

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.

Contact: Doctoral Education Program Office
Phone: 314-935-6605
Email: phdsw@wustl.edu
Website: <https://brownschool.wustl.edu/Academics/PhD-in-Social-Work>

Faculty

Dean

Mary McKernan McKay (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/mary-mckay.aspx>)
Professor; Neidorff Family and Centene Corporation Dean of the Brown School
PhD, University of Illinois at Chicago
Child mental health services; HIV prevention and care; poverty

Director, PhD Program in Social Work

Melissa Jonson-Reid (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/melissa-jonson-reid.aspx>)

Ralph and Muriel Pumphrey Professor of Social Work; Director, Center for Violence and Injury Prevention
PhD, University of California, Berkeley
Education and child welfare services policy; child abuse and neglect; interagency service delivery systems; school social work

Professors

Wendy Auslander (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/wendy-auslander.aspx>)

Barbara A. Bailey Professor of Social Work
PhD, Washington University
Health behavior and health promotion; childhood abuse and adolescent risk behaviors; trauma treatment for adolescent girls; family, psychosocial, and behavioral issues in diabetes; HIV prevention; community participatory research; cultural and ethnic factors related to health; intervention research and evaluation

Ross C. Brownson (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/ross-brownson.aspx>)

Bernard Becker Professor; Director, Prevention Research Center
PhD, Colorado State University
Chronic disease prevention through environmental and policy change; evidence-based public health; policy effects on physical activity and obesity; dissemination research

F. Brett Drake (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/brett-drake.aspx>)

PhD, University of California, Los Angeles
Children born prenatally exposed to drugs; child protection and child protective practice

Tonya Edmond (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/tonya-edmond.aspx>)

Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion
Associate Dean for Social Work
PhD, University of Texas at Austin
Violence against women; trauma-focused intervention research; evidence-based practice

Michal Grinstein-Weiss (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/michal-grinstein-weiss.aspx>)

Shanti K. Khinduka Distinguished Professor; Associate Dean for Policy Initiatives; Director, Envolv Center for Health Behavior Change
PhD, Brown School at Washington University
Public policy; economic & social mobility; asset building

Shenyang Guo (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/shenyang-guo.aspx>)

Frank J. Bruno Distinguished Professor of Social Work Research; Assistant Vice Chancellor for International Affairs - Greater China
PhD, University of Michigan
Quantitative research methodology; program and practice evaluations; child welfare; child mental health

Debra Haire-Joshu (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/debra-haire-joshu.aspx>)

Joyce Wood Professor; Director, Center for Diabetes Translation Research; Director, Center for Obesity Prevention and Policy Research; Faculty Director, Envolv Center for Health Behavior Change
PhD, Saint Louis University
Health policy; preventing obesity and diabetes in underserved populations; transdisciplinary approaches to biomedical, behavioral, and public health research

Sean Joe (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/sean-joe.aspx>)

Benjamin E. Youngdahl Professor of Social Development; Associate Dean for Faculty and Research
PhD, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Role of religion in black suicidal behavior; salivary biomarker discovery for adolescent suicidal behavior; father-focused family-based interventions; preventing self-destructive behaviors in African-American adolescent males; racial inequality in adolescent development

Matthew W. Kreuter (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/matthew-kreuter.aspx>)

Kahn Family Professor of Public Health; Senior Scientist, Health Communication Research Laboratory; Faculty Director, Envolv Center for Health Behavior Change
PhD, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Health communication; cancer prevention and control; integrating health and social services; health disparities

Carolyn Lesorogol (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/carolyn-lesorogol.aspx>)

Associate Dean for Global Strategy and Programs
PhD, Washington University
International social development; capacity building and participatory development; institutional change; political economy; ethnographic research

Douglas A. Luke (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/douglas-luke.aspx>)

Director, PhD Program in Public Health Sciences; Director, Center for Public Health Systems Science
PhD, University of Illinois
Evaluations of public health programs; tobacco control and prevention policy; community health interventions

Timothy McBride (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/timothy-mcbride.aspx>)

PhD, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Health policy; health economics; health insurance; Medicare and Medicaid policy; rural health care; health reform; Social Security and pensions; state health policy

Nancy Morrow-Howell (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/nancy-morrow-howell.aspx>)

Betty Bofinger Brown Distinguished Professor of Social Policy; Director, Harvey A. Friedman Center for Aging
PhD, University of California, Berkeley
Productive and civic engagement in late life; social engagement in later life

Enola K. Proctor (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/enola-proctor.aspx>)

Shanti K. Khinduka Distinguished Professor Emeritus; Director, Center for Mental Health Services Research
PhD, Washington University
Mental health services delivery; post-acute health and mental health community care; outcomes of clinical practice; evaluation of clinical social work

Mark Rank (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/mark-rank.aspx>)

Herbert S. Hadley Professor of Social Welfare
PhD, University of Wisconsin
Poverty and economic inequality; social welfare; family; social policy; demography; life course

Rodrigo S. Reis (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/rodrigo-reis.aspx>)

PhD, Federal University of Santa Catarina, Florianopolis, Brazil
Physical activity and public health, with particular interest in community interventions for promoting physical activity; effect of the built environment and community on health; active transportation and health

Michael Sherraden (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/michael-sherraden.aspx>)

George Warren Brown Distinguished University Professor; Director, Center for Social Development
PhD, University of Michigan
Asset building; civic engagement and civic service; productive aging; social policy; community development; youth development

Fred Ssewamala (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/fred-ssewamala.aspx>)

William E. Gordon Distinguished Professor
PhD, Brown School at Washington University
Microfinance; Asset-based social programs; disadvantaged children; social and economic development policy; children and adolescent health

Vetta L. Sanders Thompson (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/vetta-sanders-thompson.aspx>)

E. Desmond Lee Professor of Racial and Ethnic Diversity

PhD, Duke University

Cultural competence; racial identity; disparities in health and mental health services; psychosocial implications of race and ethnicity in health communications; access to health services

Associate Professors

Derek Brown (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/derek-brown.aspx>)

PhD, Duke University

Health economics; stated preference methods & health-related quality of life; child abuse and neglect; Medicaid

Sheretta T. Butler-Barnes (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/sheretta-butler-barnes.aspx>)

PhD, Wayne State University

Positive youth development; African Americans; academic achievement; mental health; religiosity

Leopoldo J. Cabassa (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/leopoldo-cabassa.aspx>)

PhD, Brown School at Washington University

Racial/ethnic disparities in health and mental health care; implementation science; integration of physical and mental health services; mental health services

Renee M. Cunningham-Williams (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/renee-cunningham-williams.aspx>)

Director, NIDA T32 (TranSTAR) Pre- and Postdoctoral Training Program

PhD, Washington University

Epidemiological, prevention, and intervention research; health and mental health disparities; pathological gambling and comorbidity; risk taking, substance use and antisocial behaviors; crisis intervention

Alexis Duncan (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/alexis-duncan.aspx>)

PhD, Saint Louis University

Psychiatric epidemiology; obesity and eating disorders; substance use and related disorders; comorbidity; child abuse and neglect; behavior genetics

Amy A. Eyler (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/amy-eyler.aspx>)

PhD, Oregon State University

Physical activity; childhood obesity; policies and preventative health

Patrick J. Fowler (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/patrick-fowler.aspx>)

PhD, Wayne State University

Housing and homelessness; child maltreatment and child welfare system; developmental psychopathology; policy and program evaluation; prevention science; violence exposure

Ross Hammond (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/Faculty-and-Research/Pages/Ross-Hammond.aspx>)

Betty Bofinger Brown Associate Professor

PhD, University of Michigan

Modeling complex dynamics in social, economic, and public health systems; obesity etiology and prevention; food systems and food security; tobacco control

Jenine Harris (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/jenine-harris.aspx>)

PhD, Saint Louis University

Dissemination research; social network analysis; social media; public health systems

Darrell Hudson (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/darrell-hudson.aspx>)

PhD, University of Michigan

Health disparities; mental health; health behavior; health education; violence and injury prevention

Lora Iannotti (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/lora-iannotti.aspx>)

Associate Dean for Public Health

PhD, Johns Hopkins University

Young child nutrition; micronutrient deficiencies; infectious diseases and poverty pathways; evaluation research

Kimberly Johnson (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/kimberly-johnson.aspx>)

PhD, University of Minnesota

Epidemiology; human genetics; cancer

Jack A. Kirkland (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/jack-kirkland.aspx>)

MSW, Syracuse University

International & national community economic development; urban issues; international, state, and regional planning; international social development; multicultural education

Patricia Kohl (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/patricia-kohl.aspx>)

PhD, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Child welfare; evidence-based practice; engaging hard to reach populations in treatment; parent training

Von Nebbitt (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/von-nebitt.aspx>)

PhD, Brown School at Washington University

Urban African-American children and youth, with a primary research agenda of increasing empirical and theoretical knowledge of the effects of living in urban public housing

David A. Patterson (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/david-patterson.aspx>)

PhD, University of Louisville
Alcohol and other drug treatment retention and effectiveness; implementation of evidence-based practices; Native American and Indigenous People's health and wellness; underrepresented minority college success

Jason Purnell (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/jason-purnell.aspx>)

PhD, Ohio State University
Health behavior; information and communication technologies; health disparities

Lindsay Stark

PhD, Columbia University
Violence prevention; child welfare; women's health

Jean-Francois Trani (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/jean-francois-trani.aspx>)

PhD, Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris, France
Mental health; disabilities; international social work

Assistant Professors

Ruopeng An (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/Faculty-and-Research/Pages/Ruopeng-An.aspx>)

PhD, Pardee RAND Graduate School
Environmental influences on diet and exercise; obesity prevention; social and economic determinants of health

Christine Ekenga (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/christine-ekenga.aspx>)

PhD, New York University
Chronic disease epidemiology; cumulative risk assessment; environmental health; occupational health; disaster epidemiology and public health preparedness

Vanessa Fabbre (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/vanessa-fabbre.aspx>)

PhD, University of Chicago
Aging and the life course; health and mental health; gender and sexuality; interpretive methodology

Tyriesa Howell (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/Faculty-and-Research/Pages/Tyriesa-Howell.aspx>)

PhD, Howard University
Sexual health; reproductive health; health interventions; racial disparities in health; social work education

Husain Lateef (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/Faculty-and-Research/Pages/Husain-Lateef.aspx>)

PhD, Arizona State University
African American youth; African-centered social work; culturally responsive practice; interprofessional practice (social work and law)

Sojung Park (<https://brownschool.wustl.edu/faculty-and-research/pages/sojung-park.aspx>)

PhD, University of Michigan
Health and well-being of older adults; environmental gerontology; community-based long-term care; cross-national/cross-cultural studies

Deborah Salvo

PhD, Emory University
Physical activity and spatial epidemiology; obesity prevention and nutrition; chronic disease prevention; global health disparities

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 72 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 (<http://bulletin.wustl.edu/brownschool/#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 adviser, 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.