Michigan State University offers a dynamic setting for social work education. As a Research I University, MSU creates and advances knowledge, attracting scholars worldwide.

As the nation's pioneer land-grant university, MSU extends learning to actively serve Michigan, the nation, and the international community. With more than 200 programs of study, students at MSU have extensive opportunities for collaboration in a wide variety of disciplines. The East Lansing campus is beautiful, rich in resources, and located near the state capital, which offers our students extraordinary access to the state policy process.

**Purpose of a PhD in Social Work**

Students who earn a PhD in social work are prepared to enter leadership positions as social work educators in graduate and undergraduate programs, researchers examining social problems and social work intervention approaches, evaluators of social service programs, policymakers, and administrators. Currently, the job market is strong for PhD graduates in social work. The doctoral program is a member of the Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education in Social Work and has produced many distinguished scholars, researchers, educators, and leaders in social work.

**Objectives of the PhD Program**

The PhD program is designed to develop scholars who have strong research and analytical skills and are well versed in the epistemological and theoretical foundations of social work. Reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of social work and the importance of addressing complex social problems via multiple perspectives, students develop a course of study that includes required social work classes as well as elective cognate classes from other disciplines. There are ample opportunities to both engage in research with different faculty members and gain critical teaching experience.

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**School of Social Work Faculty**

Core areas of faculty research include mental health outcomes, services, and accessibility; crosscultural issues and health disparities; child maltreatment and child welfare; gerontology; LGBTQ; and international social work. Other focal areas include early childhood education, interpersonal violence, poverty and homelessness, and rural social work. With such a wide range of expertise, students are exposed to an exciting variety of topics and ways to think about, study, and analyze critical social issues. Faculty are committed to providing mentorship to doctoral students by serving on guidance and dissertation committees and providing teaching and research opportunities.

**Course of Study**

A typical course of study can be completed in 4-5 years.

- 35 credits in social work, 17 of which can come from the student's MSW program
- 4 credits in a research practicum sequence to enhance skills and prepare students to conduct independent research
- 15 credits in a focused cognate, selected in a substantive area from across the University
- 6 credits in statistics
- A comprehensive examination
- The dissertation

**Financial Support**

Five years of funding are offered to incoming students, including international students. This funding is in the form of a yearly graduate assistantship (GA) that provides a stipend, tuition waiver, and health benefits. During years 1–3, the GA will be a research assistantship; during years 4–5, the GA may also include a teaching assistantship. Additionally, summer funding and professional development funding are available.
Admission Requirements
We invite applications from:
- Experienced social workers who hold an MSW degree from an accredited program and show evidence of outstanding professional competence, academic excellence, and capacity to conceptualize and articulate career interests in social work research, education, policy development, and/or administration.
- Recent graduates of MSW programs who, although limited in post-master's experience, have outstanding academic records and the capacity to conceptualize and research issues that inform social work practice.

Admission Materials
- Completed application for the PhD Program in Social Work
- Completed application for the Graduate School at MSU
- A curriculum vitae
- Transcripts of all previous undergraduate and graduate coursework
- Three reference letters from people who are knowledgeable about the applicant's academic, research, and professional abilities and aptitude
- Samples of scholarly work
- Graduate Record Examination (GRE) general examination scores
- Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores for international students

Further Information and Contacts
General information about the program and the admissions process can be accessed at socialwork.msu.edu/Programs/PhD.

For more detailed information, please see the PhD Student Handbook at https://socialwork.msu.edu/sites/default/files/PhD/PhD-Student-Handbook.pdf.

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“I think the strength and quality of mentorship provided at the MSU School of Social Work is some of the best in the world.”
—Daniel Cavanaugh

“My university time has empowered me to change people’s lives for the better.”
—Dasha Shamrova

“I ultimately chose MSU because when I came to visit, the faculty I met with were clearly invested in my education and development as a scholar.”
—Kristen Prock