

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
- 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

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/>). SLU's Ph.D. program requires a TOEFL score of 92 or higher or equivalent PTE Academic score.
- 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.
- Credential Evaluation Reports (such as the WES, ECE, Spantran, or Scholaro) are required.

If admitted to the School of Social Work, the International Office will require additional documentation to issue an I-20. Questions about these requirements can be directed to internationalservices@slu.edu.

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.

Tuition

Tuition	Cost Per Credit
Graduate Tuition	\$1,370

Additional charges may apply. Other resources are listed below:

Net Price Calculator (<https://www.slu.edu/financial-aid/tuition-and-costs/calculator.php>)

Information on Tuition and Fees (<https://catalog.slu.edu/academic-policies/student-financial-services/tuition/>)

Miscellaneous Fees (<https://catalog.slu.edu/academic-policies/student-financial-services/fees/>)

Information on Summer Tuition (<https://catalog.slu.edu/academic-policies/student-financial-services/tuition-summer/>)

Scholarships and Financial Aid

Most doctoral students receive funding in the form of a graduate research assistantship for full-time students or tuition scholarship for students retaining their employment. These awards are competitive and are based on prior academic performance, research potential and fit with the program. Awards are determined upon admission into the Social Work PhD program.

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
Methods Courses		9
Select 9 credits		
Elective Courses		36
Select 36 credits ¹		
Dissertation		12
SWRK 6990	Dissertation Research	
Total Credits		72

¹ 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

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
Elective ²		3
Credits		9
Spring		
SWRK 6020	Research Design & Measurement	3
SWRK 6030	Multivariate Data Analysis	3
Methods Course 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 Research	3
Credits		3

Spring

Completion of Oral Exam, Teaching Experience, and Workshop from Center for Transformative Teaching and Learning

SWRK 6990	Dissertation Research	3
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Credits		3
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Year Four**Fall**

SWRK 6990	Dissertation Research	3
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Credits		3
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Spring

Completion of Dissertation Defense

SWRK 6990	Dissertation Research	3
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Credits		3
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Total Credits		48
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¹ Behavioral Science, Epidemiology, Biostatistics, or Other

² 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

³ 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.

Program Notes

Students are encouraged to participate in teaching practicums that prepare them 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 numerous professional development workshops that provide students with the opportunity to build their unique professional skills outside of formal coursework or research.

~~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.~~

Contact Us

For admission questions contact:

Social Work School Graduate Admissions Office
socialwork@slu.edu
314-977-2752

For program questions contact:

Michael Vaughn (<https://www.slu.edu/social-work/faculty/vaughn-michael-1.php>), Ph.D.
Director of Ph.D. Program in Social Work
Professor of Social Work
michael.vaughn@slu.edu
314-977-2718