

SOCIAL WORK (PHD)

Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work

Unit: Kent School of Social Work and Family Science (<https://louisville.edu/kent/>) (GK)

Department: Social Work (<https://louisville.edu/kent/academics/doctor-of-philosophy-in-social-work/>)

Program Website (<https://louisville.edu/kent/academics/doctor-of-philosophy-in-social-work/>)

Academic Plan Code(s): SW_ _PHD

Program Information

Mission statement: The program develops scholars prepared to create knowledge through research that informs interventions and policies and educates future social workers to address critical social problems and pursue social justice. The program also prepares its graduates for positions in academic and related research settings.

Goals:

1. Graduates will demonstrate advanced critical thinking skills and knowledge necessary to be leaders in the social work profession as researchers, academicians and advocates for social justice.
2. Graduates will demonstrate mastery of an area of theoretical and methodological expertise to address specific social problems.
3. Graduates will demonstrate mastery of research methodology and advanced statistics, including both quantitative and qualitative methods.
4. Graduates will demonstrate mastery of the knowledge and skills necessary to prepare future social workers to address complex social problems.

For additional information about the PhD Program in the Raymond A. Kent School of Social Work and Family Science, click here (<http://louisville.edu/kent/academics/doctor-of-philosophy-in-social-work/>).

Program Components:

The components of the program include: (a) coursework, (b) comprehensive examination, (c) dissertation, and (d) mentoring and professional development. The program requires a total of 51 credit hours. A revised curriculum is nearing final stages; minor adjustments are possible.

Admission Requirements

Interested applicants will want to view the PhD Admissions page (<https://louisville.edu/kent/academics/phd-social-work-apply/>), and our PhD Application Guidance reference to walk through the general application process. Materials are due December 1st of each year. New cohort members can typically look forward to entry for the following Fall Semester.

Application materials include the following:

1. Graduate Admissions Application (<https://graduate.louisville.edu/admission/apply/>)
2. Doctoral program application
3. Non-refundable application processing fee

4. Official Transcripts
5. Letters of recommendation
6. Writing sample
7. Personal statement
8. Resume
9. TOEFL/IELTS/Duolingo (if required)

The admission process involves the following:

- Review of application materials by the doctoral admissions committee
- Admission committee interviews with those recommended
- Recommendations of selected applicants are forwarded to the Graduate School

*Note: Admission is typically limited to individuals who hold a Master in Social Work degree—i.e., MSW, MSSW—from programs accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) or international equivalents. Two years of full-time post-master's degree experience is advised. However, applicants without a Master's degree in social work, but with a Master's degree in another related discipline are welcome to apply and will be considered on a case by case basis.

Program Requirements

Code	Title	Hours
Core Courses		
SW 729	Pro Seminar I: Foundations of Scholarly Writing	1
SW 732	Theory I: Philosophy of Science & the Development and Application of Theory in Social Work Research	3
SW 733	Foundation Research Methods	3
SW 734	Introduction to Social Statistics and Data Analysis	3
SW 741	Systemic Change: Identifying and Intervening in Issues of Social Justice	3
SW 742	Theory II: Theory-Driven Analysis of Social Problems to Inform Practice & Social Welfare Policy	3
SW 743	Advanced Research Methods	3
SW 744	Applied Regression Analysis	3
SW 750	Independent Study: Examination of Scholarly Literature	3
SW 751	Independent Study: Mentored Research Experience	3
SW 752	Qualitative Methods: Design, Data Collection, and Analysis (SW 751 Independent Study: Mentored Research)	3
SW 761	Advanced Scholarly Writing to Fund and Disseminate Research to Diverse Audience	3
SW 764	Teaching in Social Work	3
SW 765	Advanced Qualitative Research: Design, Data Collection, and Analysis	3
SW 780	Pro Seminar II: Comprehensive examination Preparation	1
SW 781	Teaching Practicum	3

Elective or Additional SW 750 or 751 Independent Study	6
SW 799 Dissertation Preparation	6
DOCT 600 Doctoral Candidacy	0
Minimum Total Hours	56

The coursework consists of 56 credit hours, including 38 credit hours of core curriculum, twelve (12) hours of individualized curriculum (i.e. independent studies and electives), and six (6) credit hours of dissertation preparation. Six (6) of the twelve (12) individualized credit hours must be in research methods or statistics.

Comprehensive Examination

The comprehensive examination evaluates knowledge and skill deemed critical prior to beginning the dissertation component. Students are eligible to write their comprehensive examination upon successful completion of all required coursework. A thorough description of the comprehensive examination details the following requirements: (a) eligibility, (b) students' exam committees, (c) exam committee roles and responsibilities, (d) expected content of the exam, (e) length of exam and time allotments, and (f) evaluation of student performance.

Following the passage of the comprehensive examination, students are admitted to *Candidacy* status and proceed with their dissertation:

2nd Year: Summer : Dissertation Preparation (six (6) credit hours)

Dissertation

The primary requirement of a dissertation is that it contributes to the knowledge base of the social work profession. It must represent independent work and be based on original research. Dissertation committees have at least four members and must include one member outside of the Kent School. If the outside member does not have a primary appointment as UofL faculty but is otherwise qualified, they may be granted ad hoc approval to participate. Dissertation information such as deadlines and preparation guidelines dictated by the University are at the Graduate School website (<https://louisville.edu/graduate/current-students/thesis-dissertation-information/>). Please note semester deadlines and that the Request to Schedule Final Oral Defense form must be completed by the student. The required steps to complete the dissertation at the Kent School can be found in the Dissertation Guidelines.