

# SOCIAL WORK, PH.D.

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## Program Mission

The mission of the Ph.D. Social Work Program is to provide a high-quality doctoral education for a culturally diverse student population. The program aims to develop scholars and leaders who generate and disseminate social work knowledge, promote a scientific basis for practice, facilitate policy advancement, and advocate for social and economic justice in a global environment.

## Program Goals

The program is designed for students who are committed to social work values and ethics as well as scholarship, research, and teaching that foster social justice. It prepares students to discover, integrate, apply, communicate, disseminate and extend knowledge about social work practice and social welfare. A student's capacity to make significant original contributions to knowledge in a context of freedom of inquiry and expression is emphasized. Nationally prominent faculty with expertise in diverse areas of practice, research, and teaching, mentor students toward this end.

Goal 1: Prepare students to be scholars and foster the highest educational standards of excellence for student achievement.

Goal 2: Prepare students, utilizing an innovative curriculum, to become effective leaders of the profession and discipline.

Goal 3: Prepare students to produce high-quality research that addresses evolving social issues.

## Student Learning Outcomes

1. To acquire knowledge of the epistemological base for social work practice, various practice theories, and the relationships among perspectives, paradigms, conceptual frameworks, and contemporary practice models.
2. To acquire knowledge and skills in applying methods of advanced statistical analysis to social work practice and theoretical problems.
3. To acquire knowledge and skills about perspectives and paradigms of social welfare policy and analysis from divergent political ideologies.
4. To acquire the competencies and attributes that are essential to effective leadership in social work.
5. To prepare students for leadership positions in social work education, social work administration, research, and policy.
6. To acquire knowledge and skills to be able to evaluate the new and evolving needs and problems of special populations, such as racial and ethnic minority and other diverse family groups in need of social work services.

## Mentorship Program

A special component of the doctoral program is the mentoring/advising system. A faculty mentor is assigned to each doctoral student. The academic mentor functions in a variety of roles, such as supporter, role model, academic advisor, research collaborator, advocate, and broker to professional networks. All mentors establish and maintain consistent formal and informal contact with their mentees.

Mentors assigned to students receiving teaching assistantships assist the students in developing their competence in university teaching. Mentors assigned to students receiving research assistantships focus on the students' competency in research. Generally, mentors provide assistance to doctoral students in various areas of professional preparation and scholarship, including teaching, research, scholarly writing and presentations, and professional leadership activities.

## Course Information

Course materials are provided via Blackboard, the course management system utilized by Norfolk State University. All students have full access to the course materials at the same time and throughout the semester. Courses meet weekly and participation in Blackboard activities are part of course requirements. Students are expected to have regular access to a computer. Course examinations may be administered via Blackboard.

## Grades

Grades of B- and below are failing grades in the Ph.D. program and therefore, do not meet the academic requirement for successful completion of course work.

## Course Repeat Policy

A student who receives a grade of B- or below in a concentration or elective course, but has a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 (B), may repeat the course and continue in the PhD program upon recommendation of the student's academic advisor and approval of the Director. No course can be repeated more than once. Failure to earn a passing grade in a course repeated will result in academic dismissal from the Ph.D. Program.

A student will be permitted to repeat no more than two separate courses in the Ph.D. Program. A third grade of B- or below will result in dismissal.

## Incomplete ("I") Grades

Students must make arrangements with the instructor to remove an "I" grade. The instructor will set a time limit, usually no later than mid-term of the next semester, for the removal of the "I". After a one (1) year time limit, the "I" grade will automatically change to the "F" grade. Students with "I" grades are not eligible to take the Comprehensive Examinations. Students who fail to remove an "I" grade within the designated time frame will not be permitted to continue in the program.

## Comprehensive Examination

After successful completion of all coursework, students are required to pass SWK 950 Comprehensive Examinations. The Ph.D. Committee administers the Comprehensive Examination on the main campus of Norfolk State University. Students must be present on campus to sit for the examination.

The purpose of the examination is to assess students' ability to conceptualize, integrate, and communicate knowledge pertaining to their educational experience. The examination consists of a written test, which assesses students' mastery of policy, theory, and research content. Successful completion of the Comprehensive Examination qualifies a student for admission to Candidacy for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work.

If a student fails any portion of the examination, he or she may retake that portion of the examination the following semester. Failure to pass on retesting will result in the student's dismissal from the program.

Students who fail all three sections of the Comprehensive Exam on the first attempt are automatically dismissed from the Program.

## Candidacy for the Ph.D. in Social Work

Successful completion of the Comprehensive Examinations qualifies the doctoral student for candidacy status. After achieving candidacy status, doctoral students must propose and complete a dissertation study under the direction of the five-member Dissertation Committee.

## Proposal Defense

The candidate is required to complete a dissertation proposal under the direction of the dissertation chair. The proposal is submitted to the committee for review and approval. The Dissertation Committee will evaluate the merit of the proposed study and the feasibility of the research methodology. The Committee will approve the proposal or recommend amendments or modifications. The Dissertation Committee, as well as the Program Director, must approve the dissertation proposal before work on the dissertation is initiated.

## IRB

Upon successful completion of the oral defense of the dissertation proposal the candidate, under the direction of the chair, will complete and submit an Institutional Review Board (IRB) application. No research may be conducted or data collected without formal written approval of the NSU IRB. Candidates are expected to comply with all policies and procedures of the IRB. Failure to comply with IRB procedures will result in dismissal from the Ph.D. Program. Students are encouraged to visit the NSU Office of Sponsored Programs' website for complete details.

## Dissertation

Completion of the Dissertation is the final requirement for the Ph.D. in Social Work. The dissertation demonstrates the candidate's capabilities with respect to knowledge building that is relevant to the profession of social work.

The Dissertation Committee, under the leadership of the Chair, supervises the completion of the dissertation and conducts the final dissertation defense. Candidates may not sit for the final oral dissertation defense until the dissertation is completed, approved by the chair and the dissertation committee, and submitted to the Doctoral Program Office. The dissertation committee must formally attest that the candidate is ready to proceed to the defense. All dissertation committee members, the chair, and the candidate are expected to be present on the main campus for the final dissertation defense.

The candidate presents, explains, and justifies his/her research. Contributions of the research to the profession of social work are presented. Proposal defenses and final dissertation defenses must be publicly announced via the Ph.D. Program Office at least two weeks in advance of their occurrence. All announcements will be displayed until the defense date has expired. This policy is intended to foster maximum participation of interested faculty and students and promote scholarly interaction and inquiry.

Because the requirements for formatting and submitting dissertations are unique to the School of Social Work as well as the School of Graduate Studies and Research, the candidate must follow the current policies and procedures specified in the Dissertation Guide for completion of the final copy of the Dissertation.

## Continuation and Exit Requirements

After admission, continuation in the Ph.D. Program is contingent upon successful completion of coursework, which is defined as earning no less than a "B" grade in each course of the student's program of study. Students must maintain a 3.0 cumulative grade point average each semester.

## Graduation

Candidates for the Ph.D. in Social Work must submit an application for graduation and follow all application guidelines contained in the Graduate Catalog and Ph.D. Program Handbook. Candidates may not apply for graduation until they have successfully defended their dissertation as approved by the dissertation committee, the Ph.D. Program Director, and the Deans of the Schools of Social Work and Graduate Studies. All necessary revisions required by the dissertation committee must be completed and approved by the dissertation chair prior to application for graduation. The final bound copies of the approved dissertation must be distributed according to the Dissertation Guide, prior to certification for graduation.

The Ph.D. Program Director, the Dean of the School of Social Work, and the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies and Research must review and approve the final dissertation prior to graduation.

## Withdrawal from a Course, the Program, or the University

Students must follow the guidelines and procedures for withdrawals as outlined in the Ph.D. Program Handbook and the Graduate Catalog. Students will receive a copy upon admission.

## Appeal Process

The process for student appeals is discussed in the Ph.D. Social Work Program Handbook and the Graduate Catalog, and is consistent with the procedures of the University and School of Social Work.

## Academic Honesty

Academic honesty includes adherence to guidelines established by the University, its schools and their facilities, for the use of its libraries, its computers and other facilities.

## COSTS AND FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

### Tuition and Fees

The Student Accounts Department is the general billing and collections office for student tuition, course fees, room and board, and other education-related fees. Information regarding tuition and fees for students can be found at the office of Student Accounts' website: <https://www.nsu.edu/student-accounts/tuition-and-fees> (<https://www.nsu.edu/student-accounts/tuition-and-fees/>).

### Financial Aid

The Office of Financial Aid Office works diligently to assist students as they pursue their educational endeavors. NSU offers a wide variety of financial aid programs, including: scholarships, grants, student employment opportunities and loans. Please visit: <https://www.nsu.edu/enrollment-management/financial-aid/index> (<https://www.nsu.edu/enrollment-management/financial-aid/index/>)

## Teaching and Research Assistantships

Teaching and research assistantships may be available to full-time students. These assistantships are designed to support full-time study and include a stipend plus tuition. Assistantships are generally granted for three years of doctoral study. Students may apply for assistantships when they apply for admission to the doctoral program. A personal interview is required.

## Ph.D. Curriculum

Curriculum Credits Required for Degree. Fifty-four hours are required for the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Degree in Social Work.

## Core Curriculum

Students are encouraged to have the Master of Social Work degree and a background in social work. Thus, core courses are designed to review, frame, and expand social work knowledge and competencies. The core curriculum consists of 15 credit hours requiring the following courses:

Code	Title	Credits
SWK 810	Seminar: Scholarly Writing	3
SWK 811	Theories and Models of Practice	3
SWK 813	Introd Research Methods for Social Work	3
SWK 814	Social Welfare History and Philosophy	3
SWK 910	Dissertation Seminar	3
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>15</b>

The curriculum is designed to align with the quality guidelines published by the Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education in Social Work (GADE). Core and required courses in each category meet the professional standards of GADE. GADE acknowledges that graduates will pursue professions in the discipline directly related to research, scholarship, and teaching.

The focus of the core curriculum is to educate students on the epistemological basis and research methods for social work practice and policy. The courses focus on teaching students to critically analyze theories, practices, policies, and research to improve social welfare. The core courses will provide students with the foundation and understanding of the history and philosophy of the social work profession. Students will learn to use methods and modalities of research inquiry to disseminate an original body of work that to contribute the knowledge base of the profession. Students will also gain knowledge in research design and theory development. Coursework will allow students to examine contemporary theories and policies in the context of current social justice issues.

Policy coursework will educate students on the development of local, state, and federal policy in the United States to evaluate and address social problems and daily operations of the criminal justice system.

Coursework specific to teaching will expose students to the role of a social work educator. Students will learn the curriculum development process and how to align education philosophy to contemporary social issues and trends.

The dissertation requirement will allow students to create and present an original body of work that focuses on social welfare issues in the profession.

## Curriculum

### Full-Time

Full-time student status requires a minimum course load of 9 credit hours each semester for four consecutive semesters. Students enroll in a 15 credit hour core curriculum. An additional 27 credit hours of curriculum, 3 credit hours of electives, and 9 credit hours of dissertation work are required.

### Summary of Graduation Requirements

Subject Area	Credits
Major Requirements	42
Electives	3
Dissertation	9
<b>Total Credit Hours</b>	<b>54</b>

Course	Title	Credits
<b>First Year</b>		
SWK 810	Seminar: Scholarly Writing	3
SWK 811	Theories and Models of Practice	3
SWK 813	Introd Research Methods for Social Work	3
SWK 814	Social Welfare History and Philosophy	3
SWK 816	Qualitative Research Mthods	3
SWK 817	Social Policy Analysis and Evaluation	3
SWK 818	Seminar: Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion	3
<b>Credits</b>		<b>21</b>
<b>Second Year</b>		
SWK 812	Innovative Pedagogy	3
SWK 819	Advanced Research Mthds for Social Polic	3
SWK 820	Seminar: Culture, Privilege, and Oppress	3
SWK 840	Social Work and Criminal Justice Policie	3
SWK 821	Applied Structure Equation Modeling	3
SWK 822	Curriculum Development, Orgn and Chge	3
SWK 910	Dissertation Seminar	3
SWK XXX	Restricted Elective	3
<b>Credits</b>		<b>24</b>
<b>Third Year</b>		
SWK 999A	Doctoral Dissertation	9
<b>Credits</b>		<b>9</b>
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>54</b>

### Part-Time

### Summary of Graduation Requirements

Subject Area	Credits
Major Requirements	42
Electives	3
Dissertation	9
<b>Total Credit Hours</b>	<b>54</b>

Course	Title	Credits
<b>First Year</b>		
SWK 811	Theories and Models of Practice	3
SWK 813	Introd Research Methods for Social Work	3
SWK 816	Qualitative Research Mthods	3

SWK 818	Seminar: Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion	3
<b>Credits</b>		<b>12</b>
<b>Second Year</b>		
SWK 810	Seminar: Scholarly Writing	3
SWK 814	Social Welfare History and Philosophy	3
SWK 817	Social Policy Analysis and Evaluation	3
<b>Credits</b>		<b>9</b>
<b>Third Year</b>		
SWK 819	Advanced Research Mthds for Social Polic	3
SWK 820	Seminar: Culture, Privilege, and Oppress	3
SWK 812	Innovative Pedagogy	3
SWK 840	Social Work and Criminal Justice Policie	3
<b>Credits</b>		<b>12</b>
<b>Fourth Year</b>		
SWK 821	Applied Structure Equation Modeling	3
SWK 822	Curriculum Development, Orgn and Chge	3
SWK 910	Dissertation Seminar	3
XXX XXX	Restricted Elective	3
<b>Credits</b>		<b>12</b>
<b>Fifth Year</b>		
SWK 999A	Doctoral Dissertation	9
<b>Credits</b>		<b>9</b>
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>54</b>

## Admissions

### Requirements and Procedures

Admission to the Ph.D. Program in Social Work is a highly selective process. The School recruits doctoral students who demonstrate high academic achievement, strong personal motivation, professional backgrounds of consistent growth and achievement and a commitment to contribute to expanding and disseminating evidence-based and evidence-informed knowledge for family-centered social work. The requirements for admission are as follows:

1. MSW degree, with a grade point average of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale;
2. Two years of full-time, paid post-master's social work practice experience preferred;
3. Successful completion of a graduate course in research;
4. Successful completion of a graduate course in statistics;
5. Personal statement of career goals and research interests;
6. Four letters of recommendation: one academic, one personal/professional, and two recent work references.
7. Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores are required for admission.

## Application Process

The procedures for completing the application process are as follows:

### Application for Admission

The School of Social Work PhD Program has a rolling admission process; preference is given to those who submit their application by March 1. Students are admitted once per year, in the fall semester.

## Transcripts

The applicant must have two official transcripts from each college and/or university attended sent.

## Graduate Record Examination (GRE)

GRE scores are used as diagnostic criteria for admission.

## Interview

The applicant may be invited for, or may request a personal interview with members of the Doctoral Admissions Committee.

## References

The applicant is responsible for listing four references on the appropriate forms provided as part of the online application process. Written letters should be submitted directly to the School of Social Work and addressed to the PhD Program Director.

## Personal Statement

The applicant must provide a written statement meeting the specifications, including career objectives, professional background, and preparation and qualifications for successful doctoral work.

## Scholarly Writing

Applicants are required to submit an example of their scholarly written work.

## Application for Financial Aid

Teaching and/or research assistantships may be available to full-time doctoral students on a limited basis. To be considered for financial aid or assistantships offered by the University, applicants must submit a financial aid application along with the online application for admission. All awards are subject to the availability of funds.

Assistantship applications are assessed on each applicant's academic performance, quality and breadth of professional social work experiences, scholarly work, community service, personal statement of educational and career goals, letters of recommendation, and the personal interview.

There are two major objectives of the personal interview. For the applicant, the interview provides an opportunity to ask questions, gain information, and clarify plans for undertaking doctoral studies. For the Doctoral Committee, the interview offers an opportunity to raise questions that may stem from the written application and to deepen the impressions of the applicant's interest in, capacity for, and commitment to doctoral education in social work.

Applications for admission should be completed online via School of Graduate Studies and Research website. All written correspondence regarding the doctoral program should be directed as follows:

Norfolk State University  
700 Park Avenue  
Norfolk, VA 23504

## Admissions

Admission to the Ph.D. program in Social Work is granted on a space availability basis to students who meet all admissions requirements. Generally, coursework in the Ph.D. program can be completed in two calendar years of full-time study, although individual differences can be expected. All degree requirements, including the dissertation, must be completed within seven (7) years of admission to the program.

Admitted students must complete a minimum of one-year residency prior to admission to candidacy for the Ph.D. Residency refers to full-time enrollment or a minimum of nine credit hours of graduate coursework each semester for two consecutive semesters.

### **Full-time Students**

Full-time student status requires a minimum course load of 9 credit hours each semester for four consecutive semesters. Students enroll in a 9 credit hour core curriculum during the first semester. An additional 21 credit hours of concentration curriculum, 12 credit hours of electives, and 12 credit hours of dissertation work are required.

### **Part-time Students**

The School of Social Work has available a part-time program of doctoral study. Applicants for part-time status must meet all requirements for admission to the doctoral program. The number of part-time students admitted will be limited, according to an ongoing assessment of resources necessary to achieve program purposes and goals.

### **Provisional Admissions**

An applicant may be admitted to the doctoral program on a provisional basis only in the case of failure to meet prerequisites for research and/or statistics. Provisional status is granted for one semester. Regular admission is granted upon completion of the prerequisites. Financial aid is not available to provisional students.

### **Transfer Credits**

Transfer students are students who have been enrolled in a doctoral program in a college or university other than Norfolk State University. Transfer students must meet the same general admissions requirements. A maximum of 9 transfer credit hours may be granted for coursework completed in a doctoral program, located in a CSWE accredited School of Social Work and upon approval of the PhD Program Director. Courses considered for transfer credit must satisfy the following criteria: Completed in a doctoral program at an accredited institution;

- Completed with a minimum grade of "B";
- Compatible with the student's program of study;
- Not completed through correspondence or an examination;
- Completed within three years of the initiation of the request for the transfer credit, and
- Credits have not been applied toward another degree.

### **International Students**

International students are required to apply for admission to the PhD program similarly to any applicant. Foreign nationals must receive a minimum score of 550 on the test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). The Educational Testing Service administers the TOEFL in testing centers all over the world. Please visit the Norfolk State University International Student Services website for additional information: <https://www.nsu.edu/iss> (<https://www.nsu.edu/iss/>). Students should also visit the TOEFL website for a testing schedule at:

Test of English as a Foreign Language Educational Testing Service  
 P.O. Box 6155  
 Princeton, NJ 08541-6155 USA  
 (609) 771-710  
 Email: [toefl@ets.org](mailto:toefl@ets.org)  
 Web: <http://www.toefl.org>