

S725: Social Work Research Internship

(Variable Credits: 3, 6, or 9)

Course Description

This *Research Internship* is designed to provide doctoral students with a supervised research experience in which students work collaboratively on a current faculty research project or on an approved agency-based project under faculty supervision. The internship is designed to involve students in the major phases of a research process prior to and in preparation for the dissertation. These phases include: conceptualization of a research question(s); assessment and synthesis of the relevant literature; articulation of appropriate quantitative/qualitative methods; operationalization of theoretical concepts, empirical questions, and research procedures; collection, processing and analysis of data; interpretation of findings and the articulation of implications in terms of original research questions; and research report writing.

An overarching goal of the *Research Internship* includes strengthening students' ability to synthesize the various phases and components of social research as a foundation for subsequent independent research. This synthesis is advanced and demonstrated by the student by means of a scholarly product of publishable quality that is presented the *Annual Spring Ph. D. Research Symposium*.

Course Objectives

As a result of having completed the Research Internship, the student will have:

- Developed a research proposal,
- Participated in the planning and implementation of a research project,
- Engaged in the various tasks associated with the completion of a research project,
- Developed the capacity to plan and carry out an independent research project,
- Prepared a written research report of publishable quality.

The specific objectives for any given *Research Internship* are determined in part by the research project itself, and in part by the individualized nature of the student's research interests, knowledge, and skills. For example, based on self and faculty assessments of a student's research competencies, interests, and learning goals; and on available opportunities for supervised research experience, a written internship "Acontract" or "Aproposal" is submitted for review and approval by the proposed faculty instructor. The contract/proposal specifies the research plan to be pursued by the student, including the specific knowledge and skills to be attained as well as how they will be attained and evaluated. The proposal, which indicates how the internship will contribute to the student's capacity to perform independent research, must be mutually acceptable to the student, the faculty advisor, and the *Research Internship* instructor.

The internship proposal must address the following set of criteria:

1. The research competencies to be acquired/strengthened by the student.
2. The specific research problem to be examined.
3. The general methodological procedures to be employed.
4. The specific research tasks/ activities to be engaged in by the student over the course of the two semester experience.
5. The research training to be provided by the member of the faculty who will serve as the research instructor (mentor) for the project, including the number of hours per week of direct supervision to be provided.
6. The nature of the anticipated scholarly product to be developed.

Course Requirements and Evaluation

Ordinarily, the student's involvement in the Research Internship will culminate in a scholarly product of publishable quality, co-authored by the student and the faculty research instructor (mentor). At minimum, the student is expected to submit a formal written summary (the format of which must be approved by the instructor) which integrates the substantive, methodological, and/or statistical components of the research project. The research instructor evaluates the student's performance based upon the completion of the tasks specified in the original contract/proposal, including the attainment of the targeted knowledge and skills, and the overall quality of the final written report. This written product must be evaluated as satisfactory by the research instructor before the internship is successfully completed. Upon completion, the written report is included as part of the student's Research Portfolio. All research practica are graded on a Pass/Fail basis.

Structure/Format of the Internship

Internship placement decisions are based on the mutual interests of doctoral students and available faculty instructors (mentors). Final placement decisions are reached through a process of negotiation involving the student, the student's academic advisor, and the proposed research instructor (mentor). Research opportunities may be identified by either students or faculty. While most *Research Internship* placements are in social work, outside placements (particularly those associated with the student's "External Minor") are acceptable if quality supervision is available and all course requirements can be met.

The *Research Internship* is an individualized research experience that is normally completed over a period of two academic semesters/terms.

Pre- or co-requisites include the following core courses:

At least one foundation statistics course.

S720 Philosophy of Sciences and Social Work

S726 Advanced Social Work Research: Qualitative Methods (3 cr)

S727 Advanced Social Work Research: Quantitative Methods (3 cr)

At least one of the following core social work theory courses:

S710 Pro-Seminar on Client Systems

S730 Pro-Seminar on Social Work Policy Analysis

S740 Social Work Practice: Theory and Research

Typically, students are eligible to enroll in the *Research Internship* upon completion of the first year of their doctoral studies. The *Research Internship* requires that students complete a minimum of six (6) credit hours of approved research. With approval, students may register for up to nine (9) credits in three (3) credit units.