MSW Research Requirement: Plan A/B

There are two options for fulfilling the research requirement: Plan A/Thesis or Plan B/Practice Evaluation. Both require a Research Advisory Committee.

1. Students register for SOWK 5755 (Plan B) or SOWK 5960 (Plan A Thesis), as appropriate, while working on the Plan A/B. Students completing a Plan B will register for one credit of SOWK 5755 each semester of their final year. Students completing a thesis will enroll in two credits of SOWK 5960 each semester of their final year. Course sections for Plan A and Plan B are associated with the Committee Chair’s name. See requirements under Plan A or Plan B for specific proposal requirements/defense.

2. As a student enters the advanced year (2nd year of the MSW program), the student will establish a Research Advisory Committee.
   a. If a student has chosen a Plan A, the student will need to speak with and gain the acceptance/approval of the faculty member with whom s/he is interested in working to chair the committee.
   b. Plan B students simply need to sign up for a section of Plan B with the instructor of choice, provided that instructor still has space available in the class.
   c. The faculty member then becomes the instructor for the course, the academic advisor for the student, the research advisor, and the chair for the student’s Research Advisory Committee.
   d. Using the chair as a resource, select other committee members:
      i. At least one Social Work faculty member (inside member).
      ii. At least one faculty member from outside the Division.
   e. After confirming acceptance of appointment by committee members, the student is to complete and submit the Committee Assignment/Change form [http://www.uwyo.edu/socialwork/_files/docs/msw/committeeassignmentform.pdf] to the Division’s Office Manager to obtain approval of the Director and Dean.

3. Students prepare a written document of initial requirements for review by Research Advisory Committee members during the proposal component of the process, also referred to as the Proposal Defense.
   a. Research Advisory Committee members must approve the proposal in order to move forward in the process.
      i. This is done face-to-face for a Plan A/Thesis.
      ii. This may be done via electronic review for a Plan B/Practice Evaluation.
   b. Obtaining Committee approval to move forward is the student’s responsibility.

4. The process for the Oral Defense as Final Exam (Final Defense) is as follows:
   a. Approval of final project by Advisor/Committee Chair/permission to proceed with final defense,
   b. Student arranges a scheduled time with the committee and reserves an appropriate room for the defense.
   c. Student submits the final project to the Research Advisory Committee members 10-14 days prior to final defense date.
d. Student conducts presentation of final project at the oral defense meeting:
   i. The Final Defense form
      [http://www.uwyo.edu/socialwork/_files/docs/msw/final%20defense%20form.pdf] and
      Report of Final Examination form
      [http://www.uwyo.edu/socialwork/_files/docs/msw/reportoffinalexamform.pdf] must be
      prepared and submitted to the committee by the student at time of the final defense.
   ii. At the oral defense, the student describes the project and critiques it (approx. 15-20 minutes—
       students often develop a power point presentation).
   iii. The members of the Research Advisory Committee pose questions to and/or hold discussion
       with the student regarding the project (approx. 30-45 minutes).
   iv. The student is then excused from the room, and the Committee discusses the student’s
       demonstration of mastery of the project and project process and deliberates a decision (pass, 
       pass w/revisions, fail) without student present. The student return to the room for final 
       discussion and Committee decision. Committee members sign both final defense forms 
       indicating their decision.
   v. Final forms are given to the Office Manager to record, copy, and submit to the Office of the 
      Registrar on behalf of the student.

5. The student’s Research Advisory Committee has the following responsibilities:
   a. Guide the process of conducting the work for SOWK 5750 or SOWK 5960 based on the type of 
      research project the student has selected.
   b. Determine if the Plan A/B work satisfies UW and Division of Social Work requirements.
   c. Conduct an oral defense and determine if the student’s performance and knowledge in this defense 
      satisfies UW and Division of Social Work requirements.
   d. The written vote of each member of a candidate’s examining committee must be on record in the 
      Registrar’s Office, indicating majority approval of the committee members’ before any MSW 
      candidate will be recommended for graduation.
      i. A student failing the initial oral final examination may retake the examination once.
      ii. Failure of the final examination shall be reported in writing to the Director of the Division of 
          Social Work and forwarded to the Office of Academic Affairs.

6. Raw Data & Final Papers
   a. All raw data generated from research projects must be submitted to the student’s Research Chair 
      for archiving with records stored up to three years.
   b. In addition, an original copy of the student’s final project or thesis must be provided electronically 
      to the Research Chair and Division Office Manager for permanent archiving.
   c. In addition to these requirements, students completing a Plan A Thesis must upload an electronic 
      copy to the University through Proquest, in keeping with current requirements as delineated on the 
      Additional information on thesis requirements and formatting can be found at 
      http://www.uwyo.edu/registrar/students/graduate_student_forms.html
Plan A/Thesis:

1. Students may complete a master's thesis, also referred to as a *Plan A*.
   a. This requires completion of an original research project.
   b. The thesis is completed under the direction of the student’s Research Advisory Committee.
   c. The final oral exam is a defense of the written thesis.
   d. A handbook on preparing a thesis is available from the graduate student resources webpage (http://www.uwyo.edu/registrar/students/graduate_student_forms.html).
   e. This option should be undertaken in direct consultation with and full support from the student’s Advisor/Committee Chair.

2. Students must register for 2 credits of SOWK 5960 Thesis Research per semester of their advanced year. When registering, students must register for the section assigned to the Chair of the Advisory Committee.

3. At the end of each semester, the student’s Committee Chair must register a grade of either "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory." Incompletes are not given for S/U grading.
   a. *S/U* grades do not compute into GPA so there is no jeopardy to the student. The grade does, however, provide the student with feedback regarding progress.
      i. An *S* indicates that the student is working according to expectations;
      ii. A *U* indicates lack of satisfactory progress.
   b. If, over several semesters, a student continues to receive multiple *U* grades, the Committee Chair will inform the MSW Director in a written memorandum with a copy provided to the student.
   c. The MSW Director will then consult with both the student and Committee Chair to determine if:
      i. there is a remediation plan that could benefit that student toward accomplishing the thesis; and/or,
      ii. if the student should remain in the program.
   d. For a completed research thesis, the Research Advisory Committee at the student’s final defense presentation determines the final grade decision.

4. The thesis presentation (research project and findings) must be publicized and is open to the larger university community.

5. The oral exam/defense takes place immediately following the thesis presentation with the student’s thesis committee only.
Plan B/Practice Evaluation

1. Students may complete a non-thesis research project, also known as a Plan B (practice evaluation).
2. The non-thesis/Plan B option requires the completion of 1 credit of SOWK 5755 per semester of the advanced year.
3. During the Fall semester course, the student’s Committee Chair supervises the development of the theory-informed and evidenced-based research paper and oral defense of the paper for satisfactory completion of semester.
4. **Students registered for Plan B/SOWK 5755 must satisfactorily complete the fall course in order to proceed to the spring semester/courses.**
5. Implementation and evaluation of a theory-informed, evidenced-based practice is the focus of Spring semester.
6. The student’s Advisory Committee is available in an advisory capacity as the student implements practice intervention.
7. The final paper is submitted to the Chair for approval and then to all committee members for feedback prior to the final defense presentation.

Continuing Registration

Students may take longer than the Spring semester of their second year to complete their research project.

1. If so, students can request to register for one credit of “SOWK 5920/5940 Continuing Registration” per semester with their Chair while completing their research/thesis. If approved, the Chair will request a section of continuing registration be set up before the end of the spring semester.
2. Continuous registration is to be used when a student has not met the deadline for graduation and must register for an additional semester, or when corrections are due but not yet completed by the student, and the Chair indicates continuous registration is needed.

Termination due to lack of completion of Thesis Research at 6th year

The University has a graduate ‘6-year clock’. This is the timeframe established by the University for students to finish their graduate program or they may be dismissed from the University.

1. Upon reaching the 6th year of enrollment without completing the final research project, the MSW Program Director may call for a review of the student’s progress in the MSW Program.
2. Students must either complete their final project before the end of their 6th year or file a petition for extension.
3. The University of Wyoming’s policies regarding petition under **exceptional circumstances for extension of time** can be found on the graduate student resources web page ([http://webdev.uwyo.edu/uwgrad/enrolled-students/forms/masters-petition.html](http://webdev.uwyo.edu/uwgrad/enrolled-students/forms/masters-petition.html)).