

SOCIAL WELFARE, PHD

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More Information: <https://case.edu/socialwork/academics/phd-social-welfare>

Degree: Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Field of Study: Social Welfare

Program Overview

Founded in 1952 as one of the first doctoral programs in social welfare in America, the PhD program at the Mandel School is designed to develop leaders in social work research, policy and teaching.

The PhD program is a cornerstone of the school, offering doctoral students the unrivaled opportunity to engage with world-renowned faculty, cutting edge research and a creative curriculum- all within a supportive environment committed to student success.

Learning Outcomes

- Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences others to achieve a common goal. Leadership in academe is unique in that the organizational structure is more horizontal and shared, while in most organizations it is hierarchical. Students will achieve competency in academic leadership by understanding their and others' style of leadership and participating in student and professional activities that enhance leadership skills.
- Research competency means mastery of skills needed to design and conduct systematic, empirical, objective, public, and critical investigation of a social welfare problem or issue. It means having the capacity to frame a question about a social welfare issue or problem that can be evaluated or examined using social science research methods. The research may be descriptive, designed to develop a theory, or intended to test a hypothesis. Research competency also entails mastery of oral, written, and visual communication skills needed to disseminate research. Research competency includes the ability to critically evaluate and synthesize research conducted by others. Lastly, it entails knowledge of, and commitment to, ethical principles guiding research and mastery of skills needed to protect the rights of research participants.
- Teaching competency includes a conceptual understanding of how people learn and the translation of this understanding into constructing and delivering learning opportunities to diverse audiences. Teaching competency at the doctoral level is based upon a general understanding of the historical evolution as well as current roles, structure and function of higher education and the academic profession in American society. A prerequisite to placing social work education within the context of higher education is knowledge of the relationship of professional education to liberal education and knowledge of the history and current context of social work education. This includes knowledge of social work educational policy and program accreditation standards for program design and curriculum development. Teaching competency also entails an understanding of learning theory and its application to professional education, including capability in educational program design,

curriculum development, and the delineation and assessment of educational objectives.

- Theory competency means the mastery of skills needed to use theory and conceptual frameworks in social science research. Students mastering the theory competency will be able to use theory effectively to develop research questions and hypotheses for empirical testing. They will possess an understanding of the conceptual nature of theory and the ways theory can be applied in knowledge development. Students who master the theory competency will understand the evolution and history of theory development related to social welfare policies and problems.

Our curriculum and professional development opportunities are focused on assisting students to meet these four competencies. Student performance on the competencies is assessed annually as part of our faculty's review of students' activities and accomplishments.

Leadership

Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences others to achieve a common goal. Leadership in academia is unique in that the organizational structure is more horizontal and shared, while in most organizations it is hierarchical. Students will achieve competency in academic leadership by understanding their and others' style of leadership and participating in student and professional activities that enhance leadership skills. Students are encouraged to participate in professional social work organizations in their areas of expertise as well as to assume leadership roles in on Mandel School, CWRU and community committees.

Research

Research involves the mastery of skills needed to design and conduct a systematic, empirical, objective, public and critical investigation of a social welfare problem or issue. Doctoral students graduate with the capacity to frame a question about a social welfare issue or problem that can be evaluated or examined by using social science research methods. Their dissertation research may be descriptive, designed to develop a theory, or intended to test a hypothesis. The typical doctoral student has a prospectus approved within two years of completing coursework and a dissertation defended within five years of completing coursework, although many complete all requirements sooner. Through the dissertation, students demonstrate the ability to conduct independent research and to make appropriate use of quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods of analytical techniques. The majority of our doctoral students present research at professional conferences and author or co-author a publishable-quality article for a peer-reviewed journal during their time in the Doctoral Program. In the first three years of the full-time program, 20 hours each week are devoted to a paid individualized research fellowship matching a student's interests with a faculty member's research projects. Specialized research mentorships are also available for both full-time and part-time students who wish to work with an individual faculty member on a specific research topic.

Teaching

We expect scholars and leaders be able to effectively communicate with others and to be able to teach. Students can take coursework related to teaching and engage in a teaching mentorship with a faculty member. During the mentorship, students practice didactic, interactive and experiential teaching strategies in classroom settings. They also learn approaches to other forms of knowledge dissemination such as presentations and writing papers for publications.

Teaching involves a conceptual understanding of how people learn and the ability to translate this understanding into constructing and delivering learning opportunities to diverse audiences. Formal coursework on social work education and funded teaching mentorships allow doctoral students the opportunity to develop knowledge of the history and current context of social work education and skills in educational program design, curriculum development, and outcome assessment of educational objectives. Students have an opportunity to participate in seminars on teaching offered by the University Center for Innovations in Teaching Excellence.

Social Welfare Theory

Students in the Mandel School Doctoral Program acquire the skills needed to use theory and conceptual frameworks in social science research. Upon completion of the program, students will be able to use theory to develop research questions and hypotheses for empirical testing and will possess an understanding of the conceptual nature of theory and the ways theory can be applied to the development of knowledge in social welfare. Through coursework, research fellowships and dissertation work, students apply a theoretical framework in research to a social welfare problem and are able to discuss implications of empirical research findings on theoretical relationships.

Faculty Advisors

Each doctoral student is assigned a faculty advisor to assist in the planning of their educational experience. At the appropriate time, a dissertation advisor is selected by the student and in consultation with the Doctoral Program Chair.

Qualifying Examination

The qualifying examination for doctoral candidates is taken after completion of required coursework. The exam is intended to test the student's ability to critically analyze and integrate knowledge.

Admission to Candidacy

Students are admitted to candidacy for the PhD degree after completing all coursework and upon the successful completion of the qualifying examination. To be admitted to candidacy, the candidate also must have maintained a grade point average of 3.0. The Doctoral Program follows the grading policy and GPA Guidelines of Graduate Studies.

Dissertation Requirements

Dissertation Formats

Students may choose one of two different formats for writing their dissertation. Each format should be carefully considered by the student in consultation with their dissertation committee chair.

Traditional Dissertation

The first format is the monograph or "book" format for a dissertation. In this format, the dissertation is organized as an integrated set of chapters written as a logical progression of ideas pertaining to a central topic. Monograph dissertations typically include chapters formatted much like a book, with an abstract, table of contents, introductory chapter(s) addressing literature and theory, a methods chapter, one or more results chapter, a discussion chapter, and reference list.

Three Paper Dissertation

The second dissertation format is a series of three research papers that may differ in a topic but are clearly reflective of a coherent program of

research. Each paper is a stand-alone manuscript that is intended to be submitted to a high-quality peer review journal. Examples of acceptable paper formats may include: systematic literature review, theoretical or conceptual, or empirical which must contain its own literature review, background, motivation, theory, data, methodology, results, and conclusions. Other types of papers may be acceptable but must be approved by the dissertation committee. The three paper dissertations include the following components: abstract; an introductory chapter addressing the literature and theory of the program of research; three chapters that are the stand-alone manuscripts; a discussion chapter that discusses common implications across the program of research for social work, policy, practice and/or research; and a complete reference list. The student is the sole author of the dissertation, including the three paper chapters. In no cases should the paper chapters be articles that have already been published or submitted for publication prior to the committees' formal approval of the dissertation. The student can make the choice to co-author any subsequent publications that are derived from or related to the dissertation research. Co-authorship may occur after the dissertation committee has formally approved the dissertation and prior to the paper being submitted for publication.

The dissertation prospectus must be completed and accepted within two calendar years after the student has been admitted to candidacy, and the dissertation must be completed and accepted within five calendar years after admission to candidacy. It is to the student's advantage to make steady progress in their research and aim for early completion of the dissertation.

Once a student registers for SASS 701 Dissertation Ph.D., he or she must continue to register each succeeding regular semester (fall and spring) until the dissertation is complete unless granted a leave of absence. The minimum requirement for the dissertation is 18 hours.

All requirements for the PhD degree must be completed within a period of five consecutive calendar years after a student is admitted to candidacy, including periods of leaves of absence.

Admission and Financial Aid

Information about admission to the Doctoral Program can be found on the Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences Doctoral Program Website.

Information about financial aid for the PhD in Social Welfare can be found on the Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences website.

PhD Policies

For PhD policies and procedures, please review the School of Graduate Studies section of the General Bulletin.

Program Requirements

A total of 37 credit hours of coursework is required, plus 18 credit hours of dissertation credit. A qualifying examination, given after completion of coursework, determines each student's eligibility for degree candidacy. The degree is awarded following successful completion of the dissertation.

The school reserves the right to require additional courses, which may not be credited toward the doctoral requirements if the faculty believes the student has insufficient knowledge in core areas of the curriculum, or to assist students in their intellectual and professional development.

In response to the different needs and interests of potential PhD students, the Mandel School offers two formats for meeting course and degree requirements. Program requirements under both formats include taking 55 credit hours (28 required, 9 electives, and 18 dissertation credit hours), passing a qualifying exam, and completing a dissertation. The Alternative Program Structures are:

- **Full-Time Program**

Under this format, full-time students can complete course requirements and individualized research fellowships over two academic years.

- **Part-Time Program**

Part time students are expected to complete the coursework requirements within three years.