories and epistemologies that inform qualitative work, learning to situate their own work within these traditions.

In addition, a variety of courses that expand upon the ethnographic and observational techniques taught in HDSP include (contact the corresponding departments for more information):

- SOCIOL 410: Comparative Methodology
- SOCIOL 439: Comparative and Historical Sociology
- LRN SCI 428: Observational Techniques and Methods
- ANTHRO 461: Methods of Linguistic Anthropology
- ANTHRO 490: Life History Methods

Quantitative Methods

Following are recommendations for HDSP students who aspire to identify as “quantitative researchers”—as researchers who focus primarily on statistical analyses:

- PSYCH 405: Psychometrics: Described in the bulletin as an “introduction to principles of measurement, reliability, validity and scale construction,” this course is recommended for those working with scale data and covers topics such as factor analysis.
- PSYCH 454: Psychological Measurement Using Latent Variables: This course provides an introduction to the use of latent variables, including structural equation modeling.

- **STATS 325: Survey Sampling:** This course covers topics such as probability sampling, stratification, and cluster sampling.

Economics

Economics provides a backbone for policy research. Students with backgrounds and strong interests in economics and with the necessary mathematical training are urged to consider taking the graduate-level theory classes offered by the Economics Department, and to take that Department's theory preliminary exams. These are very rigorous courses; passing them and, especially, the qualifying exam, should provide an impressive set of credentials when looking for jobs in public policy schools and high-level research institutes (e.g., the Urban Institute, MDRC).

Microeconomics (Econ 410-1, 2 & 3) and Econometrics (Econ 480-1, 2 & 3) are each taught as yearlong sequences. Both require strong mathematical preparation including multivariate calculus, real analysis topics, and linear algebra. These topics are covered in the economics department mathematics review course (Econ 401), taught during the three weeks before the beginning of the fall quarter. The economics prelims are given in June following the conclusion of the spring quarter.

Registration for the 410 and 480 courses are open to all students; contact the economics department office for details of the 401 course. Contact the Economics Department's Graduate Student Program Coordinator for permission to take the prelim exams.

Other recommended courses include:

- ECON 339: Labor Economics
- ECON 341: Economics of Education
- ECON 436: Theory and Practice of Public Finance
- ECON 480-1: Introduction to Econometrics
- ECON 481-1: Econometrics

Learning Sciences

HDSP students commonly take courses in the Learning Sciences (LS), our sister program in the School of Education and Social Policy. The three pillars of LS that permeate much of its research and theory are: 1) Social context (e.g., classrooms, schools, home environments, neighborhoods), 2) Cognition (e.g., understanding the processes by which learning occurs), and 3) Design (e.g., curriculum, multimedia, artificial intelligence).

Recommended courses include:

- LS 401: Cognition and Learning
- LS 403: Learning In Context: Cognitive Science Foundations of the Learning Sciences
- LS 451: Analyzing Educational Policy

Political Science

An understanding of political science enables one better to examine the problems and issues of modern political life and to comprehend political behavior more fully. Political science provides a framework for thinking about policy questions, for understanding the policy context in which policy decisions get made, and for examining the politics of policy issues. Recommended courses include:

- POLI SCI 401: Introduction to Political Science
- POLI SCI 402: Conducting Political Research
- POLI SCI 412: Political Participation

Psychology

Students desiring a greater background in the human development side of HDSP and psychological methods of inquiry should consider additional coursework in psychology, either in the Department of Psychology or in Kellogg (particularly the PhD program in Management and Organizations). The Department of Psychology strongly values the norms of laboratory-based scientific inquiry, with courses emphasizing experimental methodologies, careful measurement of well-designed psychological constructs, and quantitative over qualitative analysis. Recommended courses include:

- PSYCH 462: Cognitive Development
- PSYCH 466: Analogy and Similarity
- PSYCH 467: Culture and Cognition
- PSYCH 481: Theories in Social Psychology
- PSYCH 489: Discrimination, Stereotyping, and Prejudice
- PSYCH 494: Theory and Research in Personality Psychology

Sociology

Sociologists study the implementation of policy in institutions, agencies, communities, families, and individual behavior. They also can examine the ways social context influences human development. Students who wish to gain knowledge of sociology are urged to consider taking one or more courses in social theory. In addition, the Department of Sociology (and sociologists in Kellogg) offer courses in a number of relevant substantive areas, including stratification, organizations, labor markets, gender, law and society, and comparative/historical sociology. Recommended courses include:

- SOCIOL 420: Cultural Sociology and the Sociology of Culture
- SOCIOL 439: Comparative and Historical Sociology
- SOCIOL 440: Stratification, Race, and Gender
- SOCIOL 476: Practice Evaluation
- SOCIOL 476: Special Topics: Genetics and Society

Developmental Psychobiology/Health

A recent strength of the HDSP program and of Northwestern University more generally is a multidisciplinary focus on the biological bases of human development, and the biological pathways by which social contexts “get under the skin” to affect health and developmental outcomes. This emphasis has been formalized in several ways: In the Cells to Society Center (C2S) at the Institute for Policy Research, and in the Graduate Cluster Program on Society, Biology and Health. Many faculty and graduate students involved in this research area are also involved in C2S and the Society, Biology and Health graduate cluster. New courses are frequently being added, but existing recommended courses include:

- Integrative Seminar in Society, Biology and Health
- Beyond Nature vs. Nurture: The Impact of Experience on Biology across the Life Course
- Biology and Social Inquiry

APPENDIX VI: TGS Forms

The Graduate School (TGS) Contacts

In addition to your faculty advisor, all graduate students are encouraged to contact the TGS Student Services office (gradservices@northwestern.edu) where capable persons are available to answer questions regarding enrollment, degree deadline, residency, and paperwork that you need to submit during your time at Northwestern as well as to graduate.

TGS Forms Available on [GSP](#) Include:

TGS PhD Masters Completion

Purpose: Notifies TGS of student’s successful fulfillment of the trial research requirement.

Date Due: Immediately after successfully completing the trial research.

TGS PhD Qualifying Exam

Purpose: Notifies TGS of student’s successful fulfillment of the Guided Literature Review requirement.

Date Due: Immediately after successfully completing the GLR.

TGS PhD Prospectus

Purpose: Notifies TGS of student’s successful dissertation proposal and defense as well as their dissertation committee members.

Date Due: Before the start of the student's fifth year.

TGS PhD Final Exam

Purpose: Notifies TGS of student's successful completion of dissertation and defense.

Date Due: Immediately before your scheduled dissertation defense.

Notes: You should print this form, bring it to your dissertation defense, and ask your committee members to sign it. Once the form is signed, give it to the Program Assistant.

Application for Degree

Purpose: Information on your diploma is based on this form; verification of intention to graduate.

Date Due: Usually the second Friday of spring or fall term

TGS Petition for Absence

Purpose: Leave of absence (e.g., family leave, medical leave). Date Due: Not Applicable

Notes: TGS typically honors petitions, if you have the support of your advisor and program chair.

PhD Timeline Requirements Available on the TGS Site

Graduate Faculty legislation states that all requirements for the doctoral degree must be met within nine years of initial registration in a doctoral program, which falls on the last day of the 36th quarter. For students on an approved [leave of absence](#), milestones will be extended accordingly.

[Link to TGS Milestones](#)