

PhD in Social Work

The objective of the PhD in Social Work is to prepare scholars for teaching and research careers in social work and related social and behavioral sciences. The program is highly interdisciplinary, and students have the opportunity to learn from faculty at the forefront of advances in practice and policy impact in areas such as social and economic development, gerontology, health disparities, mental health, child and family welfare, violence prevention and intervention, and international social work. Our PhD program combines intensive study with personalized mentoring to prepare the next generation of scholars across the nation and around the world with the skills needed to effect change and advance social justice.

We have a very high completion rate. Most of our graduates go on to academic positions, where they pursue a rigorous research agenda while teaching and providing service and leadership to the school and the profession. Thus, we prepare doctoral students with the advanced quantitative and qualitative methodological training and professional skills needed to conduct research projects, successfully publish findings, present at highly regarded academic conferences, and apply the latest knowledge and instructional strategies in the classroom. The Brown School's collaborative community is strongly committed to providing an exciting and supportive learning environment.

A completed master's degree in social work or a related field is required of all applicants for admission. Post-master's experience in social work at the micro, mezzo or macro level is highly valued.

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Degree Requirements

PhD in Social Work

A completed master's degree in social work, public health or a related social science field is required of all applicants for admission; a minimum of two years of post-master's practice and/or research experience is strongly recommended. The deadline for applications to the PhD in Social Work is December 1 of the year preceding enrollment.

Students need a minimum of 74 graduate credits for a PhD from the Brown School. These can include 21 master's-level credits. While in the program, the student takes a variety of theory and research methods courses, plus 15 units of elective credits, at least 3 units of which have to be taken outside of the Brown School. Electives may include classes in psychology, psychiatry, public health, anthropology, education, law, economics or political science. Teaching practica, research assistantships, and the writing of an "area statement" round out the required credits. Competence is assessed through a qualifying examination and the defense of the dissertation. We are unable to offer distance learning or part-time study.

The curriculum at the Brown School emphasizes substantive, theoretical and methodological preparation. Courses may include the following:

- Introduction to Advanced Research
- Conceptual Foundations of Social Science Research
- The Role and Use of Theory in Applied Social Research
- Foundations of Data Analysis
- Applied Linear Regression Analysis
- Data Management
- Professional Development

The first year of study includes basic principles of research, statistics and measurement as well as theoretical orientations and content underlying the knowledge base of social work and social welfare.

The second year turns to a more individualized program of study. A curriculum plan is developed by each student and their advisor, and it focuses on an area of specialization within the field of social work.

The orientation of the PhD program is interdisciplinary, requiring 15 credits of course work in the social sciences. Social science courses related to the student's developing area of specialization are selected. Courses in research methodology, research and teaching practica as well as specialized courses also help to build the student's expertise as a social work scholar.