The “Practice Doctorate” Degree: Implications for Social Work Education, Research and Practice
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
• Discussion of implications and issues for social work education, research and practice
What is a “practice doctorate?”

- Professional doctorate (JD, MD, EdD)
- DSW
- Scholar Practitioner
- Applied doctorate
- Terminal degree for practice
- Clinical Practice Only
- Not a Research PhD
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>
<td>-----</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clinical Doctorate</strong></td>
<td>JD</td>
<td>Clinical PhD; Clinical PsyD; Counseling; School</td>
<td>DrPh 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
Practice doctoral programs in social work are growing (currently 14 programs)

The question is not whether these programs should exist, but what actions should be taken to help ensure that:

- academic programs offering the social work practice doctorate meet quality standards

- a clear distinction is established and maintained between entry-level bachelor and master’s degrees and practice doctorates in social work
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. Their respective PhDs are not accredited.

Accreditation of practice doctoral degree programs in no way implies that this is now the terminal degree for social work practice.
Current EPAS Standards

• Currently, our accreditation standards recognize the master’s degree in social work as a qualification for teaching in a social work program:
  • B3.2.4: The majority of the total full-time baccalaureate social work program faculty has a master’s degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program, with a doctoral degree preferred.
  • M 3.2.4: The majority of the full-time master’s social work program faculty has a master’s degree in social work and a doctoral degree, preferably in social work. (EPAS, 2015)

• Field directors and field instructors are also required to hold a master’s degree in social work and have 2 years post-master’s social work practice experience.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continuum of Social Work Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Baccalaureate</strong> (BSW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Prepare students for generalist practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Master’s</strong> (MSW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Prepare students for generalist and specialized practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Doctorate</strong> (DSW and PhD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>DSW</strong> - prepare social workers to assume advanced professional roles such as master practitioner, educator, administrator, policy practitioner, or leader in settings where social workers practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>PhD</strong> - prepare students to be scholars who function as “stewards of the discipline” that improve the art and science of social work by generating, disseminating, and conserving the knowledge that informs and transforms professional practice (GADE Quality Guidelines, 2013)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 Statistics
History and Context of Practice Doctorates in Social Work

1920-1930’s

First Social Work Doctoral Programs
Bryn Mawr (1915)
Univ of Chicago (1924)
Ohio State (1934)
Catholic University (1934)

1940’s

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

1951

First DSW Degrees conferred
History and Context of Practice Doctorates in Social Work

1960’s
20 new programs began between 1965 and 1975

1970’s
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

1990’s
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 Compared to PhD Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>DSW Programs</th>
<th>PhD Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recent Growth of DSW Students

50% of programs are part-time

As reported in CSWE Annual Survey of Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-Time</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>1052</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Number of PhD Students

50% of PhD programs have part-time programs; two entirely online

As reported in CSWE Annual Survey of Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-Time</td>
<td>1604</td>
<td>1778</td>
<td>1679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>547</td>
<td>473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2047</td>
<td>2325</td>
<td>2152</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Percent from historically underrepresented groups

As reported in CSWE Annual Survey of Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>DSW</th>
<th>PhD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>28.90%</td>
<td>43.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>47.80%</td>
<td>44.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>45.60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comparison of Average Loan Debt

As reported in CSWE Annual Survey of Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>DSW</th>
<th>PhD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>56,494</td>
<td>47,392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>61,647</td>
<td>45,609</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DSW  | PhD
### MSW Program Responses to the Question, “Is your institution planning to offer an applied social work doctorate?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></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><strong>29</strong></td>
<td><strong>12.4</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of those programs offering an applied degree or that are still in the planning stages (30), 13 (43.3%) are planning a clinical focus, three general, three teaching, four administrative, and six other.
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
- Totally Online: 4
- Hybrid: 8

**FORMAT**
- Full-Time or Part-Time: 2
- Part-Time Only: 9
- Full-Time Only: 3
Admission Requirements of DSW Programs

**Requirement of MSW**
- MSW Required: 13
- Other Masters Degree: 1

**Post Masters Experience**
- None: 1
- Two Years Post-MSW Required: 8
- Three Years Post-MSW Required: 2
- Post-MSW Not Required, but Preferred: 3
Admission Requirements of Current DSW Programs

LICENSURE

- License required: 4
- License preferred: 2
- Not required: 8
Research Requirements for 12 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
### 2016 Applications and Acceptances to Practice Doctorate Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>#</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applications considered</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicants accepted</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newly enrolled</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

- 77%: 3 Years or Less
- 9%: 5 Years
- 12%: 6 Years
- 0%: 7 Years or More
- Unknown
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private clinical practice</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other position</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure-line faculty position in a CSWE-accredited program</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-tenure-line faculty position in a CSWE-accredited program</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic administrative position</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not employed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic research position</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonacademic research position</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonacademic administrative position</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postdoctoral fellow</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty position in a program not accredited by CSWE</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Employment of Graduates with Practice Doctorates in May 2017

N=87 10/12 responded

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tenure-line faculty position in a CSWE-accredited program</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>32.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other position</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-tenure-line faculty position in a CSWE-accredited program</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private clinical practice</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic administrative position</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulting</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not employed</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic research position</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonacademic research position</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonacademic administrative position</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postdoctoral fellow</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty position in a program not accredited by CSWE</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2017 PhD Graduates (n=292)

• Most PhD students graduate within 4–6 years
  • 27.4% in 5 years (80), 22.9% in 6 years (67), and 12% in 4 years (35).
  • A minority of students took 10 years or more to graduate (7.2%; 21).
• Most graduates were employed in faculty or academic research positions (64.5%; 229) compared to 48.4% of DSW graduates.
Accreditation

• In March 2016, the CSWE Board of Directors voted for COEP and COA to move forward with developing a process for the accreditation of practice doctoral programs in social work.

• 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.
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. Tom Gregoire, Dean, The Ohio State University

- **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
CSWE Practice Doctorate Committee Members

DSW Program Directors/Representatives:

- Brian Christenson, Capella University
- Michael C. LaSala, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
- Debora S. Rice, Walden University
- David A. Patterson, The University of Tennessee
- Bill Rowe, Southern Connecticut University
- Sharon Lyter, Kutztown University
- Laura Granruth, Millersville University
CSWE Practice Doctorate Committee Activities

- Framework document - developed last year
- APM sessions and online feedback Oct-Dec 2017
- Committee revised framework document based on feedback
- Timeline - 2 year process of feedback and comment on standards and process
- Draft 1 of Standards developed in June 2018
- Released for public feedback in November 2018
CSWE Practice Doctorate Committee Activities in 2019

• Committee meets in Jan to review feedback on standards and develop draft 2 based on feedback
• Draft 2 presented at BPD, NADD and GADE
• Accreditation process is developed for pilot reviews
• Fall 2019-CSWE’s COA begins to accept applications for pilot reviews
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
Core Expertise & Skills

Practice doctoral programs, regardless of focus, should prepare doctoral practitioners to:

• engage in systematic inquiry that adheres to scholarly conventions;
• use and critically evaluate advanced-level evidence-based practice;
• develop and disseminate practice-relevant knowledge through a variety of channels, such as teaching, scholarship, professional presentations, mentoring, and administration;
• demonstrate leadership in social work practice and education; and
• develop and maintain substantive expertise in one or more areas of social work practice.
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
FUTURE

• 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
DISCUSSION AREAS

• Terminal degree issue-impact on BSW and MSW
• Impact on PhD programs & program rankings
• Research-practice divide
• Workforce issues and market demand
• Licensure issues
Contact Information

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