

SOCIAL WORK, PH.D.

Saint Louis University's Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work provides rigorous coursework and research training to prepare graduates for positions in academia, applied research and policy settings. Small class sizes facilitate an atmosphere of intellectual dialogue that fosters relationships between students and faculty.

Curriculum Overview

SLU's Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work requires 72 credits and offers rigorous methodological and interdisciplinary training for social workers and related professionals.

There are three phases to the doctoral studies curriculum:

- The first is the core doctoral curriculum. This comprises required coursework built around theory, methods and data analysis.
- In the second phase, students take additional electives and complete a synthesis project in their area of research. Students can tailor these elective courses to meet the knowledge and methodological skills needed to achieve their research and professional goals. The synthesis project summarizes the major theoretical and methodological issues, including key findings, and provides a scholarly platform for the final phase.
- The third phase consists of written exams, preparation and presentation of the dissertation proposal, and the completion of the dissertation.

Research Opportunities

Building on the foundations of required coursework, students will develop individualized plans of study that will meet intellectual and professional requirements. These concentrations consist mainly of elective coursework and participation in mentored research. Students will also complete a dissertation project corresponding with educational and professional goals.

Careers

SLU's Ph.D. in Social Work provides a solid foundation for an academic career or as a social work research scientist in practice or policy settings. The program has a strong interdisciplinary and methodological orientation.

Admission Requirements

Applicants must hold a master's degree in social work or a closely related field.

Application Requirements

- Application form and \$65 fee
- Transcript(s)
- Three letters of recommendation
- Résumé or curriculum vitae
- Interview with the faculty program director
- Statement of purpose (two-three pages, single-spaced) detailing research interests, career goals and fit with current faculty research
- Writing sample such as a published article, course paper, agency technical report or a grant proposal

Requirements for International Students

TOEFL score of 92 or higher or PTE Academic score

All admission policies and requirements for domestic students apply to international students. International students must also meet the following additional requirements:

- Demonstrate English Language Proficiency (<https://catalog.slu.edu/academic-policies/office-admission/undergraduate/english-language-proficiency/>)
- Financial documents are required to complete an application for admission and be reviewed for admission and merit scholarships.
- Proof of financial support that must include:
 - A letter of financial support from the person(s) or sponsoring agency funding the student's time at Saint Louis University
 - A letter from the sponsor's bank verifying that the funds are available and will be so for the duration of the student's study at the University
- Academic records, in English translation, of students who have undertaken postsecondary studies outside the United States must include:
 - Courses taken and/or lectures attended
 - Practical laboratory work
 - The maximum and minimum grades attainable
 - The grades earned or the results of all end-of-term examinations
 - Any honors or degrees received.

WES and ECE transcripts are accepted.

Application Deadline

Feb. 15

Review Process

The admissions committee considers several factors to determine eligibility: academic achievement, strength of the undergraduate program, application information, personal statement, work experience, any graduate degrees earned, letters of recommendation, motivation and a commitment to a research career. The undergraduate and graduate GPA is weighted with other criteria in the admissions process.

Fellowships

Newly accepted students and students in the first year of the program are eligible to apply for the Diversity, Dissertation and Presidential University-funded fellowships. Students must apply to be nominated by the School of Social Work by Jan. 15.

Other University scholarships that do not require nomination by a department/school are also available.

Graduate Assistantships

Full-time students normally receive a graduate assistantship with the School of Social Work.

Students can apply for a full or partial graduate assistantship with the School of Social Work.

Scholarships and Financial Aid

The College for Public Health and Social Justice offers several ways to help finance graduate education. Opportunities include a limited number of merit-based scholarships and graduate research assistantships.

Awards are made to applicants with the highest combinations of GPAs and test scores who complete their applications by the priority deadlines.

For more information, visit the student financial services office online at <http://finaid.slu.edu> (<http://finaid.slu.edu/>).

Learning Outcomes

1. Graduates will be able to critically evaluate and identify gaps in current scientific knowledge and develop alternative explanations and research strategies.
2. Graduates will be able to design, conduct and defend dissertation research that expands scientific knowledge.
3. Graduates will be able to demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of a specific area of research in their discipline.
4. Graduates will be able to understand and apply scientific methods of study design and measurement to address research questions, including methods to expedite the translation and dissemination of research findings.
5. Graduates will be able to understand, use and interpret basic and inferential statistics.
6. Graduates will be able to apply basic principles of ethical behavior (e.g., the Social Work Code of Ethics, human rights framework, other moral theories) and be familiar with codes that guide application of these issues in research such as the importance of principles of confidentiality of information and data, and how these are applied within research.
7. Graduates will be able to communicate effectively about scientific information for diverse audiences through scientific publications, lay documents, and grant applications.
8. Graduates will be able to understand and apply pedagogical methods.

Requirements

Code	Title	Credits
Required Courses		
SWRK 6000	Foundations of Theory Development in Social Work	3
SWRK 6010	Principles of Statistics & Data Analysis	3
SWRK 6020	Research Design & Measurement	3
SWRK 6030	Multivariate Data Analysis	3
SWRK 6040	Research Area Synthesis	3
PUBH 5030	Methodological Approaches to Understanding Population Health	3
Methods Courses		
Select 9 credits		9
Specialization Elective Courses		
Select 9 credits		9
Elective Courses		
Select 24 credits ¹		24
Dissertation		
SWRK 6990	Dissertation	12
Total Credits		72

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Students can petition to have up to 24 credits of electives count toward the 72-credit total from an approved M.S.W. or closely-related Master's degree.

Non-Course Requirements

Teaching

Students are required to participate in teaching practicums that prepare students to teach their own course in either the B.S.S.W. or M.S.W. program or in the applied behavior analysis and criminology degree programs. Further, there are required professional development workshops that provide students with the opportunity to build their unique professional skills outside of formal coursework or research.

Written Exam

As required by the Office of Graduate Education, the doctoral program administers written examinations following successful completion of the doctoral course series, the methods core coursework and the required elective courses. The written examinations are structured to assess the student's knowledge and skills in the foundational, contextual, methodological and analytical skills needed of all social work researchers.

The written examination assesses students' achievement of the doctoral competencies covered within the general and concentration curricula and also reflects their expertise in a specific area of research. The written examinations combine two components:

1. Foundation (theory, methods, statistics) material
2. Research area

The written exam is conducted by a committee of three faculty members who are likely to compose the dissertation committee. Questions are approved by the director of the doctoral program. The exam takes place across two sequential days and can be arranged anytime during the school year. The written exam should reflect competencies covered in the doctoral course series and reflected topically in the research area synthesis. As such, questions can be generated that focus on a research area but are also tied to theoretical and methodological issues.

Oral Examination

The oral examination is intended to focus on the proposal of the dissertation. The presentation usually consists of a statement of the problem, literature review and the research design prepared for the investigation. The exam is structured to assess the student's comprehensive knowledge of prior literature, ability to integrate knowledge across the discipline, and ability to design an appropriate research approach that significantly expands this body of knowledge. This is when the student presents a proposal for what they intend to do prior to actually starting their research.

The oral examination must follow the written exams and is normally scheduled after the student completes all structured academic coursework.

Defense of the Dissertation

Upon completion of the dissertation, students publicly present and defend their dissertation before their dissertation committee.

Continuation Standards

Students must maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 in all graduate/professional courses.

Roadmap

Roadmaps are recommended semester-by-semester plans of study for programs and assume full-time enrollment unless otherwise noted.

Courses and milestones designated as critical (marked with !) must be completed in the semester listed to ensure a timely graduation. Transfer credit may change the roadmap.

This roadmap should not be used in the place of regular academic advising appointments. All students are encouraged to meet with their advisor/mentor each semester. Requirements, course availability and sequencing are subject to change.

Course	Title	Credits
Year One		
Fall		
SWRK 6000	Foundations of Theory Development in Social Work	3
SWRK 6010	Principles of Statistics & Data Analysis	3
PUBH 5030	Methodological Approaches to Understanding Population Health (or other approved Methods Course) ¹	3
Credits		9
Spring		
SWRK 6020	Research Design & Measurement	3
SWRK 6030	Multivariate Data Analysis	3
Methods Course (or PUBH 5030) ¹		3
Credits		9
Year Two		
Fall		
Methods Course ¹		3
Methods Course ¹		3
Elective ²		3
Credits		9
Spring		
SWRK 6040	Research Area Synthesis	3
Elective ²		3
Elective ²		3
Credits		9
Year Three		
Fall		
Completion of Written Exam, Teaching Experience, and Workshop from Center for Transformative Teaching and Learning		
SWRK 6990	Dissertation	3
Credits		3
Spring		
Completion of Oral Exam, Teaching Experience, and Workshop from Center for Transformative Teaching and Learning		
SWRK 6990	Dissertation	3
Credits		3
Year Four		
Fall		
SWRK 6990	Dissertation	3
Credits		3
Spring		
Completion of Dissertation Defense		

SWRK 6990	Dissertation	3
Credits		3
Total Credits		48

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Behavioral Science, Epidemiology, Biostatistics, or Other

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To be determined by the student and mentor based on the needs for the overall plan of study. Can be taken in departments inside or outside of the College

Program Notes

Written Examination: Written exams are based on theory, methods and research topic knowledge as determined by the research area synthesis committee.

Teaching Practicum: If the student plans an academic career, it is valuable to obtain teaching experience. These experiences can be obtained via assisting a faculty member with a course or independent teaching. In addition, the Center for Transformative Teaching and Learning offers workshops and a certificate in teaching that can be obtained while being a doctoral student.

Dissertation: The traditional dissertation format involves the proposal, the research defense and an oral defense.

Contact Us

Doctoral Program in Social Work

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