

Academic Policies

Doctoral Programs

PhD Course-Related Policies

Course Level

To count toward a graduate degree, courses must be offered at the graduate level, taken for a grade, and approved in advance by the student's advisor and program as eligible to count toward the student's degree. Graduate-level work includes Brown School courses, School of Medicine courses, and other program courses numbered at the 4000 or 5000 level. Audited courses and courses taken on a Pass/No Pass basis cannot be counted toward the degree. Students should consult their advisors regarding these options. Brown School courses cannot be taken for audit or Pass/No Pass grade option.

Brown School doctoral programs require a combination of coursework and research units to be completed for a degree. The minimum for the PhD in Social Work is 74 credits, and it is 74 credits for the PhD in Public Health Sciences. Students should consult their program handbooks for courses specific to their programs. 21 credits from a master's program can be applied toward the 74 credit total.

Grading

Credit-conferring grades for PhD students are as follows: A, outstanding; B, good; and C, conditional. An A, B or C grade may be modified by a plus or minus. Other grades are F, failing; P, pass; I, incomplete; W, withdrawal; R, repeat; and N, no grade submitted. The mark of I reverts to an F grade after 60 days from end of the semester in which the I grade was given. The Brown School uses a 4-point scale for calculating grade-point averages tabulated as follows:

Grade	Points per Unit
A	4.0
A-	3.7
B+	3.3
B	3.0
B-	2.7
C+	2.3
C	2.0
C-	1.7
F	0.0
P	Pass
F	Fail
I	Incomplete
W	Withdrawal
N	No Grade Submitted

Course Retake

Brown School doctoral students may choose to retake a course with the permission of their advisor. If a course is repeated, only the second grade is included in the calculation of the GPA. Both enrollments and grades are shown on the student's official transcript. The symbol R next to the first enrollment's grade indicates that the course was later retaken. Credit toward the degree is allowed for the latest enrollment only. No student may use the retake option to replace a grade received as a sanction for violation of the Academic Integrity Policy. The R option may be invoked only once per course, and the original grade option must be retained.

Transfer Credit

A maximum of 21 units of graduate credit earned during a doctoral student's masters program at Washington University or another university may be applied toward the PhD required credit total of 74. Transfer credit must be recommended by the program director and approved by the registrar with receipt of an official transcript. No graduate courses carrying grades lower than B can be accepted for transfer toward any graduate degree. Other transfer credit scenarios will be reviewed on a case by case basis with a review of syllabi and transcripts needed before approval.

PhD Registration and Enrollment Policies

Full-Time Enrollment

Students admitted to a PhD program in the Brown School must maintain full-time continuous enrollment throughout the approved length of the program. Brown School PhD programs are to be completed within five years under normal conditions. During those years, students will be considered full-time with one or a combination of the following enrollments: (1) registered for 9 or more course units (including doctoral research units); or (2) registered for BSDC 9900 Doctoral Research (see In-Absentia Enrollment (p. 2) below). These courses indicate the student's full-time engagement in research or academic writing and should be used once a student has completed the total credit unit requirement for the program. PhD students who are not registered as described above may find themselves carrying a part-time status and could be in jeopardy of losing certain benefits or be in violation of their visa status. Part-time enrollments will be permitted only in extraordinary circumstances. BSDC 9900 Doctoral Research can be used for enrollment in circumstances requiring an eighth year of study.

Program Length Limit

The Brown School PhD maximum number of semesters of continuous enrollment is 14 (seven years). Students in one of the PhD programs who have not completed their terminal degrees and who have not withdrawn will be dismissed at the end of 14 semesters. An exception may be granted by the Brown School Dean on request by the program

director if the student is expected to complete their degree during an eighth year of enrollment. Enrollment for a ninth continuous year will not be allowed. Semesters during which the student is on an approved leave of absence are not included on the enrollment clock.

Enrollment Extension

Students may be permitted to register for one additional year beyond their seven-year program length, when approved by their program. The advisor must submit a letter to the program director explaining the rationale for the extension and specifying a timeline for the student's completion of the dissertation. The program director presents the request to the PhD Administrative Committee; a majority vote is needed for final approval of the extension. Students approved for extension must enroll in BSDC 9900 Doctoral Research, which confers full-time enrollment status. Students registered for BSDC 9900 Doctoral Research may or may not receive financial support, but they are eligible to receive other benefits available to full-time PhD students, including health insurance and wellness fee subsidies.

Degree Candidacy Extended

In very rare circumstances, Degree Candidacy Extended Status allows PhD candidates who have not completed degree requirements within the program length to leave the full-time program but remain degree candidates. Extended degree candidates are not registered for any courses, have no enrollment status, and receive none of the benefits available to registered Washington University students, including student loan deferment. Advisors must submit to the program director the rationale for the student leaving the full-time program; the PhD Administrative Committee must approve the request by a majority vote. If approved, the student may remain a doctoral candidate for up to five years. If the PhD requirements are not completed, the candidate is immediately dismissed from the program.

In-Absentia Enrollment

During a student's period of regular registration, they may have a need or opportunity to study away from Washington University. Students, with their advisors, should submit a request for in-absentia enrollment to the program director. Directors consider requests on a case-by-case basis. If approved, the student will be registered for BSDC 9900 Doctoral Research for up to four consecutive or nonconsecutive fall/spring semesters. Semesters in which a student is registered in absentia are counted as part of the student's program length.

Leaves of Absence (Medical and Personal)

The Brown School accepts two types of leaves of absence (LOAs): personal and medical.

- Personal leave is used for any nonmedical emergency (e.g., pregnancy, death in the family).
- Medical leaves must be authorized by Student Health Services. Policies and procedures are listed on the Student Health Services website.

For either a personal or medical LOA from the Brown School, prior to leaving, the student must complete the appropriate LOA form on InsideBrown as well as the Student Time Away Request in Workday. The Brown School does not approve LOA paperwork submitted after the last day of classes of the semester.

A personal LOA can be approved for up to one academic year. If a student anticipates being on leave for longer than one academic year, they must request an extension of their leave for up to one additional academic year and must complete a new LOA form with the new anticipated date of return.

A student who anticipates being on leave in any semester should discuss their situation with their academic advisor to consider all options and assess the potential consequences to their academic record. The timing of an LOA may impact both academic credits and tuition charges. Taking a leave may therefore adversely affect loan deferment, visa status, the right to rent university-owned housing, and so on. Most visa types would prevent international students from remaining in the United States while taking an LOA; such students should consult the Office for International Students and Scholars as well as their faculty advisor. Prior to a student taking an LOA, students should meet with the Registrar and the Assistant Director of Financial Aid to discuss how taking a leave may affect their record.

A student who takes a medical or personal LOA after the 12th week of classes may have to take the subsequent semester off, which can include summer. Depending on the length of the leave and the structure of the current curriculum, previous credits may not count toward the degree being sought.

International students requesting a personal leave of absence must leave the country within 15 days after submitting their request, and these students are responsible for their visas. They must also meet with a staff member in the Office for International Students and Scholars.

Voluntary Withdrawal

A student may request a voluntary withdrawal if they no longer wish to pursue a doctoral degree at the Brown School. Before withdrawing, students should consult with their faculty advisor and program director to consider all options and assess the consequences to their academic record. The timing of a withdrawal may impact both academic credits and tuition charges, and the effective date of withdrawal will determine grades. If a student then wishes to voluntarily withdraw from the Brown School, the following formal procedure is required:

- Request and complete the PhD Request to Withdraw form, including a written statement of withdrawal. The form is available on InsideBrown. Additionally, complete the Student Time Away Request in Workday.
- Meet with the Registrar, who will advise the student on implications resulting from a voluntary withdrawal.

Involuntary Leave of Absence

The Washington University Involuntary Leave of Absence Policy applies to all undergraduate and graduate students.

Reinstatement

If the leave of absence has been less than two years, the student will have an active academic record and can request to return from leave within Workday. If it has been over two years, the student will have to submit an application for re-entry to WashU.

Doctoral students on leave from the Brown School must submit the Student Return from Time Away request in Workday if their absence has been less than two years. Students whose absence has been longer than two years should contact the Brown School Registrar's Office. Decisions regarding reinstatement or readmission may be based on the applicant's academic status when last enrolled, their activities while away from campus, the length of their absence, the potential for successful completion of the program as determined by the Brown School, the ability of the department to support the applicant both academically and financially, as well as other relevant factors or considerations. An Application for Reinstatement must be completed 6 weeks prior to the first day of the term in which enrollment is requested. After this date, the application will be reviewed for reinstatement in the subsequent term. Once the application has been reviewed and a decision has been made, the student will receive notification via email.

Students returning from medical leaves of absence must follow the deadlines described above and obtain approval from Washington University Student Health Services prior to returning. Student Health Services authorizes reinstatement based on the student demonstrating the adequate resolution of the conditions that required the leave. Reinstatement for the summer session is not allowed. Detailed information about reinstatement after a medical leave of absence can be found on the Student Affairs website.

Doctoral students who do not register in one of the scenarios as described under the full-time enrollment policy may have to apply for reinstatement if they wish to re-enroll at a future time.

PhD Academic Progress/ Probation/Dismissal

Satisfactory Academic Progress

Satisfactory academic progress for students in PhD programs is monitored by the Brown School and the degree program. Failure to maintain satisfactory academic progress may result in a student's immediate dismissal or in their placement on academic probation for the ensuing year. Most financial awards — and all federally funded awards — are contingent on the maintenance of satisfactory academic progress. The following timetable presents key milestones by completion year in the program:

Program Requirements	Target Year	Limit Year
Secure faculty advisor	1	2
Coursework completed	2	3
Area statement completed and qualifying exam passed	3	4
Approval of dissertation proposal	3	4
Dissertation defended	4	7

The following are minimal standards of satisfactory academic progress for PhD students:

- PhD students must adhere to the Washington University Academic and Professional Integrity Policy for PhD Students for honesty and ethical behavior in all scholastic endeavors and in everyday conduct outside of the scholarly community.
- Students are expected to proceed at a pace appropriate to enable them to finish within the time limits and milestone markers of their programs. Students are expected to have completed all PhD requirements except for the dissertation by no later than the end of the fourth year of full-time graduate study.
- Students must secure a faculty advisor by the beginning of their second academic year.
- Students are expected to maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0.
- Students are expected not to carry at one time any more than 9 credit units for which the grades of I (incomplete) or N (no grade submitted) are recorded.
- Students must satisfactorily pass the area statement and qualifying exam by August 1 following the third academic year.
- After four years of full-time graduate study, doctoral students who cannot identify three faculty members who are willing to serve on their Dissertation Committee are not considered to be making satisfactory academic progress. The Title, Scope and Procedure form must be filed before August 1 of the end of the fourth year in order to identify the membership of the student's Dissertation Committee.
- Students may take up to seven years to complete the PhD by August 1 at the end of the seventh year. A one-year extension is available if circumstances warrant (see Enrollment Extension (p. 2)). Extensions are obtained by application by the student to the degree program and approved by the PhD Administrative Committee.

Academic and Professional Integrity for PhD Students

The Academic and Professional Integrity Policy (PDF) applies to all PhD students on the Danforth and Medical campuses, including dual-degree students when one of the degree programs is a PhD program.

Probation for Academic Reasons

Except for circumstances justifying immediate dismissal (see Dismissal for Academic Reasons (p. 4)), a student cannot be dismissed on the basis of academic performance without the opportunity to return to good standing during an identified period of probation. The purpose

of probation is to do the following: (1) explicitly warn the student of their status; (2) provide the student with clear guidelines of the performance that will be necessary to return to good standing; and (3) provide the student with reasonable time to meet these expectations. To meet these objectives, probation normally should be designated for a minimum of three months. When the probation criteria involve coursework, then the probation period would normally correspond to the semester duration. A student on probation must receive a detailed letter from the program director stating the reasons for the probation and explicitly identifying the steps necessary for the student to return to good standing by the end of the probation period. A copy of this letter should be sent to the Brown School Dean. If a student does not meet all criteria for good academic standing but the department does not wish to place the student on probation, an appeal for this exception can be made to the PhD Administrative Committee.

At the end of a first probation, the student may (1) be returned to good standing; (2) be placed on a second consecutive probation; or (3) be dismissed from the program. A second consecutive probation must be accompanied by a new letter identifying the steps required to return to good standing. Although the purpose of the probationary period is to provide the student with time to improve, the decision of the program at the end of a probationary period could involve immediate notification of dismissal. At the end of a second continuous probation, the student will be either returned to good standing or dismissed.

A third probation will be allowed only if it is not continuous. A fourth probation will not be allowed. A student whose performance would result in a fourth probation will be dismissed immediately. A leave of absence cannot be used by a student to delay or nullify the consequences of a third consecutive or fourth probation.

Stipend support should continue during a probationary period unless the student is failing to meet the basic expectations of their position (e.g., repeatedly missing classes, repeatedly absent from faculty mentor meetings, failing to carry out research tasks). If a program or school decides to suspend stipend support under these circumstances, the student must be given a minimum of two weeks' notice prior to the withholding of such support. If the student's performance improves and they begin meeting the basic expectations of the program, stipend support should resume at that time. During all probationary semesters, tuition remission will remain as offered at initial enrollment.

The appeal of probation or dismissal by a student should follow the guidelines for Student Grievance procedures (p. 4) in that it should begin at the most local level. In cases of probation or dismissal, a student may appeal within 14 calendar days to the program director or another designated faculty representative from the PhD Administrative Committee. Appeals of probation end with the program director or the designated faculty representative (i.e., placement on probation cannot be appealed to the Brown School Dean). In cases where there is a perceived conflict of interest with the program director or the PhD Administrative Committee, another Brown School faculty member can be designated to address the appeal process for probation or dismissal.

Dismissal for Academic Reasons

Academic dismissal is distinct from withdrawal (initiated by the student), deactivation of a student's record by a failure to register, and dismissal or other sanctions associated with the University Academic and Professional Integrity Policy or the University Student Judicial Code. Dismissals are recommended by the degree program and are not final until approved by the PhD Administrative Committee. Students may be dismissed immediately for extreme academic underperformance (see Satisfactory Academic Progress (p. 3)). Students who encounter personal situations that contribute to academic underperformance during a semester should be informed of the option to request a leave of absence rather than continuing enrollment with poor performance. The ability to complete mentored teaching responsibilities is not a sufficient basis for remaining enrolled.

For academic dismissal decisions, a graduate student may submit a final appeal of the dismissal to the Brown School Dean. Appeal requests must be initiated with the program director within 14 calendar days of formal notification of probation or dismissal, and appeals to the Dean must be made within 14 calendar days of a decision by the program director to uphold a student's dismissal. Responses to appeals generally occur within the next 14 calendar days after the appeal is requested. Stipend support is discontinued at the time the student is notified of dismissal. The student is not eligible to receive stipend support during an appeal of dismissal; however, if the appeal is upheld, the student is eligible for stipend support covering the period of the dismissal appeal process. Students who have chosen to withdraw from their program (as opposed to taking an authorized leave) cannot appeal or seek reconsideration of this decision.

Student Grievance

From time to time, students may feel that they have legitimate complaints regarding academic matters or interactions with faculty members. It is important that students and faculty have a common understanding of how such complaints may be expressed and resolved. Students with complaints regarding academic matters should initially seek resolution from their faculty advisor and then then from their program director. Complaints that remain unresolved may be addressed to the PhD Administrative Committee. The final court of appeal for all doctoral students is the Brown School Dean.

Washington University policies state that members of the university community can expect to be free from discrimination and harassment. Students, faculty, staff and outside organizations working on campus are required to abide by specific policies prohibiting harassment. An allegation of discrimination or harassment may be appealed to the Vice Chancellor for Human Resources, who will determine whether to convene the Title IX Grievance Committee to hear the case. Visit the university's Discrimination and Harassment page for more information.

Dissertation Dissenting Votes

For the rare cases in which faculty raise concerns about a student's dissertation that cannot be resolved through subsequent revisions and that therefore result in dissenting (negative) vote(s), the Committee Chair will refer the case to the program director. If the program director is on the committee, they will designate an outside faculty to mediate. In the case of one or more dissenting votes, the Committee Chair and the dissenting voter will be asked to explain the reasons for the dissent in a letter to the program director or designee. After consulting with these and other members of the Committee, the director or their designee may accept the majority opinion and approve the dissertation, or they may seek the opinion of an additional reader. After considering this additional evidence, the director or their designee must approve or decline the dissertation. Failure to enlist a designee will be tantamount to a rejection of the dissertation.

Advisor/Advisee Relationship

The relationship between an advisor and an advisee is critical to the success of a student in a PhD program. If a situation arises in which it is determined that the existing advisor/advisee relationship should be terminated, either by the advisor or the advisee, the student will enter into a three-month probationary period so that the student can identify a new thesis research advisor. The student will continue to receive the customary stipend (if appropriate) and allowances until an advisor for the thesis research is identified or for three months, whichever comes first. After the three-month period, the student will either have established a new advisor/advisee relationship or, at the discretion of the program, be provided with a second three-month probationary period. At the end of either probationary period, the student may be dismissed from the program as not having made the appropriate academic progress. A third probationary period will not be permitted. A student is able to appeal the probation decision following the appropriate procedures as outlined earlier in these policies.

PhD Financial-Related Policies

Minimum Stipend Award

All Brown School PhD students receive a monthly stipend beginning in August of the first academic year of their full-time enrollment.

For the 2025-26 academic year, the minimum 12-month stipend is \$37,853. The stipend amount is detailed in the admission offer letter for each first-year admitted student. Stipends are eligible for renewal for a period of five years for full-time enrolled students making satisfactory progress in the PhD program. International students will have higher stipends during their first year only due to visa supplements; for years two through five, the base stipend will go back to the school's base stipend amount.

Tuition and Fees

The maximum tuition fee is the equivalent of 9 semester units. Students who enroll for 9 or more units per semester are automatically regarded as full-time students and are charged a flat full-time rate. Students must enroll in at least 9 units of coursework and in BSDC 9900 Doctoral Research or Full-time Graduate Study in Absentia to maintain full-time status. Failure to register risks satisfactory academic progress. The tuition rate and fees are subject to annual change; however, Brown School doctoral students receive remission for these charges. Please note that students who do not register for two consecutive semesters could lose university benefits and will be considered candidates for dismissal.

Tuition Remission

The Brown School provides tuition remission for the length of the student's program as long as academic progress is being made. To be eligible for tuition remission, courses must be taken at the graduate level. These include most Brown School and School of Medicine courses and skill labs and, depending on the program, courses numbered in the 4000s and 5000s in other schools. Courses offered through the School of Continuing & Professional Studies are non-remissible, and Brown School students cannot audit these courses.

Students who wish to enroll in courses outside of these parameters and to receive tuition remission must submit justification of relevancy to their program with approval from their advisor to the program director. Likewise, doctoral students should discuss and receive permission from the program in advance if seeking remission for the cost of educational or training opportunities besides courses (e.g., summer institutes, professional development, external trainings, unrelated master's degrees). Tuition remission is not guaranteed for the non-program-related coursework. Students pursuing a certificate or an unrelated master's degree in addition to their PhD must consult their program director and advisors about credit sharing between the programs.

Refunds

In the event that a PhD student is responsible for the tuition of a course, they should consult the school refund timeline and policies for information.

Insurance and Health-Related Subsidies

All full-time students on the Danforth Campus are charged a mandatory health fee that gives them access to the Student Health Center. In addition, they must either enroll in the student health insurance plan or present proof of comparable coverage. International students are not allowed to waive health insurance. Both the health fee and the health insurance premium are subject to annual change. The Brown School covers both costs plus 90% of the optional dental insurance through an enhancement added to students' monthly stipend. Students are then responsible for paying the balance for the cost of these items as they appear on the students' billing. Students receiving special fellowship

support may have different arrangements for covering their health fees and insurance. Information about healthcare coverage can be found on the Washington University Human Resources site. Please consult the program manager for specific questions.

All students receiving the stipend for dental insurance will automatically be enrolled in the dental insurance plan. The charge for this plan will be on the student accounting bill. Students may elect to opt out of the dental coverage by contacting studentinsurance@wustl.edu. If the request to opt out of the dental insurance has been received before the deadline listed on the student health services website, the student account charge will be reversed within seven working days. Students can view the dental benefits on the UnitedHealthcare Student Resources site (select the "Dental/Vision" tab). More information may be found on the Washington University Student Health Insurance Plan Information page.

Please note the following:

1. Students will only be eligible to remain on the dental plan if they are on the medical plan. If a student waives the medical plan, they are not eligible to remain on the dental plan.
2. Students may enroll dependents on the dental plan by contacting UnitedHealthcare directly. Students must be on the dental plan in order to enroll dependents.
3. This stipend does not include vision insurance. Students may enroll in vision insurance directly through UnitedHealthcare.

Reimbursement for Professional Development Expenses

Full-time doctoral students may request up to \$1,000 in support for professional development. Professional development entails presenting papers or posters at scholarly and professional conferences or attending workshops and classes on statistics or other topics of relevance to the dissertation. Students may also apply to use these funds for other dissertation-relevant expenditures, including computers, software, clerical assistance, and research-related incentives.

Part-Time Employment

If a full-time supported doctoral student wishes to accept part-time employment within or outside of Washington University, the following guidelines must be followed. The Internal Revenue Service, the Washington University Human Resources Office, and US Citizenship and Immigration Services all make important distinctions between students and employees. These guidelines are designed to assist doctoral students with retaining their status as students.

Brown School doctoral students receiving stipends or fellowships are allowed a maximum of 10 hours per week on average of additional part-time employment while maintaining their status as full-time students. Working up to 20 hours a week is approved on a case-by-case basis after consultation with the faculty advisor and approval from the program director. International students should consult with the Office for International Students and Scholars regarding requirements, and all students must consult and receive approval from their advisor and

program director in order to accept an additional position outside of the stipend or fellowship. Fully supported students engaged in part-employment may have a reduction or even a cease in their stipend from the program.

Brown School doctoral students *not* receiving stipends or fellowships and who have yet to complete their PhD requirements must enroll in BSDC 9900 Doctoral Research. Enrollment confers full-time student status and continuing access to health insurance, university resources, and loan forbearance (see Enrollment Extension (p. 2) and In-Absentia Enrollment (p. 2)). Unfunded continuing students may work up to 20 hours per week on average if approved by their faculty advisor and program director. The request for outside employment may be denied for any reason related to research or academic progress. If approved, the student must abide by all applicable university, IRS, and immigration policies. The student also must keep their advisor and program director apprised of all extra activities. PhD students who are not registered or who are not compliant with the policies as described above may find themselves in a part-time status and thus could be in jeopardy of the loss of certain benefits or be in violation of their visa status. Part-time enrollments will be permitted only in extraordinary circumstances (see Degree Candidacy Extended (p. 2)).

Child Day Care Subsidy

The Child Day Care Subsidy is sponsored by Washington University in St. Louis, and its purpose is to help the families of PhD students meet the costs of child day care while the student pursues their studies.

The amount of child day care subsidy awarded to eligible applicants depends on their financial need, the number of children they have enrolled in child day care facilities, their child day care expenses, and available funding.

Requirements for Eligibility

To be considered for the Child Day Care Subsidy, a student should meet the following qualifications:

- Be enrolled full-time in a Washington University PhD degree program at the start of the award period
- Be the parent of a child under the age of 5, a child between 5 and 6 years old who is currently ineligible to attend kindergarten due to their date of birth, or a child with special needs under the age of 19
- Incur child day care expenses from a facility, center, or provider
- Apply for any available scholarships and aid at their chosen provider before applying for the Washington University child day care subsidy
- Be making satisfactory academic progress, as defined by their school/program

- Utilize child day care services because they are a single student or, if they are married or have a partner, because their spouse or partner is either a student (enrolled full time in an undergraduate or graduate degree program) or employed outside the home for a minimum of 20 hours per week (The student may be asked to attest to their spouse's or partner's employment or student status.)
- Complete the day care subsidy application by the deadline for each semester.

Day Care Subsidy Process

PhD students interested in receiving the child day care subsidy will complete a centralized application form found on the Vice Provost for Graduate Education (VPGE) website each fall or spring semester. The subsidy is not available during the summer term. Applications will route to the appropriate representative in the student's selected school based on information communicated to the provost office staff. A financial administrator from each school/program will be responsible for reviewing the application to ensure the student meets the stated criteria. Eligible students will receive subsidy payments via Workday.

The application will request the initial information necessary to make most determinations. On occasion, school administrators may need to request supplemental information from the student in order to make a determination regarding eligibility. Questions not addressed in this document may be posed to the VPGE/Office of the Provost for clarification.

The provost's office will be responsible for gathering and maintaining data for reporting purposes. Schools are requested to keep track of requests and payouts.

As students are approved for the subsidy, the school is responsible for notifying the student of their award and ensuring the payout. The subsidy will be paid as a lump sum. Students' applications must be received by the end of the term in which they are requesting the subsidy.

Award Amounts

As of 2025, any PhD student who meets the eligibility requirements (see above) will receive the subsidy based on the following parameters:

- One eligible child: \$3,550 per semester (FL/SP)
- Two eligible children: \$4,550 per semester (FL/SP)
- Three or more eligible children: \$5,550 per semester (FL/SP)

New Child Leave

Full-time PhD students may request a New Child Leave to assume care for a new child. They should maintain their full-time student status. Students on New Child Leave are not expected to participate in mentored teaching or research experience for up to 60 calendar days while they receive their current stipend support. Additional time off without receiving a stipend for up to a full semester will ordinarily be granted by the student's home school if approved by the student's department.

New Child Leave does not affect the student's full-time status and will not appear on the student's official transcript. New Child Leave must be taken within the first year after the child's birth or adoption. Students should contact their department to request a New Child Leave. Students who receive support from external agencies should consult the policies and guidelines of the sponsor.

PhD General Requirements

Residence Requirement

Brown School PhD students are required to remain in residence until they have successfully completed the area statement and qualifying exam. Brown School students are strongly encouraged to remain in residence throughout their entire time in the program, with the exception of those students doing fieldwork to collect dissertation data. In all cases, a student receiving a fellowship must maintain full-time student status or forfeit the fellowship, and they may not accept other employment unless it has been specifically preapproved by the Brown School.

Area Statement and Qualifying Examination

Brown School PhD students demonstrate readiness to begin dissertation research by completing an area statement and passing a qualifying examination in their third or fourth year in the program. The area statement outlines an area of intellectual concern, reviews the literature, and highlights the importance of this area to practice and/or policy. Students work with their faculty advisor to develop the scope of the statement and to identify two additional doctorate-level Brown School or program-authorized faculty to serve on the Area Statement and Qualifying Exam Committee. In the spring of the second year in the program, students register for BSDC 9502 Area Statement and Qualifying Exam under their advisor, who serves the committee chair. The chair coordinates with the committee to approve the final draft and generate questions to be answered over a two-day closed-book or a seven-day open-notes exam. Each Committee member independently grades the answers to each question as "no pass" or "pass." The advisor submits a grade of "pass" for BSDC 9502 Area Statement and Qualifying Exam to indicate successful completion. If the committee agrees that one or more questions on the exam has received an overwhelming grade of "no pass," the student must rewrite the answer to a particular question or a substitute question of the committee's choice.

Students are expected to pass the area statement and qualifying exam by August 1 following their third year in the program. Exceptions for extraordinary extenuating circumstances are made only with an application to the program director along with confirmation from the advisor in regard to the rationale and reasonable deadline for completion. Failure to pass the area statement and qualifying exam by August 1 following the fourth year requires program review of the student's academic standing. A student may retake a failed exam once. Failure the second time requires withdrawal from the program. Within one year, the student may petition the program director of

the appropriate doctoral program for a third and final opportunity to be examined. The program director, in collaboration with the Area Statement and Qualifying Exam Committee chair, will decide if a third attempt is warranted.

Mentored Experience Requirement

Brown School PhD students fulfill the university's mentored experience requirement through a sequence of teaching activities outlined in their Mentored Experience Implementation Plan. During their first year, students achieve basic competencies in teaching during new student orientation training and professional development courses in the fall, BSDC 8800: Professional Development Seminar I, BSDC 8801 Professional Development Seminar II in the spring.

Students also must complete three teaching practica BSDC 9003 Practicum in Teaching I, BSDC 9004 Practicum in Teaching II, and BSDC 9005 Practicum in Teaching III. These may be taken beginning in the spring semester of the first year, and they are designed to give students experience with lecture preparation and delivery, grading, and other aspects of course management under the guidance of an experienced faculty member. Supervising faculty may be adjuncts, teaching faculty, professors of practice or tenure-track faculty. Students may serve as assistants for any Brown School course and are encouraged to select courses that may become part of their own teaching repertoire in the future. The minimum involvement includes the following: (1) giving at least one full lecture based on notes developed by the student and approved in advance by the professor; (2) providing course-relevant consultation for students who are having problems learning the material; and (3) grading or critiquing student assignments. Faculty who agree to work with students to meet their teaching practicum requirements must hold supervisory meetings during the course of the semester, provide a short statement to the student that summarizes the student's major strengths and primary weaknesses as a teacher, and submit a letter grade for the practicum. Students cannot teach independently or be teaching assistants for pay until the teaching practica are completed.

Upon completion of the required professional development and teaching practica, Brown School PhD students can seek an Independent Teaching Experience. Non-credit teaching practica or independent paid teaching experiences (i.e. teaching fellowships) exist to meet school needs, not just the learning needs of students. Teaching fellows are PhD students appointed by the Brown School. They are answerable directly to the associate deans for the MSW and MPH programs, who may not renew the contract of a teaching fellow who fails to make adequate progress toward the completion of the PhD.

Several factors determine the need for a non-credit teaching fellow. These include a request from the instructor, the associate deans for the master's program (for MSW or MPH courses), or the director of the social work or public health doctoral program (for PhD courses). The need for a teaching practicum student is also based on student demand, class size, lab sections and the instructor's release time. The instructor should seek a teaching practicum student to teach another course

section or a paid lab after approval has been gained. Students who have not accomplished program milestones in a timely manner may not be allowed to do teaching practica or at least be restricted in regard to the number allowed during a given semester or summer.

Finally, the Graduate Teaching Citation is an optional program for Washington University PhD students who would like to gain teaching experience and expertise beyond the minimum requirements of their departments and of their graduate program. See the complete description on the website of the Washington University Center for Teaching and Learning.

Research practicums (BSDC 9000 Practicum in Research I, BSDC 9001 Practicum in Research II, BSDC 9002 Practicum in Research III) may be taken beginning the spring semester of the first year. Students work with a faculty member and may or may not be paid according to whether they are working with a funded study or center. Students and the supervising faculty outline a plan for the practicums along with completing an electronic form that is approved by the advisor and PhD Program Director.

Dissertation

Brown School doctoral students must complete a dissertation to demonstrate their mastery of a specific field of knowledge and their capacity for original scholarly work. Students form a Dissertation Committee of faculty authorized by the program to mentor PhD students. The Dissertation Committee approves the subject and approach of the dissertation as evidenced by the student's completion of the Title, Scope and Procedure requirement.

The Dissertation *Proposal* Committee consists of at least four full-time Washington University faculty members who are authorized to supervise PhD students in their respective doctoral program of study (i.e., social work or public health sciences) and who have appropriate expertise in the proposed field of study. One of the faculty members must be the student's faculty advisor, who will chair the Dissertation Committee; for social work, the chair must be tenure-track faculty in the Brown School. One of the four may be a member of the emeritus faculty. The Dissertation *Defense* Committee must include a fifth committee member external to the student's doctoral program of study. The external member could be inside or outside Washington University but must have a doctoral degree and an active research program at another university, in government, or in industry. Additional faculty member(s) may be added in cases where additional expertise is required.

A Notice of Title, Scope and Procedure form for the dissertation must be completed by the Dissertation Committee members and the program director. It must be submitted at least six months before the degree is expected to be conferred or before the beginning of the fifth year of full-time enrollment, whichever is earlier.

A Doctoral Dissertation Guide and a template that provides instructions regarding the format of the dissertation are available through the website of the Office of the Provost; both of these should be read carefully at every stage of dissertation preparation.

Each student is required to make the full text of the dissertation available to the committee members for their review at least one week before the dissertation defense. Most degree programs require two or more weeks for the review period.

Faculty Departures

The programs maintain lists of authorized faculty advisors who may chair and serve as internal members of student committees. Committee chairs and members who go on sabbatical or who take leaves of absence and are temporarily non-residents at Washington University may continue their roles as chairs with approval of the program director. If a committee chair ceases to be employed by the university, the student may request that the faculty continue to serve as co-chair of the committee. Another member of the committee must agree to serve as the co-chair, with the consent of the original chair, student, and program director. Then, the new co-chair should take the responsibility of providing the day-to-day guidance and decision making for the student's research and writing process. The co-chair structure is reserved for exceptional cases, and the normative structure continues to be a sole chair. A co-chair who is not able to commit sufficient time to the role should step down as chair and allow a different committee member to take their place. A co-chair arrangement must always benefit the student, who has the freedom to choose their advisor, as well as the faculty members involved. If an authorized committee member ceases to be employed by the university, the student may request that the faculty continue to sit on the committee. Consent from the faculty member and approval by the program director will include a decision on whether the departing faculty should be one of the four authorized members or an external member.

Dissertation Defense

At least three weeks prior to the preferred defense date, the candidate's dissertation committee chairperson and/or the student's program director or manager must provide information regarding the preferred date, time and place of the oral defense of the dissertation and indicating the exact dissertation title. The notification should include the student's curriculum vitae. The terminal dates for scheduling the final oral dissertation examination in time to receive the degree within a semester are set by the Brown School Registrar (registraroffice@brownschool.wustl.edu).

The student assumes responsibility for making the full text of the dissertation accessible to all members of the final examination panel for their review at least two weeks in advance of the examination. The final oral examination is concentrated on the subject matter of the candidate's dissertation. The examination of the student (i.e., the oral presentation) is treated as a confidential assessment of the student's achievement. An open defense is permitted and highly encouraged by the Brown School, but it is not required. In consultation with the chair, students can choose to allow any or specific audience members to attend. The audience members are not allowed to speak during the presentation and must exit the room with the student after the presentation while the committee members deliberate after the presentation and discussion.

The defense consists of an oral presentation of the study, its results and its implications followed by a discussion/question-and-answer period with the committee members. Once this is completed, the student exits the room while the committee deliberates regarding the success of the defense and renders one of the following four decisions:

1. Pass with no recommended changes;
2. Pass with changes that are to be made in concert with the chair's approval;
3. Pass with changes that an individual committee member wants to view before submission of the document; or
4. Did not pass as the student has not met sufficient standards and must do further work and attempt a second defense.

The Dissertation Defense Exam Approval Form available on InsideBrown should be completed by all the Dissertation Defense Committee members after the defense.

Dissertation Submission

After successfully defending the dissertation and making any requested changes, the student must create an online account at ProQuest and submit the final text. The submission website requires students to choose among publishing and copyrighting services offered by ProQuest ETD Administrator, but the university permits students to make whichever choices they prefer. Students who defend their dissertations successfully have not completed their PhD requirements; they finish earning their degree only when their dissertation submission has been accepted. Students should plan to submit their dissertations and paperwork before the deadline; they may need to make corrections to their formatting or complete additional paperwork.

In addition, the following must be completed:

1. The Survey of Earned Doctorates. Students are encouraged to complete the Survey of Earned Doctorates prior to the dissertation deadline. They should do this as soon as possible so that a record of the survey arrives in time for graduation requirements to be met. Brown School administrators are notified automatically once the survey is completed. Electronic submission of the student's dissertation will not be processed or approved until this email arrives.
2. The Doctoral Exit Survey. The survey administered by the Office of Institutional Research gives graduating students an opportunity to evaluate Washington University, their doctoral program, faculty advising and professional development and to report on their plans for the future. The survey is sent via email from the Office of Institutional Research to PhD graduates each season (i.e., May, August, and December). If a student does not plan to graduate and receives this survey in error, they should email institutionalresearch@wustl.edu to have their name removed from the mailing list.

Students are highly encouraged to read the Dissertation Guide on the Vice Provost for Graduate Education website.

Degree Certification

If a student requires verification of a degree prior to the degree date and before the degree appears on the official transcript, the Brown School Registrar can prepare a degree certification on Brown School letterhead. Note that, to receive this certification, the student must have successfully completed all requirements for the degree, including the submission of the dissertation. Requests for degree certification are made via email to the Brown School Registrar (registraroffice@brownschool.wustl.edu).