The Qualifying Paper (QP) is a preliminary exam, in line with Graduate Division policy. It is a single, stand-alone paper; the degree milestone following the Comprehensive Exam. Students must submit a 2-page QP Proposal to the Graduate Student Affairs Office (GSAO) by October 15th, of the 2nd year PhD program or 3rd year of the MSW/PhD Program.

In the 1st year of the PhD program and 2nd year of the MSW/PhD program, students may begin drafting their QP Proposal. Students may benefit from developing a bibliography of relevant works during the spring semester and studying that bibliography during the summer months between Year I and Year 2 of the doctoral program.

Students, with their Faculty Advisors, may consider whether an expansion of their mentoring team is needed in order to complete the QP (co-supervision or outside consultation on problem, theory, or methods) and how persons with such expertise or skills may be engaged.

You are encouraged to discuss your QP with your faculty advisor this spring so that you have shared expectations for the topic, scope, and format of the proposal, and many opportunities for feedback, well before you intend to receive your advisor's approval. You may submit the QP Proposal early and receive approval to begin work on your QP shortly thereafter. Please recall that many advisors are unavailable during summer term; please plan accordingly. The proposal submission to the GSAO must have written indication of their faculty advisor's approval.

Looking forward, the Qualifying Paper is typically completed by the end of the 2nd year in the PhD program or 3rd year in the Combined MSW/PhD program. The outside submission deadline to maintain normative time in program is 6 weeks before the end of the fall semester of the students' 3rd year in the PhD program or 4th year in the Combined MSW/PhD program, such that a satisfactory grade can be assigned by the end of the fall semester.