

SOCIAL WORK (PHD)

The PhD in Social Work, established in 1986, extends the tradition of educating students skilled in clinical research, scholarship, and teaching with the Jesuit ideals of service to others and commitment to social justice as its foundation. The doctoral program prepares students for leadership roles in diverse practice and academic arenas.

Our mission is to educate and train doctoral students to be independent scholars who conduct rigorous social work research and deliver effective teaching strategies to future social workers. The PhD Program at Loyola University Chicago School of Social Work builds on its clinical reputation by preparing doctoral students to create and evaluate practice-informed, client-centered interventions and policies that impact practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Doctoral students are trained in these practice-informed approaches to understand and respond to the complex social, racial, and economic justice issues that impact the most marginalized and oppressed in our society. The doctoral program reflects the social justice mission of our university by training doctoral students to engage in reflective and intentional study to become scholars who transform themselves, their community, the profession, and their world.

Program Goals

The specific goals of the PhD Program at the School of Social Work at Loyola University Chicago are consistent with national goals as outlined in the Group for Advancement of Doctoral Education (<https://www.gadesocialwork.org/>) and prepare professionals for:

- Scholarship and research in areas that include but are not limited to theory building, the effectiveness of practice interventions, and program evaluation.
- Academic teaching in the content areas of theory, practice, research, and policy.
- The advancement of the social work profession in a context that is global, and multi-cultural, requiring and addressing global-based human rights violations and inequalities.
- Leadership in the profession's commitment to remedying the growing and profound inequality with a commitment to policies, practices, and research that remedy those inequalities and their immediate negative effects on vulnerable populations.
- Inter-disciplinary scholarly work through course electives taken outside the SSW (School of Social Work) to enhance student's learning toward the completion of their dissertation.

Related Programs

Master's

- Social Work (MSW) (<https://catalog.luc.edu/graduate-professional/social-work/msw/>)

Certificate

- Advanced School Mental Health Certificate (<https://catalog.luc.edu/graduate-professional/social-work/advanced-school-mental-health-certificate/>)

Combined

- Divinity and Social Justice (MDiv/MA) (<https://catalog.luc.edu/graduate-professional/dual-degree-programs/divinity-social-justice-mdiv-ma/>)

Curriculum

The PhD in Social work requires 48 credit hours of coursework, a comprehensive examination, and a dissertation.

Coursework Requirements

The PhD in Social Work courses expand on student's understanding of social work research methodology and teaching.

Code	Title	Hours
SOWK 800	Statistics	3
SOWK 801	Historical & Contemporary Issues in Social Work Practice	3
SOWK 802	Grand Theories & Perspectives in Social Work Knowledge	3
SOWK 803	Advanced Statistics	3
SOWK 804	Qualitative Research	3
SOWK 805	Research Practicum I	3
SOWK 806	Research Practicum II	3
SOWK 808	Integration of Research, Practice, & Theory in Social Work Scholarship	3
SOWK 817	The Nature of Social Work Knowledge	3
SOWK 818	Social Work Research Methodology: Overview of the Fundamentals	3
SOWK 820	Social Theory & Social Change	3
SOWK 822	Organizational Analysis	3
SOWK 828	Teaching Seminar and Practicum I	3
SOWK 829	Teaching Seminar & Practicum II	3
Graduate Level Elective Courses ¹		6
SOWK 827	Doctoral Study	0
SOWK 600	Dissertation Supervision	0
Total Hours		48

¹ The goal of elective courses is to enhance the quality and scholarship of the dissertation. The Director of the Doctoral Program should be consulted to provide advising about potential elective courses.

Once a student has completed coursework, they are registered for SOWK 827 Doctoral Study or SOWK 600 Dissertation Supervision to maintain standing in the Graduate School. It is not necessary for students to register for either of these courses during the summer term, but it is imperative that they register for either of these two courses every fall and spring term until graduation.

Comprehensive Examinations

Once students have completed the core curriculum (the second year of course work) they prepare for the Comprehensive Exam which is taken during the fall semester of their third year and prior to developing a dissertation proposal. The written and oral exam test knowledge and critical thinking in research and micro/mezzo/macro theories and practices in the context of social justice applications.

Dissertation

Students are encouraged to begin thinking about specific areas for scholarly inquiry early in their course of study and to discuss these interests with full-time faculty members who have similar interest and expertise. The educational experiences are planned to facilitate the development of skills of intensive investigation and the application of

research techniques to clinical phenomenon, process and/or services. A dissertation proposal Chairperson may be selected as early as the second semester of study. The selection of the Chairperson is normally a matter of mutual agreement between the student and the faculty member involved. The development of the dissertation proposal is a continuous process of focus, modification, and refinement until the proposal is developed to the satisfaction of the student and the dissertation Chairperson.

The following criteria will be applied by members of the Dissertation Proposal Committee in determining acceptability of the document and in granting final approval:

1. Proposals must have as their ultimate objective a contribution to the knowledge of the practice of social work. This objective may be in the advancement of relevant theory, the improvement of practice, the process outcomes, or synthesis of existing knowledge.
2. The formulated research question must be based on informed and extensive knowledge of theory and prior empirical study in the specific area of pursuit.
3. Clear concepts and well articulated research questions must be formulated.
4. Client systems, other social systems, and social service delivery systems are acceptable foci for subject matter within the context of practice related problems, situations, interactions, processes, and outcomes.
5. Replication of other studies is acceptable provided theory is advanced by way of its application to practice. This implies thinking through of alternative explanations of prior findings, the formulation of questions and hypotheses which reflect this thinking and the development of designs which take into account the gaps and/or limitations of prior work.
6. Proposals must include an acceptable plan and methodology of inquiry. No single research methodology is favored or prohibited. The proposed study may be exploratory, experimental, or historic in nature. Appropriate guidelines for the collection of data and data analysis must be stated.
7. Sample size must be appropriate to the nature of the study, the questions asked and methods to be used. Intensive case study (individual, group or family) and single subject approached may be acceptable. However, replication over series of cases may improve the potential for committee approval as a dissertation topic and would provide opportunity for comparative analysis.
8. When agency accessibility and cooperation is essential to the study, a plan based on preliminary negotiations when attention to feasibility must be presented.
9. Proposals must accord with the policies and procedures of all relevant review boards for the Protection of Human Subjects.

When the Chairperson is satisfied that a report is reaching a stage at which approval from the Committee is likely, the Chairperson will request the Director of the Doctoral Program to schedule a Dissertation Hearing which will be open to the public and advertised to the students and faculty and the School of Social Work.

After the Dissertation Committee has given final approval to the Dissertation, the student must bring the manuscript form into conformance with official specifications and to submit all appropriate abstracts and forms. Students should be aware that they will not be allowed to graduate unless the Graduate School is satisfied that they

have met all the requirements related to the submissions of the final document.

Suggested Sequence of Courses

After coursework listed below is complete, students begin taking SOWK 827 Doctoral Study or SOWK 600 Dissertation Supervision until dissertation defense.

The below sequence of courses is meant to be used as a suggested path for completing coursework. An individual student's completion of requirements depends on course offerings in a given term as well as the start term for a major or graduate study. Students should consult their advisor for assistance with course selection.

Course	Title	Hours
Year 1		
Fall		
SOWK 800	Statistics	3
SOWK 801	Historical & Contemporary Issues in Social Work Practice	3
SOWK 817	The Nature of Social Work Knowledge	3
SOWK 818	Social Work Research Methodology: Overview of the Fundamentals	3
Hours		12
Spring		
SOWK 802	Grand Theories & Perspectives in Social Work Knowledge	3
SOWK 803	Advanced Statistics	3
SOWK 804	Qualitative Research	3
SOWK 820	Social Theory & Social Change	3
Hours		12
Year 2		
Fall		
SOWK 805	Research Practicum I	3
SOWK 822	Organizational Analysis	3
SOWK 828	Teaching Seminar and Practicum I	3
Elective		3
Hours		12
Spring		
SOWK 806	Research Practicum II	3
SOWK 808	Integration of Research, Practice, & Theory in Social Work Scholarship	3
SOWK 829	Teaching Seminar & Practicum II	3
Elective		3
Hours		12
Total Hours		48

Responsible Conduct of Research

All PhD students and students in thesis-based Master's degree programs must successfully complete UNIV 370 Responsible Conduct in Research and Scholarship or other approved coursework in responsible conduct of research as part of the degree requirements. It is strongly recommended that students complete this two-day training before beginning the dissertation/thesis stage of the program.

Graduate & Professional Standards and Regulations

Students in graduate and professional programs can find their Academic Policies in Graduate and Professional Academic Standards and Regulations (<https://catalog.luc.edu/academic-standards-regulations/graduate-professional/>) under their school. Any additional University Policies supersede school policies.

Learning Outcomes

At the completion of the program, doctoral students in the PhD program should be able to demonstrate the following competencies as a practice-informed researcher in the field of social work.

- Apply a commitment to social justice, equity, and inclusion of all people, in all course assignments, comprehensive exams and dissertation work, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty guided by the National Association of Social Work Code of Ethics
- Critically analyze and evaluate social work theories, practices, policies, and research and contribute to, extend, and create knowledge in your area of specialization
- Differentiate, appraise, and develop the capabilities as an independent research scholar, the necessary interpersonal skills for team-based research and scholarship, and the ability to contribute to the knowledge base in one's area of interest through independent and collaborative scholarship.
- Examine one's positionality in research and teaching and develop a commitment to anti-racist and anti-oppressive practices in social work research, practice, and education as demonstrated by completion of yearlong research and teaching practicums.
- Compare, contrast, and critique existing social work pedagogies, and construct an emerging pedagogical style with teaching strategies for online and in person classrooms, which support establishing an inclusive classroom tailored to the learning styles of diverse students and their intersectional identities.