

# PhD in Social Work

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## Mentored Experience Implementation Plan

As part of their degree requirements, PhD students must complete a program-defined Mentored Experience Requirement (MER) as per these guidelines. The Mentored Experience Implementation Plan (MEIP) is the written articulation of a program-defined degree requirement for PhD students to engage in mentored teaching activities and/or mentored professional activities, collectively referred to as *MERs*.

## Mentored Experience Requirements (MERs)

### Philosophy of Teaching

Social Work and Public Health Sciences PhD programs provide students with practical mentored research and teaching experiences. Students develop methodological and analytical skills in courses that provide discipline-specific historical context, theoretical and conceptual underpinnings, and philosophy. The programs also foster professional acculturation, soft-skill development, and network building.

### Preparatory Engagement

Preparatory Engagement activities are those that represent an introduction to the foundational skills associated with teaching or communication. Pedagogical preparation engagement activities are normally completed before students are permitted to engage in assisting or teaching in a classroom.

PhD students fulfill the Preparatory Engagement through a sequence of teaching activities. Students in their first year achieve basic instructional competencies through the following experiences:

1. New student orientation
2. Professional Development Course: BSDC 8800 (fall, first year)
3. Professional Development Course: BSDC 8801 (spring, first year; can be concurrent with the first AI engagement)

Students are introduced to the WashU Center for Teaching and Learning, where they can engage in optional skill workshops.

## Mentored Teaching Experiences (MTEs)

### Assistant in Instruction (AI)

An Assistant in Instruction (AI) is a PhD student who is directly engaged in the organization, instruction, and/or support of a semester-long course *primarily taught by a faculty member*. An AI receives mentorship from a faculty member related to best practices in classroom engagement, instruction in the field, interpersonal engagement, and other relevant skills. Students and mentors complete a mentorship plan prior to the start of each AI experience. To complete each AI assignment and to ensure that it applies toward their degree requirements, students must register for the appropriate course number for each semester of engagement. Refer to the "Required Pathways for Completion" section below for course numbers and details.

Students complete three required AIs via teaching practicum courses (BSDC 9003, BSDC 9004, and BSDC 9005) under the guidance of an experienced faculty, starting in the spring of the first year.

AI/Teaching practicum (TP) experiences may vary in regard to tasks; however, the minimum is one credit hour for each. Adequate knowledge of the subject matter is a prerequisite for a TP experience to earn practicum credit. This requirement can be met by the student having completed the course they wish to choose, or by the faculty supervisor for the teaching practicum certifying that the student has adequate knowledge of the subject matter. PhD students working with a social work Foundations of Practice I or II must meet the CSWE qualifications (MSW degree and two-year post-MSW experience).

AI/Teaching practicums require that the student be involved in a variety of teaching tasks. The minimum involvement includes the following:

- Giving at least one full lecture based on notes developed by the student and approved in advance by the professor
- Providing course-relevant consultation for students who are having problems learning the material
- Grading or critiquing student assignments

Students should consult the Doctoral Handbook for more information and details.

### Required Pathways for Completion

Students work with their faculty mentor and their Director of Graduate Studies to plan how and when they will complete their MERs. Students register during the normal registration period for courses in accordance with one of these approved pathways.

Students complete three required AIs via teaching practicum courses under the guidance of an experienced faculty, starting in the spring of the first year.

|           |               |
|-----------|---------------|
| BSDC 9003 | Take one time |
| BSDC 9004 | Take one time |
| BSDC 9005 | Take one time |

## Optional Activity: Teaching Intensive Pathway (TIP)

The TIP is an optional pathway for those students whose career interests lie in academia or another field that would benefit from extended teaching experiences. This immersive experience allows students to further explore the breadth and depth of teaching best practices and pedagogy related to their respective field. Students who are interested in participating in this elective experience must formally request to participate, which is subject to program approval. Due to this experience being an elective, unpaid experience, students who participate in the TIP will not receive compensation.

Students have two options to complete the TIP:

1. One Mentored Independent Teaching Experience (MITE)  
After completing all three required teaching practicums, eligible doctoral students may enroll in BSDC 9501 Mentored Independent Teaching Experience (MITE) with approval. The unpaid MITE fulfills the requirements of the TIP and allows full-time students to teach their own masters-level course under the guidance of an experienced faculty member. The student leads all aspects of the course development and implementation, including developing and finalizing the syllabus, preparing all lectures and class activities, planning and conducting student assessments, and effectively managing student communications. Faculty mentors support students by offering course materials, advising on course design and implementation, and providing consultation on classroom issues that arise during the semester. Consult the Doctoral Handbook for more details and information.
2. Two Mentored Assistant Teaching Experiences (MATEs)  
After completing the required AI/Practicum teaching experiences, students may seek additional experience assisting in the teaching of core courses. The unpaid BSDC 9500 Mentored Assistant Teaching Experience (MATE) exists to meet school needs, not just the learning needs of the students. Students have the option to complete two MATEs to meet the requirements of the optional TIP.

### Optional Pathway #1

|           |               |
|-----------|---------------|
| BSDC 9501 | Take one time |
|-----------|---------------|

### Optional Pathway #2

|           |                |
|-----------|----------------|
| BSDC 9500 | Take two times |
|-----------|----------------|