SOCIAL WORK, DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Ph.D.)

Program mission
The VCU School of Social Work Ph.D. program prepares researchers and educators to generate, implement and communicate knowledge to advance social justice, improve human well-being and enhance the profession’s impact on pressing social problems.

Program goals
The principal goal of the Ph.D. in Social Work program is to prepare a diverse student body whose research, teaching and scholarship will position them for leadership in advancing professional practice, social policy and social work education. To achieve this goal, the program prepares students to:

1. Conduct and disseminate high-quality research that furthers the knowledge base of the profession
2. Develop cutting-edge knowledge and skills for social work teaching and learning
3. Promote social welfare and social justice in and with local, national and global communities

Student learning outcomes
Upon completion of the required curriculum, students will demonstrate the ability to:

1. Understand and critique the history of social work as a profession and academic discipline and draw implications for its current and future directions
2. Use rigorous methods and analytic strategies to conduct and disseminate high-quality research that contributes to the knowledge base of social work and related disciplines
3. Identify and critique the main social and behavioral science theories that inform knowledge development in their selected substantive area and in social work education
4. Articulate expertise in a selected substantive area relevant to social work and contextualize this expertise in a broader interdisciplinary frame of reference
5. Critically analyze the substance, function and contexts for formulation, implementation and evaluation of key social policies and draw implications for advocacy and social justice
6. Demonstrate proficiency in the knowledge, skills and values required for excellence as a social work educator

It is the responsibility of all graduate students, both on- and off-campus, to be familiar with the VCU Graduate Bulletin as well as the Graduate School website (http://www.graduate.vcu.edu) and academic regulations in individual school and department publications and on program websites. However, in all cases, the official policies and procedures of the University Graduate Council, as published on the VCU Graduate Bulletin and Graduate School websites, take precedence over individual program policies and guidelines.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on academic regulations for graduate students. (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-reg.html)

Degree candidacy requirements
A graduate student admitted to a program or concentration requiring a final research project, work of art, thesis or dissertation, must qualify for continuing master’s or doctoral status according to the degree candidacy requirements of the student’s graduate program. Admission to degree candidacy, if applicable, is a formal statement by the graduate student’s faculty regarding the student’s academic achievements and the student’s readiness to proceed to the final research phase of the degree program.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following degree candidacy policy as published in the VCU Graduate Bulletin for complete information and instructions.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on degree candidacy requirements. (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-reg.html/grad/candidacy)

Comprehensive exam/admission to candidacy
Upon completion of all required course work, students are required to take a comprehensive exam under the supervision of a comprehensive examination committee. Through the comprehensive examination, students must demonstrate the ability to integrate the whole of their educational experience by adequately addressing complex questions pertinent to the current and developing knowledge base of the human service field. Students must register for a minimum of one credit hour of independent study (SWKD 792) in the semester in which they take the comprehensive examination.

Upon successful completion of all portions of the comprehensive exam, students are approved for degree candidacy and for registration for a minimum of one credit hour of dissertation research.

If one or more portions of the examination are not passed upon the first attempt, the student receives a mark of I in the independent study course and the following semester reattempts (or portions) of the comprehensive examination one additional time. The grade of I is changed to A upon successful completion of the comprehensive exam on the second attempt and results in approval of degree candidacy and registration for dissertation research. If a student fails to pass all portions of the comprehensive examination a second time the grade of I is changed to F in the independent study course and the student is dismissed from the program. If a student chooses not to attempt the failed portion(s) of the comprehensive examination a second time, the grade of I is changed to F in the independent study course and the student is dismissed from the program.

Dissertation
After admission to candidacy, students proceed to propose, complete and defend their dissertations. The dissertation is completed under
Graduation requirements

As graduate students approach the end of their academic programs and the final semester of matriculation, they must make formal application to graduate. No degrees will be conferred until the application to graduate has been finalized.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following graduation requirements as published in the Graduate Bulletin for a complete list of instructions and a graduation checklist.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on graduation requirements. (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info)

Apply online at graduate.admissions.vcu.edu (http://www.graduate.admissions.vcu.edu).

Degree requirements

The Ph.D. curriculum is designed for students to specialize in a substantive area and increase their relevant research skills. In addition to general VCU Graduate School graduation requirements (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info), students must meet the following requirements.

A minimum of 54 graduate credit hours is required, which comprises 27 hours of core course work common for all students; 12 credit hours of electives selected individually to suit the student's course of study as follows: three credit hours of advanced statistics, three credits hours of advanced statistics or research methods, three credit hours of theory three credit hours of any course customized to the student's area of interest and a minimum of 12 credit hours of dissertation research. In addition to elective courses offered by the program, students may enroll in appropriate courses in other schools and departments at VCU with approval of their advisers. A minimum of 39 credit hours of coursework, as outlined above is required before admission to candidacy. Upon completion of the 39 credit hours of coursework students are required to complete three credit hours in a social work teaching practicum. The Graduate School requirements for candidacy exams and dissertation committees apply to students in this program. Up to six credit hours may be granted for courses completed at another university. Full-time students ordinarily complete 18 to 20 credit hours per academic year.

Curriculum requirements

Core curriculum

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SWKD 701</td>
<td>Introduction to Advanced Quantitative Methods</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWKD 702</td>
<td>Introduction to Quantitative Data Analysis</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWKD 704</td>
<td>Introduction to Qualitative Methods</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the general admission requirements of the VCU Graduate School (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/admission-graduate-study/admission-requirements), applicants must meet the following minimum requirements.

Applicants to the program must have an earned master's degree in social work or a closely related discipline, as well as professional experience relevant to their career goals. The relationship between the applicants' professional experiences and their career objectives should be clearly articulated in the personal statements submitted with the application materials.

Applicants whose career goals include teaching in a bachelor's- and/or master's-level social work program should be aware that an M.S.W. degree and social work practice experience, along with the Ph.D., are often considered to be minimal job requirements. In addition, Council on Social Work Education accreditation standards currently require that individuals who want to teach practice courses, in particular, must have an M.S.W. and at least two years of post-M.S.W. practice experience.

The normal course of study is full-time. While it is possible, in some cases, to combine a limited amount of course work with outside employment, all students must complete at least one year of full-time study prior to admission to candidacy.

Special requirements

- Submit all additional application materials (personal statement, reference letters, writing sample and resume/curriculum vita) through the Graduate Admissions office. If desired, an additional copy may be sent directly to the School of Social Work c/o Ph.D. program coordinator.

In addition to the general admission requirements of the VCU Graduate School (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/admission-graduate-study/admission-requirements), applicants must meet the following minimum requirements.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SWKD 705</td>
<td>Multivariate Analysis in Social Work and Human Services</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWKD 706</td>
<td>Proseminar I</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWKD 707</td>
<td>Proseminar II</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWKD 709</td>
<td>History and Philosophy of Social Work</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWKD 711</td>
<td>Social and Behavioral Science Theory for Social Work</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWKD 713</td>
<td>Social Policy Theory and Analysis</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWKD 716</td>
<td>Measurement in Social and Behavioral Sciences</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Hours:** 27

### Electives

**Advanced statistics and/or research courses**

Select two of the following:

- BIOS/STAT 513 Mathematical Statistics I
- BIOS/STAT 514 Mathematical Statistics II
- BIOS 553 Biostatistical Methods I
- BIOS 554 Biostatistical Methods II
- BIOS 571 Clinical Trials
- BIOS 572 Analysis of Biomedical Data
- BIOS 625 Categorical Data Analysis and Generalized Linear Models
- BIOS 631 Mixed Models and Longitudinal Data Analysis
- BIOS 647 Survival Analysis
- BIOS 688 Applied Bayesian Biostatistics
- EDUS 712 Mixed Methods Research
- EPID 651 Intermediate Epidemiologic Methods for Research
- EPID 652 Advanced Epidemiologic Methods and Data Analysis
- SBHD 633 Structural Equation Modeling
- SBHD 636 Community-based Participatory Research
- STAT 546 Linear Models
- STAT 626 Complex Sampling Designs and Variance Estimation
- STAT 642 Design and Analysis of Experiments I
- STAT 643 Applied Linear Regression
- STAT 675 Time Series Analysis I
- STAT 744 Regression II
- SWKD 722 Evaluation of Human Service Programs
- SWKD 724 Constructivist Inquiry
- SWKD 730 Seminar in Applied Quantitative Data Analysis
- SWKD 791 Topical Seminar
- SWKD 797 Directed Research
- URSP 621 Introduction to Geographic Information Systems
- URSP 622 Community Socioeconomic Analysis Using GIS

Any approved 600-level course from ADLT, CRJS, DPAL, EDUS, EPID, GRTY, GSWS, GVPA, MGMT, PADM, PPAD, PSYC, SBHD, SOCY, URSP

**Additional elective courses or independent study**

Select an additional three credits customized to student’s area of interest.

**Total Hours:** 12

One of these courses must be taken as the advanced statistics course.

In addition to elective courses offered by the program, students may enroll in appropriate courses in other schools and departments at VCU with approval of their advisers. Outside elective courses may be selected from classes at the 500 level or higher in BIOS, CCTR, CMSC, CLED, CRJS, ECSE, ECON, EDUS, ENVS, EPID, GSWS, GRTY, GVPA, GRAD, HADM, HCPR, HSEP, HGEN, HUMS, INFO, IDAS, IDDS, MASC, MATX, NURS, OVPR, PHAR, PSYC, PADM, PPAD, SBHD, SLWK, SWKD, SOCY, SEDP, STAT, SYSM, TEDU, and USRP.

### Teaching

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<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SWKD 896</td>
<td>Social Work Teaching Practicum</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Hours:** 3

### Research

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<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SWKD 898</td>
<td>Dissertation Research (a minimum of 12 credits)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Hours:** 12

The minimum total of graduate credit hours required for this degree is 54.

### Graduate program director

Denise Burnette, Ph.D.
Professor and Samuel S. Wurtzel Endowed Chair in Social Work
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Phone: (804) 828-2859

### Additional contact

Leslie Choplin, D.Ed.Min.
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### Program website:

[socialwork.vcu.edu](http://www.socialwork.vcu.edu)