The “Practice Doctorate” Degree: Implications for Social Work Education, Research and Practice

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Overview

• What is the “Practice Doctorate?”
• History & context of the practice doctorate in other disciplines and social work
• Overview of practice doctoral programs in social work education
• Implications for social work education, research and practice
What is a “practice doctorate?”

- Professional doctorate (JD, MD, EdD, DSW)
- Not a Research PhD
- Scholar Practitioner
- Applied doctorate
- Clinical Practice Only
- Terminal degree for practice
Growth of Practice Doctorates

Figure 4. The recent growth of earned doctorates is largely attributable to professional doctorates.

Data Sources: National Science Foundation, Survey of Earned Doctorates (2015), Table 13, and U.S. Department of Education, Digest of Education Statistics (2015), Table 324.10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nursing</th>
<th>Occupational Therapy</th>
<th>Physical Therapy</th>
<th>Pharmacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DNP</strong> Doctorate in Nursing Practice</td>
<td><strong>OTD</strong> Occupational Therapy Doctorate</td>
<td><strong>DPT</strong> Doctor of Physical Therapy</td>
<td><strong>PharmD</strong> Doctor of Pharmacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminal degree in advanced nursing practice</td>
<td>OTD mandated as the entry level degree and that all programs be in compliance by 2027</td>
<td>Terminal degree for entry level physical therapists since 2011; all entry level PT’s will have this degree by 2020</td>
<td>Terminal degree for entry to practice leading to licensure as a pharmacist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accredited by CCNE</td>
<td>Accredited by ACOTE</td>
<td>Accredited by CAPTE</td>
<td>Accredited by ACPE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech-Language Pathology</td>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>Public Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
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<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clinical Doctorate</strong></td>
<td><strong>JD</strong></td>
<td>Clinical PhD; Clinical PsyD; Counseling; School</td>
<td><strong>DrPh</strong> Doctor of Public Health</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The clinical doctorate in speech-language pathology is an advanced clinical practice degree that is distinct from the entry-level master’s degree in speech-language pathology as well as the research PhD.

JD is the gateway to the legal profession. The graduates of approved law schools can become members of the bar in all United States jurisdictions.

- Terminal degree in psychology leading to licensure as a psychologist
- All degrees can lead to teaching/research/practice fields and to licensure

Not accredited but have guidelines | Accredited by ABA | Accredited by APA | Accredited by CEPH

Terminal professional degree for public health
## Continuum of Social Work Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baccalaureate</td>
<td><strong>BSW</strong>- prepare students for generalist practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td><strong>MSW</strong>- prepare students for generalist and specialized practice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Doctorate      | **DSW**- prepare students for advanced practice building from generalist social work competencies  
                 | **PhD**- prepare students to be scholars who function as “stewards of the discipline.” |
First Social Work Doctoral Programs
Bryn Mawr (1915)
Univ of Chicago (1924)
Ohio State (1934)
Catholic University (1934)

First DSW Programs
Catholic University (1947)
Smith College (1948)
University of Pennsylvania (1948)

First DSW Degrees conferred
20 new programs began between 1965 and 1975

Number of universities offering the DSW had surpassed those offering the PhD with 11 offering the DSW, 8 offering the PhD, and 2 offering both degrees

Most social work universities in the United States were offering a PhD as the research doctorate. By the late 1990s, the DSW had all but disappeared.
Recent Growth of DSW Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# MSW Program Responses to the Question, “Is your institution planning to offer an applied social work doctorate?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th># programs</th>
<th>% programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Already offer</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, within next academic year</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, within two academic years</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of those programs still in planning stages, most (9/52.9%) are planning a clinical focus, 3 general, 2 teaching, 1 administrative, and 2 others.
Examining the Practice Doctorate:
A Timeline

2010-11
DSW Task Force Report
• Report of the Task Force on the DSW Degree Convened by the Social Work Leadership Forum
• Recommendations and preliminary guidelines

2013
NASW Social Policy Institute Think Tank
• Interdisciplinary group of stakeholders
• Report summarizes key findings and recommendations

2013-present
CSWE Practice Doctorate Committee
• Stakeholder meetings
• Surveys and feedback sessions
• March 2016-CSWE Board decision
• Accreditation framework

2014-2018
CSWE Annual Statistics on practice doctoral programs
• 2014 Statistics
• 2015 Statistics
• 2016 Statistics
• 2017 in progress
Overview of Practice Doctoral Programs

• See handout of current practice doctoral programs in social work
• Focus of programs
• Characteristics of practice doctoral programs in social work education
What is the focus of your practice doctorate? Please select all that apply.
Characteristics of Current DSW Programs

DElIVERY METHOD
- Totally In-Person: 2
- Hybrid: 7
- Totally Online: 3

FORMAT
- Full-Time or Part-Time: 2
- Full-Time Only: 3
- Part-Time Only: 7
Admission Requirements of DSW Programs

**Requirement of MSW**
- MSW Required: 11
- Other Masters Degree: 1

**Post Masters Experience**
- None: 1
- Two Years Post-MSW Required: 6
- Three Years Post-MSW Required: 2
- Post-MSW Not Required, but Preferred: 3
Admission Requirements of Current DSW Programs

- License required: 4
- License preferred: 1
- Not required: 7

LICENSURE
Research Requirements of DSW Programs

**NUMBER OF RESEARCH COURSES**
- None: 1
- 1 course: 2
- 3 courses: 2
- 4 courses: 3
- 5 courses: 1

**FINAL PRODUCT**
- Papers/Presentations: 4
- Dissertation: 3
- Capstone Project: 3
- Clinical/Research Project: 2
Eleven practice doctoral programs (100% response rate) participated in the 2016 CSWE Annual Survey and reported a total of 611 students. This represents a 122% increase in full-time students enrolled in practice doctoral programs since 2015.
There were 466 applications to the 11 programs that participated in the survey; 53.6% of applications were accepted and 87.2% of those accepted enrolled.
Time to Degree for Graduates with Practice Doctorates

- 3 Years or Less: 77%
- 4 Years: 9%
- 5 Years: 12%
- 6 Years: 0%
- 7 Years or More: 0%
- Unknown: 0%
## Employment of Graduates with Practice Doctorates in May 2016

**N=56 4/11 responded**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Position</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private clinical practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure-line faculty position in a CSWE-accredited program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-tenure-line faculty position in a CSWE-accredited program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic administrative position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not employed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic research position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonacademic research position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonacademic administrative position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postdoctoral fellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty position in a program not accredited by CSWE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Implications for social work education, research and practice

• Accreditation issues
• Terminal degree issue-impact on BSW and MSW
• Research-practice divide
• Workforce Issues and market demand
• Licensure issues
CSWE Practice Doctorate Committee Members

**Commission on Educational Policy (COEP) Representatives**
- Dr. Debra McPhee, Dean, Fordham University, COEP Chair
- Dr. Robert Kersting, Social Work Department Chair, Westfield State University
- Dr. Christopher Mitchell, University of Illinois at Chicago
- Dr. Larry Ortiz, Professor and Director, PhD Program in Social Policy and Social Research, Loma Linda University

**Commission on Accreditation (COA) Representatives**
- Dr. Andy Safyer, Dean, Adelphi University, COA Chair
- Dr. Beverly Black, Professor and former PhD Program Director, University of Texas at Arlington
- Dr. R. Paul Maiden, Clinical Professor, Virtual Academic Center (UT) and Department of Social Change & Innovation, DSW Faculty, USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work

**CSWE Staff**
- Dr. Jo Ann Regan, CSWE Vice President of Education, COEP Staff Liaison
- Dr. Stacey Borasky, CSWE Director of Social Work Accreditation, COA Staff Liaison
- Katie Benson, CSWE Research Associate
Rationale for Accreditation

• Accreditation of practice doctoral programs would protect and enhance the preparation of social work practitioners in social work practice.

• This aligns us with the majority of other professions that accredit their practice doctorate.
• The practice doctorate committee is recommending a diverse approach for the accreditation of practice doctoral programs that encompasses the broad scope of social work practice at the doctoral level.

• The accreditation process and standards developed will ensure that these programs can differ in their goals, curricula, and in the competencies of their graduates.
Social work education at the baccalaureate, master’s, and doctoral levels shapes the profession’s future through four components:

- education of competent professionals,
- the generation of knowledge,
- the promotion of evidence-informed practice through scientific inquiry,
- and the exercise of leadership within the professional community (EPAS, 2015)
The practice doctorate committee is recommending a framework with five general areas for program accreditation standards:

- Program Mission and Goals
- Core Expertise and Skills
- Explicit Curriculum
- Implicit Curriculum
- Assessment
• Regardless of program focus, there is a core level of skills that doctoral practitioners should have
  • Scientific Inquiry guided by theory
  • Evidence-Based Practice/Scholarship of Application to Practice/Thought leader and public intellectual
  • Leadership
  • Critical Analysis of Policy, Practice, Research and Theory
  • Specialty area of practice
Requiring MSW

• Debate regarding admission criteria for practice doctorate programs

• Key is if programs should articulate as a condition of admission that applicants have a MSW plus practice experience.

• The practice doctorate committee is recommending the following for admission criteria:
  • Admissions criteria that are clear and transparent but may vary by program based upon program mission and goals. Rationale for admission criteria would need to be presented.
  • Evidence of mastery of generalist social work competencies (BSW, MSW or BSW with other master’s degree)
UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF PRACTICE DOCTORATES

• Terminal degree issue-impact on BSW and MSW
• Research-practice divide
• Workforce issues and market demand
• Licensure issues
Where are we going?

- Competency-based accreditation standards continue and more focus on assessing delivery methods that enhance attainment of competencies
- MOOCs and other distance education innovations may change the way courses and/or programs are delivered
- Need more data on the number of types of students, areas of specialized practice, types of distance education programs

"The future ain't what it used to be"
- Yogi Berra
• Programs will continue to grow
• Accreditation of programs by CSWE will start next year for those programs interested
• Creation of more social workers to teach practice but need to follow-up through workforce study and more programs reporting graduation data
Contact Information

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