

PH.D. IN SOCIAL WORK

Frequently Asked Questions

How are the M.S.W. and Ph.D. programs different?

The M.S.W. prepares students for careers in direct practice, administrative social work practice, community organizing, and policy. The Ph.D. program prepares individuals for careers as social worker researchers within and outside academia and as social work educators.

Do I need an M.S.W. degree to enter the program?

While having an M.S.W. is preferred, students are eligible to apply to the program with a master's degree in a related discipline (i.e., public health, psychology, sociology, economics, etc.). Students who do not have a background in social work may be required to complete additional coursework.

Do you have a combined or joint M.S.W./Ph.D. option?

No.

Can I attend the program part-time?

No. Students are required to maintain full-time enrollment.

Do I need post-M.S.W. practice experience?

No. However, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) requires those teaching practice courses to have post-M.S.W. practice experience. Individuals seeking to obtain faculty positions in a social work program are encouraged to get post-M.S.W. practice experience before completing the doctoral program.

Do I need to take the GRE to apply to the program?

Yes. Students can contact the program director to request a waiver.

Will I be provided with financial aid?

Yes. Students receive a fellowship that covers full-time tuition. Funding is contingent upon satisfactory progress in the program and the ability to serve as a teaching or research assistant for seven hours per week.

How many students are enrolled in the program, and what backgrounds do they have?

The incoming cohort typically consists of eight to 10 students per year. At any given time, 35 to 45 students may be enrolled in the Ph.D. program. Our students come from around the country and the world. Students come with micro and macro practice experience, while others pursue a doctoral degree directly after graduation from an M.S.W. program.

How long does it take to complete the Ph.D. program?

It is possible to complete the program in four years. On average, students take five years to complete the program.

Are classes held in person or online?

All classes are held in person. You will need to be available for one day per week to take classes.

What areas of research can I pursue?

Students can work with faculty to pursue research in their area of interest.

Will I get classroom (i.e., teaching) experience?

Yes, students will have coursework on teaching and need to complete a teaching practicum.

What is the difference between a Ph.D. and a DSW?

Practice doctorate programs (DSW) in social work prepare graduates to advance practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels and in higher education and or professional leadership. Research doctorate programs (Ph.D) prepare graduates to become members of the faculty at a university, join a research center addressing social and health problems, or look for advancement in leadership positions requiring research skills.

The Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education in Social Work (GADE) provides valuable information on doctoral education in social work.

Does Fordham have a DSW program?

No.

What do graduates do with their doctoral degree?

Graduates have obtained tenure-track academic positions and served as administrators in city government and with nonprofit social service agencies.