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

VCU Graduate Bulletin, VCU Graduate School and general academic policies and regulations for all graduate students in all graduate programs
The VCU Graduate Bulletin website documents the official admission and academic rules and regulations that govern graduate education for all graduate programs at the university. These policies are established by the graduate faculty of the university through their elected representatives to the University Graduate Council.

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/) and academic regulations for graduate students. (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-reg/grad/candidacy/)

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/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 all (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
the supervision of a dissertation committee. A cumulative total of at least 15 credit hours of dissertation research must be completed in order to receive the Ph.D.; however, students may register for as many credits as needed/desired. Students are required to maintain continuous enrollment of at least three credit hours per semester (excluding summer) until they have attained 12 hours of dissertation credit, after which they may enroll for as few as one credit per semester. The dissertation must represent independent research and should be based on an original question or hypothesis relevant to social work. Successful defense of the dissertation, after the completion of 54 hours of course work and dissertation credits, completes the requirements for the degree.

Upon successful completion of the comprehensive examinations and entering candidacy, doctoral candidates enroll in SWKD 898 every fall and spring semester until graduation. Candidates must have successfully defended their dissertation proposal within four consecutive academic terms (fall and spring semesters), inclusive of the semester entering candidacy. Failure to have successfully defended the dissertation proposal within the time limit specified above will result in an unsatisfactory grade (U) in the fourth term of enrollment in SWKD 898. Failure to successfully defend the dissertation proposal by the end of the next fall or spring semester will result in another U grade in SWKD 898 and dismissal from the program. The semester limits noted above for successfully defending the dissertation proposal are in effect whether a candidate is actively matriculated or on a leave of absence.

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://wwwgraduate.admissions.vcu.edu).

Admission requirements

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Degree:</th>
<th>Semester(s) of entry:</th>
<th>Deadline dates:</th>
<th>Test requirements:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>Fall only</td>
<td>Jan 15</td>
<td>GRE-General</td>
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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.

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 Graduate Record Examination (General Test including verbal, quantitative and analytic sections) is required. There is no minimum threshold for acceptance. Applicants are strongly advised to take the examination by December to ensure scores are received by the application date of Jan. 15. For more information on the GRE, visit gre.org (https://www.ets.org/gre/). The institution code for VCU is 5570.

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.

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

<table>
<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>
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</tbody>
</table>
SWKD 705  Multivariate Analysis in Social Work and Human Services Research 3
SWKD 706  Proseminar I 1
SWKD 707  Proseminar II 1
SWKD 709  History and Philosophy of Social Work 3
SWKD 711  Social and Behavioral Science Theory for Social Work Research and Practice 3
SWKD 713  Social Policy Theory and Analysis 3
SWKD 716  Measurement in Social and Behavioral Sciences 3

Total Hours 27

Electives

Course  Title  Hours

Advanced statistics and/or research courses
Select two of the following: 6
BIOS/STAT 513  Mathematical Statistics I 1
BIOS/STAT 514  Mathematical Statistics II 1
BIOS 553  Biostatistical Methods I
BIOS 554  Biostatistical Methods II
BIOS 571  Clinical Trials
BIOS 572  Analysis of Biomedical Data I 1
BIOS 625  Categorical Data Analysis and Generalized Linear Models 1
BIOS 631  Mixed Models and Longitudinal Data Analysis 1
BIOS 647  Survival Analysis 1
BIOS 688  Applied Bayesian Biostatistics 3
EDUS 712  Mixed Methods Research 1
EPID 651  Intermediate Epidemiologic Methods for Research
EPID 652  Advanced Epidemiologic Methods and Data Analysis
SBHD 633  Structural Equation Modeling 1
SBHD 636  Community-based Participatory Research
STAT 546  Linear Models 1
STAT 626  Complex Sampling Designs and Variance Estimation
STAT 642  Design and Analysis of Experiments I 1
STAT 643  Applied Linear Regression 1
STAT 675  Time Series Analysis I 1
STAT 744  Regression II 1
SWKD 722  Evaluation of Human Service Programs
SWKD 724  Constructivist Inquiry
SWKD 730  Seminar in Applied Quantitative Data Analysis 1
SWKD 791  Topical Seminar 1
SWKD 797  Directed Research 1
URSP 621  Introduction to Geographic Information Systems 1
URSP 622  Community Socioeconomic Analysis Using GIS 1

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. 3

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, HCPH, HGEN, HUMS, INFO, IDAS, IDDS, MASC, MATX, NURS, OVPR, PHAR, PSYC, PADM, PPAD, SBHD, SLWK, SWKD, SOCY, SEDP, STAT, SYSM, TEDU and USRP.

Teaching

Course  Title  Hours
SWKD 896  Social Work Teaching Practicum 3

Total Hours 3

Research

Course  Title  Hours
SWKD 898  Dissertation Research (a minimum of 12 credits) 12

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
Email: jdburnette@vcu.edu
Phone: (804) 828-2859

Additional contact
Leslie Choplin, D.Ed.Min.
Program assistant
Email: lachoplin@vcu.edu
Phone: (804) 828-1044

Program website: socialwork.vcu.edu (http://www.socialwork.vcu.edu/)