

SOCIAL WORK, DSW

The Doctorate in Clinical Social Work is a fully online program that offers all the advantages of a world class learning community in a highly interactive, relational, accessible and convenient format. Balancing the rigor of doctoral education with the practical considerations of busy working professionals, students complete the coursework and dissertation simultaneously, earning the degree in 3 years without career disruption. The program uses a combination of campus immersion experiences and online course delivery (videoconferencing) that works for working professionals, wherever they live. Students enjoy an unparalleled educational experience, coming together to interact and learn on an Ivy League campus during the campus immersion experiences. Technology is used to connect, not to distance. The program recognizes the importance of relational learning and all of the online course delivery and educational strategies are chosen with an eye toward building knowledge in community. Renowned faculty from all over the world teach cutting-edge courses on the latest in clinical practice, research, and teaching. Graduates' successes prove that the DSW is a gateway to fulfilling careers as social work practice leaders and educators.

For more information: <https://www.sp2.upenn.edu/program/doctorate-in-clinical-social-work/>

Curriculum

Students begin the program with a five day immersion experience on Penn's Philadelphia campus at the start of the fall semester (late August/early September). During this residency period, students attend their first classes and participate in a variety of activities that immerse them in the Penn experience and prepare them for the DSW program. Students come to campus for one more five-day residency period in the summer following the first year. Students who are able to travel to campus more often are invited to do so to use the library, meet with faculty, and take advantage of other campus resources and activities.

Classes meet online two evenings each week for two hours. Students and faculty log in on their personal computers or devices from wherever they are. The real-time online video conferencing format allows everyone to be seen and heard at all times, closely approximating a physical classroom experience. Students are in class for the first two years of the program; in the third year, students participate in a Dissertation Seminar Series that provides support and structure as they complete the last stages of the dissertation.

The curriculum is designed to bridge theory, practice, and research, and prepare students for teaching. Students are actively engaged in learning about and critiquing the latest developments, discoveries, and best practices in evidence-based social work practice and teaching. Classes are taught by Penn faculty and renowned visiting faculty and clinician experts from across the country. The dissertation provides an opportunity to gain deep knowledge and become a content expert in a particular area, as well as contribute to the social work knowledge base.

Required Classes

Code	Title	Course Units
SWRK 9100	Quantitative Research Methods	1
SWRK 9120	Qualitative Research Methods	1
SWRK 9130	Clinical Theory I	1
SWRK 9140	Clinical Theory II	1

SWRK 9150	Dissertation Seminar	1
SWRK 9170	Applied Statistics	1
SWRK 9180	Trauma Interventions	1
SWRK 9190	Teaching Social Work Practice	1
SWRK 9200	Advanced Topics in Social Work Practice	.5
SWRK 9210	American Racism, Patriarchy, Intersectionality, and Social Work Practice	1
SWRK 9230	Social Construction and Social Work Practice: Transforming Dialogues	1
SWRK 9240	Leadership	.5
SWRK 9250	Supervision	1
SWRK 9900	DSW Dissertation	0
Total Course Units		12

¹ During the second year, the student cohort selects two electives and takes them together as a group.

The degree and major requirements displayed are intended as a guide for students entering in the Fall of 2025 and later. Students should consult with their academic program regarding final certifications and requirements for graduation.

Sample Plan of Study

First-year Curriculum

The program begins with a two-semester foundation that spans clinical theory and research and ends with a core course on trauma-informed individual and organizational interventions. Concurrent with their coursework, students engage in a dissertation workshop that helps guide them through the first stages of the dissertation project. Near the end of the first year, students are matched with a dissertation chair who shepherds them through the remainder of the dissertation process.

Second-year Curriculum

The curriculum in year 2 continues with specialized, applied courses that cover clinical content and preparation for teaching. The second and final year of coursework culminates in two electives that the student cohort selects and takes together as a group. Students continue the dissertation work, under the direction of their dissertation committee.

Third-year Curriculum

During the third and final year of the program, students complete, defend and deposit the dissertation. There is no formal coursework, but students participate in a dissertation seminar that provides structure and support and keeps them moving steadily toward the defense.

Code	Title	Course Units
Year 1 Fall		
SWRK 9100	Quantitative Research Methods	1
SWRK 9130	Clinical Theory I	1
SWRK 9150	Dissertation Seminar	1
Year 1 Spring		
SWRK 9120	Qualitative Research Methods	1

SWRK 9140	Clinical Theory II	1
SWRK 9250	Supervision	1
Year 2 Fall		
SWRK 9170	Applied Statistics	1
SWRK 9180	Trauma Interventions	1
SWRK 9190	Teaching Social Work Practice	1
Year 2 Spring		
SWRK 9200	Advanced Topics in Social Work Practice	.5
SWRK 9210	American Racism, Patriarchy, Intersectionality, and Social Work Practice	1
SWRK 9230	Social Construction and Social Work Practice: Transforming Dialogues	1
SWRK 9240	Leadership	.5
Year 3		
SWRK 9900	DSW Dissertation	0
Total Course Units		12