

SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES, DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PH.D.)

Program goal

Training to be social and behavioral scientists

Students in the doctoral program in social and behavioral sciences will acquire the skills to become scientists, educators and scientists/administrators in a broad spectrum of positions and settings. Students will gain a progressive mastery of the current state of the subject matter in the social and behavioral sciences, an ability to synthesize the information and apply this foundation to the identification of key areas of investigation/experimentation and the ability to design and interpret studies that address the questions identified. In addition, students will develop the various means of communicating core social and behavioral science knowledge and particular study designs, results and interpretations to a variety of audiences.

Student learning outcomes

1. Analytical thinking: Students will demonstrate an appropriate level of ability to interpret information relevant to social and behavioral science, to connect rationales to procedures and evidence to findings, to draw reasonable conclusions, and to generate and evaluate alternate explanations.
2. Integrated knowledge of social and behavioral science: Students will demonstrate an appropriate level of knowledge of the current elements of the social and behavioral sciences as related to disciplinary specialization and a more detailed understanding of the individual area of scholarship, including an appropriate familiarity with the research literature and the ability to evaluate and critique.
3. Oral communication skills: Students will demonstrate the achievement of an appropriate level of skill in the oral communication of social and behavioral science subject matter with respect to content, organization, logical flow, presentation, use of language and incorporation of visual aids in formal and collaborative communication.
4. Study design: Students will demonstrate the achievement of an appropriate level of competence in the ability to appraise, modify and/or create, and implement study protocols and to design and develop studies.
5. Written communication skills: Students will demonstrate the achievement of an appropriate level of written communication skill with respect to grammar, syntax, spelling, vocabulary and use of figures, tables and citations to effectively present social and behavioral science information.

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-regs/>)

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-regs/grad/candidacy/>)

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/>)

Other information

School of Medicine graduate program policies

The School of Medicine provides policies applicable to all programs administratively housed in the school. Information on **doctoral programs** is available elsewhere in this chapter of the Graduate Bulletin.

Apply online at [sophas.org](http://www.sophas.org) (<http://www.sophas.org/>) and submit a VCU supplemental application following instructions available at [sophas.org](http://www.sophas.org).

Admission requirements

Degree:	Semester(s) of entry:	Deadline dates:	Test requirements:
Ph.D.	Fall	Jan 9 (Priority consideration given to applications received by the deadline. Interviews will be conducted in February and March.)	GRE

Special requirements

- M.P.H. or equivalent M.A. or M.S. degree

Applicants must meet all general admission requirements of the VCU Graduate School (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/admission-graduate-study/admission-requirements/>).

Degree requirements

The Ph.D. program in social and behavioral sciences, the only one of its kind in Virginia, prepares students to conduct theoretically based research and interventions on the social and behavioral determinants of health and disease. In addition to the general VCU Graduate School graduation requirements (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info/>), a minimum of 54 post-master's credit hours is required for the doctoral degree, which is expected to involve four years of full-time study.

Course requirements

Course	Title	Hours
Required core courses		
BIOS 543	Graduate Research Methods I	3
BIOS 544	Graduate Research Methods II	3
SBHD 609	Research Methods in Social and Behavioral Health I	3
SBHD 619	Research Methods in Social and Behavioral Health II	3
SBHD 630	Theoretical Foundations of Social and Behavioral Health	3
SBHD 632	Health Disparities and Social Justice	3
SBHD 634	Patient-Provider Interaction ¹	3
SBHD 636	Community-based Participatory Research ¹	3
SBHD 637	Program Evaluation	3
SBHD 638	Applications in Qualitative Research Methods	3
SBHD 639	Intervention Development and Implementation	3
SBHD 640	Seminar in Mixed Methods Research	1
SBHD 690	Departmental Seminar (one credit course taken four times)	4
Required additional courses		
OVPR 601	Scientific Integrity	1

or OVPR 602	Responsible Scientific Conduct	
or OVPR 603	Responsible Conduct of Research	
Elective courses		
Any graduate-level courses approved by adviser		6
Dissertation research		
SBHD 697	Directed Research in Social and Behavioral Health (nine credits minimum)	9
Total Hours		54

1

SBHD 692 may be taken if subject matter is appropriate; see adviser for approval.

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

Typical plan of study

Many students often end up taking more than the minimum number of hours required for a degree program. The total number of hours may vary depending upon the nature of research being conducted or the enrollment or funding status of the student. Students should refer to their program websites and talk with their graduate program director or adviser for information about typical plans of study and registration requirements. This program has a typical time to degree of four years. For additional information, see the departmental website (<http://hbp.vcu.edu/education/phd-behavioralhealth/>).

Contact

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Program website: hbp.vcu.edu (<http://hbp.vcu.edu/>)