

DOCTORAL PROGRAM

Doctor of Philosophy in Social Welfare

The purpose of the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Social Welfare degree program is the preparation of scholars, teachers, and leaders to generate new knowledge on the policies and programs of social welfare and the practice of social work. Accordingly, we emphasize the creative and evaluative skills necessary for independent inquiry. The program prepares students to be knowledgeable in the following:

- Relevant areas of the social and behavioral sciences
- Research design, statistics, qualitative methods, mixed methods, and the philosophy of science
- Theory-building and theories of social welfare
- Methods for the application and transmission of knowledge in the human services

In addition to this foundation knowledge, students develop specialized expertise in program planning, evaluation, or social work practice theory and in one or more substantive areas of social welfare. An effort is made to provide an educational climate in which critical analysis and creative thinking flourish. The program core emphasizes philosophical and scientific approaches to theory development, the content and boundaries of theoretical social welfare, statistics, and advanced research methodologies, and the social and behavioral science foundations underpinning social welfare programs and social work practice.

The area of specialization enables the student to apply social science theory, analytical approaches, and research tools to a social problem or issue in social work. Students are encouraged to focus on a substantive social problem during the period of specialization. This facilitates the development of a dissertation proposal. Permeating the content of the entire program is a focus on the development and transmission of knowledge as a part of an educational process.

To prepare students for academic careers in social work education is an integral part of the educational plan. Teaching mentorships and classroom teaching experiences are available.

Students can pursue special interests through individual reading and research projects. In addition, regular course offerings in other departments of the university are available to students. Practical experiences in faculty-conducted research projects are made available to doctoral students.

A total of 43 credit hours of coursework is required, plus 18 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 14 courses (43 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.

Plan of Study: Full-Time Doctoral Program

SASS 608	Philosophy of Science and Theory Building	3
SASS 613	Advanced Research Design	3
SASS 614	Models of Qualitative Research	3
SASS 615	Social Statistics and Data Analysis	3
SASS 616	Applied Regression and the Linear Model	3
SASS 618	Measurement Issues in Quantitative Research	3
SASS 619	Structural Equation Modeling ¹	3
SASS 623	Research Synthesis & Systematic Review Methodology ¹	3
SASS 630	Seminar on Social Work Education	3
SASS 631	Job Seekers Seminar ²	3
SASS 637	Individual Reading ¹	3
SASS 638	Integrative Seminar: Research Development for Social Welfare Scholars ³	4
SASS 639	Independent Study for Early Teaching Support ⁴	1
SASS 701	Dissertation Ph.D. ⁵	18

¹ Elective, students are required to take at least one 3 credit hour advance statistics or theory elective at MSASS or outside MSASS

² Optional elective for job market readiness

³ This course is a 1 credit hour course which students are required to take for their first four semesters.

⁴ Required to register in the years that they are teaching one of the 3 required MSSA courses or serving as a TA in a Doctoral course

⁵ Students must register each semester until the dissertation is complete. SASS 701 Dissertation Ph.D. hours are not required during the summer semester.

Part-Time Program

The part-time format accommodates social work professionals who must maintain their employment commitments but wish to pursue PhD study through the completion of a minimum of six courses per year.

Faculty Advisors

Each doctoral student is assigned a faculty advisor to assist in the planning of his or her educational experience. At the appropriate time, a dissertation advisor is appointed after consultation with the student.

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 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 and received not more than one course grade of C or lower. To remain in the program, students must maintain a minimum of a cumulative 3.0 average and receive no more than one grade of C or lower.

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 his/her dissertation committee chair.

Monograph 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. Coauthorship 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 his or her 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 and financial aid for the PhD in Social Welfare (<http://msass.case.edu/doctorate>) can be found on the Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences website.