



الجامعة الألمانية الأردنية
German Jordanian University

German Jordanian University
School of Applied Humanities and Social
Sciences
Department of Social Work
Doctor of Philosophy in Social
Work
A Hosted Doctoral Program / Universität
Hamburg

Study Plan 2025

Introduction

Members of the School of Applied Humanities and Social Sciences (SAHSS) at the German Jordanian University (GJU), and the Faculty of Education at Universität Hamburg (UHH) have been cooperating in the field of social work for many years now. One overarching goal of the collaboration is to explore the approaches and working methods of state and civil society institutions for education, culture and social support in Jordan and Germany in order to determine the extent to which they successfully help to facilitate the social participation of various vulnerable groups. These activities are to now be continued in a postgraduate program focusing on the preparation and supervision of a doctorate in the field of social work.

The hosted doctorate preparation and support program Doing a Doctorate in Social Work will provide a setting for systematic teaching and reflection and include research colloquiums, academic lectures, workshops and conferences, methodological training and/or teaching-learning research projects. Lecturers and professors from both the three partner universities and other universities will offer corresponding courses so that graduates and doctoral researchers can discuss theories and methods relevant to social work (social science research methodology, humanities research methodology, participatory research, research ethics, etc.).

The program developed jointly aims to prepare qualified master's students, graduates and doctoral researchers from Jordan and Germany for a doctorate in social work and to support them during preparation of their dissertation. The network also provides a formal structure that ensures that the title of "Dr. Phil." can be awarded for doctorates completed at Universität Hamburg. Graduates from the three participating faculties are able to participate in the program, as are graduates of other universities with a master's degree in social work. An application procedure will apply for admission to the program.

The field of social work derives its importance from the set of concepts that have developed in recent years to contribute to a greater understanding of the social phenomenon, which needs more specialization and deep digging to deconstruct individual and societal behavior towards daily human interactions and institutional and societal construction. Therefore, a Ph.D. program in Social Work is vital for several reasons:

- A. The importance of advanced Research Skills: The Ph.D. program prepares students with advanced research skills and tools that are indispensable for conducting in-depth research in the field of social work.
- B. Leadership and Advocacy: The Ph.D. program in social work can prepare social workers for future leadership skills and experiences and deepen their better understanding of topics like social justice matters and enable them to stand strongly with marginalized populations more competently.
- C. Contribution to the Field: graduates of this program will be highly equipped with skills that contribute to the field of social work by constructing solid research that adds new knowledge, advances new knowledge, informs policy, and improves practice.
- D. Job and career opportunities: graduates of a Ph.D. program in Social Work can be exposed to new windows of career opportunities in different fields of academic work or positions, research positions, policy development roles, and leadership positions in many institutions and organizations.
- E. Impact on communities: Social worker graduates with such program, can make a substantial impact and influence on individuals and communities by developing and implementing evidence-based interventions, encouraging policy decisions, and training the next generation of social workers.

So, a Ph.D. program in Social Work is important for educating specialists who can lead positive changes, contribute to research, and to address complex social issues.

The Department of Social Work is looking to strengthen its cooperation with universities in order to open up doctoral opportunities for graduates of its Master's degree program. The possibility of a doctorate not only ensures the attractiveness of the established Master's degree program in Social Work, it also enables the discipline to produce its own young professors. Furthermore, given Jordan's important stabilizing role in coping with political upheavals and the associated humanitarian crises in the region due to the massive intake of displaced persons, the hosted Ph.D. program in social work contributes to the fulfillment of the university's third mission through its graduates. In addition to that, the establishment of Ph.D. program at The German Jordanian university stem from the following considerations:

- A. It will be the first social work Ph.D. program in Jordan.

- B. It will be the first social work Ph.D. program in English language where many of the students are looking to enhance their English language which enable them to be strong candidate for research, and academic career as well as working with high prestigious.
- C. It will be the first hosted program in Social work in Jordan.
- D. The program is part of long-standing cooperation with Germany through well recognize universities, as Hamburg University and HAW Hamburg.
- E. Opening such program will contribute to preparing skillful Ph.D. graduates not just for the Jordanian market but for the region and international market.
- F. Establishing the Ph.D. program will encourage students to join program that derive its reputation from national and international perspective specially among those who cannot travel abroad due to the high cost of living.
- G. Since the social work field considered as feminine phenomena, launching this program will encourage female students to enhance, add knowledge to their existing career and profession, and it will enable them to practice more academic and research experience.
- H. Starting this program will strengthen the relationship and cooperation between GJU and international organizations especially German organizations who are willing to support vulnerable communities through well respected academic institutions.
- I. Having such program will contribute in creating new culture of establishing hosted program in Jordan where it will open up new perspective in higher education with well-respected academic institutions around the world.
- J. Establishing Ph.D. program at German Jordanian university will contribute to increasing the ranking of GJU on the world academic ranking system.
- K. Jordan remains safe and stable country with outstanding academic reputation, so establishing a social work Ph.D. program will encourage families from Arab countries and worldwide to continue their higher education degree in Jordan.

I. Program Objectives

The hosted doctorate preparation and support program Doing a Doctorate in Social Work aims to foster specific skills for conducting research in social work to qualify academic staff and consolidate their proficiency in scientific methods and methodologies.

It is geared toward the specific tasks and topics as well as the special framework conditions of social work as a discipline. In Germany, social work was only recognized by the German Rectors' Conference (Hochschulrektorenkonferenz, HRK) as an academic discipline in 2001, for example. In Jordan, this accreditation only took place in 2024. This means that the corresponding structures for doctoral studies are still being established.

The decade-long discussion on the relationship between theory and practice in the praxeological sciences shows that distinguishing between the universities of applied sciences, which are responsible for applied research, and the universities, which focus on basic research, is unrealistic and outdated – at least in the field of social work. This is all the more the case for doctoral studies during which it is essential to link the theory-based practical research and practice-relevant theoretical developments in the various fields of social work. Specifically, the learning objectives for the program are to enable students to:

- A. qualify as researchers with a particular ability to engage with the theories of social work.
- B. conduct empirical research applying specific research methodologies used in social work.
- C. acquire a high degree of competence in researching, designing and conducting scientific studies in their respective fields independently and in line with international scholarly standards.
- D. present comprehensive documentation and publish their research (publishable dissertation);
- E. become qualified as social workers and in related fields (e.g. culture studies, migration studies, disability studies, poverty studies) in academic and educational contexts.
- F. develop a high level of (inter)cultural competence and gain the ability to cooperate in international academic contexts with researchers and academic staff from the field of social work to the benefit of their countries.

II. Learning Outcomes

The Learning outcomes:

1. Students will prove a comprehensive understanding of foundational and contemporary theories, methods, and approaches in social work practice, research, and policy.
2. Students will develop advanced critical thinking skills to examine and to analyze complex social issues, assess empirical evidence, and produce innovative solutions to address social problems and endorse social justice.
3. Students will obtain advanced research skills, including the ability to design and conduct rigorous empirical studies, apply qualitative and quantitative research methods, analyze data, and distribute research findings through scholarly publications and presentations.
4. Students will demonstrate the ability to cooperate effectively with professionals from diverse disciplines, integrating insights from sociology, psychology, public health, law, and other relevant fields to address complex social challenges.
5. Students will sustain the highest ethical standards in their research and practice, demonstrating cultural humility, sensitivity, and competence in working with varied populations and communities.
6. Students will develop leadership skills to advocate for social change, influence policy development, and mobilize resources to address systemic inequalities and promote human rights and social justice.
7. Students will gain experience in teaching social work courses, mentoring undergraduate and graduate students, and circulating knowledge through workshops, seminars, and proficient conferences.
8. Students will engage in ongoing professional development activities, including participation in conferences, workshops, and professional organizations, to stay well informed of emerging learnings, best practices, and innovations in the field of social work.
9. Students will make original contributions to the field of social work through their doctoral research, advancing theoretical understanding, informing evidence-based practice, and shaping social policy at local, national, and global levels.
10. Students will actively engage with communities, organizations, and stakeholders to address social needs, promote social inclusion, and empower individuals and groups to create positive social change.

Course Delivery Methods

Courses are in one of the following three methods:

- **Face-to-Face (F2F) Method**

Courses using this method are delivered by faculty in person in regularly scheduled class sessions physically on campus.

- **Blended (BLD) Method**

Courses are delivered in a hybrid mode of physical face-to-face class sessions and asynchronous material including online instructional videos, presentations, projects, and similar learning activities.

- **Online (OL) Method**

Courses are delivered exclusively online. This method consists of a hybrid of synchronous regularly scheduled class sessions delivered via the Internet, and asynchronous material including online instructional videos, presentations, projects, and similar learning activities. Virtual classrooms utilizing different online platforms are used. No physical face-to-face meetings are required.

Topics, methods and ethics of research in Social Work

Like every discipline, social work has its own specific topics, questions and problems. The program prepares participants for conducting research within these. Without claiming to be exhaustive, these include the following research fields, methodologies and methods:

Subject-Oriented Studies

Empirical studies on the life situation of people in need consider how people from all age groups manage to develop productive strategies for coping with even the most difficult life situations despite the most adverse conditions. Individual and collective barriers must be identified precisely in order to determine the tasks for social work and the educational options for action that can help to open up subjectively satisfying social participation for particularly disadvantaged children, young people and adults.

- A. In life situation analyses, the objective conditions, individual experiences and subjective assessments of precarious situations can be reconstructed using biographical, family and habitus research methods.
- B. In socio-spatial analyses, residential, employment and educational biographies can be linked, for example.
- C. In transnational analyses, biographies, life situations and family networks in the context of transmigration can be addressed.

Institution-Oriented Studies

Empirical studies will focus on the formal and non-formal educational and support institutions of social work, which accompany the addressees in their lives, and impart the necessary skills.

- A. Social work relates its concepts as precisely as possible to the various disadvantages of social groups by focusing on target groups. Hence empirical studies are needed that critically explore educational and support programs geared specifically toward target groups.
- B. The underlying intersectional orders must also be reconstructed and reflected upon based on data in inclusive education and support programs that are explicitly aimed at heterogeneous, multicultural, multilingual and gender-differentiated groups.

Intervention-Oriented Studies

Research into the empirical determination of quality characteristics of educational, social work, vocational qualification and therapeutic counselling, care and support services is also indispensable. "Quality" means providing people with reliable access to support services so that they can develop the skills they need to cope with precarious living conditions.

- A. Professional research emphatically points to the basic antinomic structure of social work, as these professional fields are characterized by mutually contradictory requirements for action. Such ambivalences must be kept open in both theory and practice, as they cannot be resolved but rather can at best be addressed with caution.
- B. Transition research has shown that support and education programs must be institutionally and conceptually linked to form tailored support chains in order to ensure opportunities for participation.
- C. Network research underlines the importance of community alliances in which education providers, schools, specialist authorities, NGOs and commercial enterprises join forces to overcome the many barriers to social integration.

Participatory Research

Social work has the discipline-specific characteristic that it focuses on vulnerable groups. Hence the paradigm of qualitative participatory research is often called for in research. However, practical experience shows that, overall, the comprehensive inclusion of disadvantaged groups in the entire research process (from development of the research question through data collection and analysis to joint writing and publication) is very difficult in participation research. Consequently, special efforts must be made to design and implement participatory research projects.

Participants in the program will first work together to evaluate documented/published participatory research projects. NGOs and social work target groups will then be asked about their experiences with participatory research during small-scale studies. The aim is to prepare a joint paper in which some "quality characteristics" for participatory research are identified for various fields of action within social work during a doctorate.

Ethical Research Document

Research ethics issues arise in every research process, for example regarding the individual relationships of the research participants or the collective consequences of research work, which can include the risk of (re-) producing stigmatization or social inequality. The German Association of Social Work (DGSA) has published an eleven-page code that focuses explicitly on research. The research ethics principles formulated there provide valuable guidance for the implementation of social work research projects.

The program assigns great importance to research-ethical reflection. It will continuously document research-ethical issues and situations that arise in the individual fields of inquiry: the program will provide graduates with

guidance on how to prepare their individual ethical research document in order to reflect on the research ethics implications of their own project. However, the program will also tap into the group dynamic to reflect together on research ethics issues in the various phases of the research process.

Cultural Criticism and Dialogue

The fact that conflicts can arise in international, multicultural and multilingual groups due to sociocultural differences between the participants is known. Such conflicts must be addressed in the joint work if the program is to successfully be implemented. Geopolitical challenges should also be discussed openly, which inevitably arise in a “dialogue-based” cooperation between Jordan and Germany (e.g. structural asymmetries, dominance relations, power structures, figurations).

The program fosters a cultural dialogue between the participants in order to discuss gender relations, cultural attributions and intercultural conflicts within the project group. The program will organize formats for familiarization, reflection and conflict resolution, particularly during the in-person events, in order to identify conflicts in the intercultural communication at an early stage and to take the time to address these.

III. Admission Requirements

To apply for admission, the following minimum requirements must be met:

- A. A regular bachelor’s degree (or equivalent) with a minimum rating of good (or equivalent), and a regular master’s degree (or equivalent) with a minimum rating of good (or equivalent).
- B. BA and MA in related subjects or disciplines with Social work (e. g. Education, Psychology, Sociology, Cultural Studies, Counselling).
- C. A total of 300 ECTS credits in disciplines relevant to social work.
- D. German or English language competences (C1 according to the CEFR, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages).

The Graduate School of the Faculty of Education at the University of Hamburg as well as the Department of Social Work at the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences and the Hamburg Research Academy offer the opportunity to take additional courses online and in English in social work or other social science topics. At the Graduate School of the University of Hamburg, a certificate can be obtained successively, for candidates who have not completed the required number of ECTS in their master's program.

Doctoral researchers at the Graduate School must earn at least 12 ECTS in the doctoral program. As a rule, a course totaling one credit hour per week corresponds to 2 ECTS credits. The regular period of study for doctoral studies is 3 years (6 semesters). Doctoral researchers from partner institutions may attend courses alongside doctoral researchers from the Graduate School.

<https://www.wiso.uni-hamburg.de/en/einrichtungen-service/einrichtungen/graduate-school/structured-doctoral-program.html>.

IV. Degree Requirements (30CH)

Completing successfully all the compulsory courses (30 credit hours).

V. Framework for Ph.D. Degree (30 Credit hours)

| Classification | Credit Hours | | | ECTS | | |
|----------------------|--------------|----------|-----------|------------|----------|----------|
| | Compulsory | Elective | Total | Compulsory | Elective | Total |
| Program Requirements | 30 | - | - | - | - | - |
| Total | 30 | - | 30 | - | - | - |

Compulsory Requirements: (30 credit hours)

| Course ID | Course Name | Credit Hours | ECTS | Contact Hours | | Type | Prerequisites / Corequisites |
|--------------|------------------|--------------|------|---------------|-----|------|------------------------------|
| | | | | Lect | Lab | | |
| SW9901 | Dissertation I | 3 | - | - | - | F2F | - |
| SW9902 | Dissertation II | 6 | - | - | - | F2F | SW9901 |
| SW9903 | Dissertation III | 6 | - | - | - | F2F | SW9902 |
| SW9904 | Dissertation IV | 6 | - | - | - | F2F | SW9903 |
| SW9905 | Dissertation V | 6 | - | - | - | F2F | SW9904 |
| SW9906 | Dissertation VI | 3 | - | - | - | F2F | SW9905 |
| Total | | 30 | - | - | - | | |

VI. Study Plan Guide

| First Year | | | | | | | |
|----------------|----------------|--------------|----------|---------------|----------|------|------------------------------|
| First Semester | | | | | | | |
| Course ID | Course Name | Credit Hours | ECTS | Contact Hours | | Type | Prerequisites / Corequisites |
| | | | | Lect | Lab | | |
| SW9901 | Dissertation I | 3 | - | - | - | F2F | - |
| Total | | 3 | - | - | - | | |

| First Year | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|----------|---------------|----------|------|------------------------------|
| Second Semester | | | | | | | |
| Course ID | Course Name | Credit Hours | ECTS | Contact Hours | | Type | Prerequisites / Corequisites |
| | | | | Lect | Lab | | |
| SW9902 | Dissertation II | 6 | - | - | - | F2F | SW9901 |
| Total | | 6 | - | - | - | | |

| Second Year | | | | | | | |
|----------------|------------------|--------------|----------|---------------|----------|------|------------------------------|
| First Semester | | | | | | | |
| Course ID | Course Name | Credit Hours | ECTS | Contact Hours | | Type | Prerequisites / Corequisites |
| | | | | Lect | Lab | | |
| SW9903 | Dissertation III | 6 | - | - | - | F2F | SW9902 |
| Total | | 6 | - | - | - | | |

| Second Year | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|----------|---------------|----------|------|------------------------------|
| Second Semester | | | | | | | |
| Course ID | Course Name | Credit Hours | ECTS | Contact Hours | | Type | Prerequisites / Corequisites |
| | | | | Lect | Lab | | |
| SW9904 | Dissertation IV | 6 | - | - | - | F2F | SW9903 |
| Total | | 6 | - | - | - | | |

| Third Year | | | | | | | |
|----------------|----------------|--------------|----------|---------------|----------|------|------------------------------|
| First Semester | | | | | | | |
| Course ID | Course Name | Credit Hours | ECTS | Contact Hours | | Type | Prerequisites / Corequisites |
| | | | | Lect | Lab | | |
| SW9905 | Dissertation V | 6 | - | - | - | F2F | SW9904 |
| Total | | 6 | - | - | - | | |

| Third Year | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|----------|---------------|----------|------|------------------------------|
| Second Semester | | | | | | | |
| Course ID | Course Name | Credit Hours | ECTS | Contact Hours | | Type | Prerequisites / Corequisites |
| | | | | Lect | Lab | | |
| SW9906 | Dissertation VI | 3 | - | - | - | F2F | SW9905 |
| Total | | 3 | - | - | - | | |