

University of Virginia School of Nursing

PHD ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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“The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) represents the highest level of formal education for a career in research and the scholarship of discovery. It prepares scholars for the expression and communication of the knowledge base in the profession. The PhD graduate develops the science, stewards the profession, educates the next generation of nurses, defines its uniqueness, and maintains its professional integrity. In the academic setting, the PhD is the highest academic degree and is required for success as a scientist in the multiple disciplines represented within educational institutions. In the scientific arena within and beyond the Academy, the PhD is the beginning preparation for the development of independence in scientific pursuit. Post-doctoral study is recommended for depth in a field. Attainment of the PhD requires a strong scientific emphasis within the discipline; an understanding of the science of related disciplines and translation science; dissemination of innovations; and interdisciplinary collaboration. In addition, for the profession to achieve this vision and make the maximum impact on the healthcare system, PhD nursing scientists should reflect society at large.”

The Research - Focused Doctoral Program in Nursing- Pathways to Excellence. AACN 2011

DISCLAIMER: No student handbook can anticipate every circumstance or question regarding University or program policies. Every effort has been made to provide students with accurate, complete information. This handbook does not constitute a contract between the student and the School of Nursing. The School reserves the right to modify, amend or revoke any rules or regulations and to change programs and requirements.

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Program Overview

Philosophy

A University is a community of scholars having as its central purpose the enrichment of the human mind. Within this community, the Doctor of Philosophy program in nursing seeks to prepare scholars who will advance nursing knowledge. Scholarly achievement in nursing is accomplished in a spirit of free inquiry directed toward a better understanding of human existence, especially in relation to health and illness. Nurse scholars participate in the study of particular phenomena and in the identification of central domains related to these phenomena. This requires that students be well informed about advanced practice in professional nursing.

Nursing knowledge is advanced through association with other disciplines and is often enhanced by the work of other university scholars. Central to the education of nurse scholars is the opportunity to interact with other scholars throughout the university community. Through dialogue and study with these professionals, nurse scholars expand their understanding of health and illness and the biological, environmental, sociocultural, ethical, legal, philosophic and historic factors influencing nursing care.

Scholars must be inquisitive, informed and committed. This requires expertise in the principles and methods of inquiry and an informed imagination for exploring substantive areas in nursing. The ultimate goal of this inquiry is to enhance nursing's contribution to the health of all persons.

Aims

The major purpose of the PhD program in nursing is to prepare scholars with expertise in selected substantive areas who will contribute to nursing science and practice through systematic inquiry. Aims of the PhD program in nursing are to prepare scholars who will:

1. Demonstrate advanced knowledge of nursing, related sciences and humanities, and methods of inquiry;
2. Expand the research base of nursing theory and practice; and
3. Serve the Commonwealth, the nation, and the world by addressing major nursing and health care issues in a scholarly manner.

Description

Students initially plan their academic programs with an academic advisor who typically will be the dissertation chair in order to develop an individualized comprehensive program that meets the degree requirements and the student's research and educational goals. The PhD degree is not an accumulation of courses, but rather a rationally unified plan of study and research. The program is designed so that the plan of study in nursing is supported and complemented by cognate area courses (courses outside the School of Nursing) and by electives (courses either within or outside the School of Nursing). The purpose of the cognate and elective coursework is to support a student's individual learning needs and research focus beyond the required core classes. The dissertation research completes the student's training.

Program Components

The PhD program consists of courses, research and teaching activities, and required experiential elements (comprehensive exam, dissertation proposal defense, dissertation and its defense). We support our PhD students in obtaining the skills needed for teaching in a future faculty role. Many students gain teaching experience within a funded Graduate Teaching Assistantship. Students are encouraged to work with their advisors to identify other teaching resources within the University (See section below, “Opportunities to Develop Teaching Skills”).

Nursing Field (6 credits)

The evolution and current state of nursing knowledge are examined from both historical and philosophical perspectives and serve as the basis for the establishment of critical inquiry and study in addressing the increasingly complex health care needs of vulnerable populations. The courses in the nursing field include:

- GNUR 8210 - Scientific Progress in Nursing
- GNUR 8220 - Philosophy of Science and Development of Nursing Knowledge

Research (29 credits plus 12 dissertation credits)

The research component of the program includes courses in research design and methodology, statistics, individually designed research practicums, and the dissertation. The dissertation is a culminating experience which requires the student to plan and implement a research study of significance to nursing. Courses in the research component include:

- GNUR 8000 – Seminar in Nursing Science
- GNUR 8110 - Quantitative Research Methods
- GNUR 8120 - Qualitative Research Methods
- GNUR 8130 – Statistical Methods for Health Care Research I
- GNUR 8140 – Statistical Methods for Health Care Research II
- GNUR 8230 - Historical Inquiry in Nursing
- GNUR 8410 – Grant Writing Seminar
- GNUR 8435 – Scholarship in Research Ethics **or** BIMS 7100 - Research Ethics **or** PHSE 7650 - Ethics and Law in Human Subjects Research (offered in odd Years, fall)
- GNUR 9110 – Research Practicum (4 credits minimum)
- GNUR 9890 – Dissertation Seminar
- GNUR 9998 – Doctoral Research (pre-dissertation proposal defense)
- GNUR 9999 – Dissertation Research (post-dissertation proposal defense)

Students planning on using qualitative research methods should take a second advanced qualitative methods course, and students planning on using quantitative research methods should take an additional advanced quantitative methods course that is specific to the method they plan to use for their dissertation research.

Cognate Minor (9-12 credits)

The cognate requirement includes course work in a single cognate field or combination of fields outside the School of Nursing. The cognate field is intended to complement the student's major scholarly focus. Cognates must be at the 5000 level or higher and be offered from departments outside of the School of Nursing (not GNUR classes).

Electives (3-6 credits)

Electives are selected by the student based on individual interest. These should complement the total program of study and may be taken either in or outside the School of Nursing. Electives must be at the 5000 level or higher and may include GNUR classes.

NOTE: Students must have a total of 15 credit hours of cognates plus electives. If 12 credit hours of cognates, 3 credit hours of electives are required. If 9 credit hours of cognates, 6 credit hours of electives are required. All cognate and elective credits must be graded on an A through F scale.

It is **strongly recommended** that at least 6 credits within the total number of cognates and electives be allocated to advanced methods courses.

Per the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Graduate Record:

Degree Requirements: Students [seeking a Doctor of Philosophy Degree] must complete a minimum of 72 hours of graduate credit. A minimum of 24 out of the 72 credit hours must be graded coursework, and no more than 48 of the 72 credit hours can be comprised of Non-Topical Research. Only graduate courses taught by members of one of the graduate faculties of the University, offered during the fall or spring term and graded on the standard A through F scale may be counted toward the graded coursework requirement unless otherwise specified in a program's degree requirements.

Transfer Credit: With the approval of the supervising department and the assistant dean, a student may transfer up to 24 credit hours of coursework earned in another graduate program (and awarded a grade of "B" or higher) toward the 72-hour doctoral requirement. In any case, at least 18 graded course credits applied toward the degree must have been earned at the University of Virginia. If nine or more transfer credits are awarded, the student's date of graduation will be accelerated by one term. If 21 or more transfer credits are awarded, the student's expected date of graduation will be accelerated by two terms.

Suggested Plan of Study

Fall, Year 1:

- GNUR 8210: Scientific Progress in Nursing
- GNUR 8130: Statistical Methods for Health Care Research I
- GNUR 8220: Philosophy of Science and Development of Nursing Knowledge
- GNUR 8000: Seminar in Nursing Science

Spring, Year 1:

- GNUR 8140: Statistical Methods for Health Care Research II
- GNUR 8110: Quantitative Research Methods
- GNUR 8230: Historical Inquiry in Nursing
- GNUR 8120: Qualitative Research Methods

Fall, Year 2:

- GNUR 8410: Grant Writing

Seminar

Variable Semesters:

- GNUR 8435 – Scholarship in Research Ethics **or** BIMS 7100: Research Ethics
- GNUR 9110: Research Practicum (4 credits, minimum)
- GNUR 9890: Dissertation Seminar
- GNUR 9999: Dissertation
- Cognates and Electives

Comprehensive Exam

All students are required to write a comprehensive exam. The comprehensive examination may occur within the last semester of course work but must be held no later than: (1) if coursework is completed in the spring or summer, comprehensive exams must be completed by the end of the following fall semester; (2) if coursework is completed in the fall semester, comprehensive exam must be completed before the start of the following fall semester. Students may apply to the Director of the PhD Program for an extension of one semester maximum. Failure to complete the examination within the allotted timeframe constitutes a failure to make satisfactory progression and can be grounds for involuntary withdrawal from the program.

Students can apply to take comprehensive exams after completion of course work requirements as represented in the Plan of Study, and comprehensive exams must be completed prior to the defense of the dissertation proposal. The purpose of the examination is to demonstrate the student's ability to synthesize knowledge in the student's area of expertise, to visualize the long-term development of a program of research in that area, and to place the planned dissertation research in the context of that program of research and the area of knowledge (see Appendix A for the Comprehensive Exam Evaluation Tool).

Comprehensive Examination Guidelines

The comprehensive exam evaluation tool (see Appendix A) can also be found on the SON Registrar's webpage: [PhD Specific Forms](#). The procedure is as follows:

1. The student will identify a substantive area in which he or she is developing an expertise. A brief statement (approximately five pages) of the area will be drawn up by the student and approved by his/her advisor (who should be the director of the dissertation at this point). The purpose of this statement is to help the Committee develop appropriate comprehensive exam questions for the student.
2. One month prior to the anticipated date of the comprehensive exam, the student will complete the request form, meet with the SON registrar, AND simultaneously notify the Director of the PhD Program by email of the intent to sit for the comprehensive exam.
3. A committee of three people will be formed by the Director of the PhD Program. The student's advisor will chair the committee and will advise the student in recommending

to the Director of the PhD Program a second member who is an expert in the student's subject area. The Director of the PhD Program will choose a third member from among the PhD Program Committee members.

4. The committee will formulate a set of questions that the student is to address in the written examination. These questions will require the student to do the following:
 - Synthesize knowledge in the field from a nursing perspective to summarize the current state of knowledge and to identify areas in which further research is needed, including identifying key phenomena and methodological approaches for addressing those phenomena and related research questions;
 - Describe how the student foresees developing a program of research in the content area over the five to seven years, including
 - Identifying the topic of the dissertation research;
 - Showing how the dissertation will contribute to the overall content area and describe its significance to knowledge development and to nursing;
 - Demonstrating competency in research methodology related to the areas of inquiry in which the student is developing expertise
5. Upon receiving the examination questions, the student will have one week to write the responses. Because the emphasis is on scholarly synthesis rather than memorization, the student may consult published materials, notes, and the like. Responses to the questions must include appropriate references to sources consulted. The student may not, however, receive help from any persons in answering the questions nor may they rely on assistance from any entity for writing.
6. After receiving the student's responses, the committee may take up to three weeks to read and evaluate the written examination.

The committee members, using the Comprehensive Exam Evaluation Tool (rubric), will evaluate the student's performance on the written examination and return it with a recommendation of Distinguished, Acceptable, Failure with Revision, or Failure without Revision to the Director of the PhD Program and copying the program manager. "Failure with revision" will require the student to complete specific remedial assignments designated by her or his chair with the approval of the examination committee. "Failure with revision" also requires a plan with a clear timeline that is agreeable to both the committee and student for a second administration of the examination, for which the questions may be different from those of the first examination. "Failure" on the second examination or "Failure without Revision" on the first examination will mark the end of the student's progression in the program. Please refer to the University policy for additional details regarding appeal and grievance procedures.

Dissertation (12 credits)

The dissertation is a culminating experience which requires the student to plan and implement a research study of significance to nursing (see "Dissertation Research" in this handbook for details).

Opportunities to Develop Teaching Skills

Students are encouraged to develop their teaching skills while in the PhD program. This can be accomplished in several ways. The UVa Center for Teaching Excellence offers workshops and seminars every semester on basic and advanced teaching skills. The Center also offers

information on developing a teaching portfolio and is willing to attend a class and provide the instructor with a thorough critique. An additional way to develop skills is to work as a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA). In working as a GTA, the student can develop the skills of preparing a lecture, writing examination questions, grading written assignments and providing clinical supervision. Work closely with your advisor to assure experience in all components of the teaching process. Experienced students may also seek employment as a clinical instructor in the undergraduate program.

Other PhD Student Resources

PhD+ is university-wide, unique to UVA and newly launched to prepare pre-doctoral students across all disciplines for long-term success. The goal of this program is to “enable versatile academics who are deeply engaged with society’s needs to become influential professionals in every sector and field of study.” *PhD+Core* Modules are dynamic extra-curricular training experiences designed to provide students with an enhanced suite of skills and competencies necessary for success across all careers paths. The foundations series (building resilience, leveraging strengths, time and finance management, and health and wellness) is a guide for how to navigate and design an individual’s optimal graduate experience and is specifically tailored to meet the needs of first-year students. However, all years, including postdoctoral fellows are invited. Other core modules include the topics of entrepreneurship and commercialization, tomorrow’s professor today, and science policy. For more information <https://phdplus.virginia.edu/>

Research Practicum

The goal of the research practicum is for the student to have experiences in aspects of research that will facilitate embarking on a career of research and scholarship. The research practicum is an important pedagogical aspect of the PhD program regardless of funding source or student status.

Given that publication is a vital outcome of any PhD program, the research practicum mechanism is an ideal one from which to publish.

- It is understood that not all research training experiences will be the same.
- Decisions regarding research training experiences ultimately rest with the primary research mentor and the student using the following guidelines:
 - An average of four hours per week per credit should be devoted to this training.
 - Ideally the student will be a part of a research team.
 - The range of experiences may include but are not limited to: conceptualization of a study, grant writing, review of literature, data collection, data management, data analysis, preparation of manuscripts, presentations, and laboratory experiences.

- It is highly desirable that the student participate in a variety of research endeavors throughout the practicum.

Setting goals and objectives for the research practicum:

- It is important to have realistic and objective goals and outcomes to both insure that there are meaningful research training experiences and that research training experiences are documented in the Individual Development Plan.
- Measurable outcomes addressing each goal should be written and agreed upon and monitored for research proposals. Outcomes may include the development of protocols, publications, presentations, or other objective evidence.

Program Academic Policies and Procedures

Student Responsibilities

Students have the responsibility for satisfying the requirements and for meeting the formal deadlines of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and School of Nursing. Appropriate forms are available to students through the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences <http://graduate.as.virginia.edu/thesis-submission-and-graduation> and the SON Registrar's web site. <https://community.nursing.virginia.edu/students/forms/> Students are also responsible for completing an individual development plan with their advisors each academic year and for providing updates on their progress and achievements each spring when requested by the PhD Program Director.

Visiting Students

When unusual and/or extenuating circumstances prevent an applicant from completing the admission process prior to the established deadline, special permission may be given for the individual to enroll in a maximum of six credits of course work as a visiting student. Visiting students may take one course per semester with permission of instructor. Completion of course work as a visiting student does not guarantee admission to the program. Visiting student applications can be found on the SON Admission's website. Visiting Students who fail a course will not be permitted to take additional coursework in the SON.

RESEARCH Related Guidelines

Acknowledgement of External Funding

Students who are successful in obtaining funding for their research or training must carefully acknowledge this support in all subsequent publications, presentations and posters. This includes support from a NRSA and other extramural and intramural/University awards. For example, for a NRSA this is usually worded: "This research was supported in part by a grant from the National Institute of Nursing Research F31 NRG 000000".

Human Subjects and Animal Care and Use Protections

All PhD students are required to promote the ethical treatment of human subjects including ensuring informed consent, assuring anonymity and confidentiality, guaranteeing fair treatment of subjects, and minimizing risks. Students should follow all applicable university requirements and policies for protection of human subjects and animal care and use.

The dissertation chair is jointly responsible, with the student, for the accuracy of the information provided on any Human Subject Review form and must co-sign HSR/SBS forms with the student.

Students are required to close all studies with the SBS/HSR IRB prior to graduation, as there is a financial charge for each CCR report to keep a study open.

ACADEMIC Related Policies

Under certain circumstances and with the approval of the PhD Program Director, a student may be allowed to register as a part-time student.

Grades

The standing of a graduate student in each course is indicated by one of the following grades: A+, A, A-; B+, B, B-; C+, C, C-; D+, D, D-; F. B- is the lowest satisfactory grade for graduate credit. Students who receive any grade of C+ or below or with a grade point average below 3.00 in a semester will be considered as “not making satisfactory progress” toward a degree. Unsatisfactory performance during any semester may be considered sufficient reason for enforced withdrawal from the University.

For certain courses in which the department does not require a final examination, permission can be granted to grade those courses on an S/U (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory) basis. A report of IN (incomplete) on a graduate course is changed by the University Registrar to a failing grade if the course is not completed by the end of 200 days. Students in which no grade was recorded (NG on the transcript) are also changed to a failing grade after 200 days. Failing grades recorded in this manner have the same effect on the student’s record and status as failing grades assigned by instructors. Unsatisfactory performance during any semester may be considered sufficient reason for enforced withdrawal from the University.

Progression through the PhD Degree

The student has the responsibility for ensuring that each step in fulfilling degree requirements is completed and that an official record is kept. Typically, there is an important form to complete with each milestone activity. Please see the Registrar’s web site for the most current forms and policy regarding these forms. Because the PhD program is guided by both the GSAS and the SON, all students and faculty must be informed and submit proper documents for both Academic Divisions.

Academic Advisor and the Student's Program of Study

Upon entry into the program, the student is assigned an academic advisor. The advisor works with the student during the initial stages of program development, guiding and monitoring the student's program of study.

It is not uncommon for students to discover, once in the program, that another faculty member may offer a better match for the student's research interests than the advisor initially assigned. It is entirely acceptable for the student to change advisors. The student submits the form "Notice of Change of Academic Advisor" with the signatures of both the former and the new advisors to the School of Nursing Registrar for the student's file, with a copy to the Director of the PhD Program.

As the student progresses through required courses, they need to identify cognate courses outside of nursing which will complement the student's nursing preparation and projected area of research. After establishing contact and having course experiences with a range of faculty, the student is usually ready to select a Dissertation Chair who will continue to monitor the student's program of study and direct the student's dissertation research.

Approval of Program of Study

Certification that the student has completed all required and recommended course work for the PhD degree is granted by the registrar and Dissertation Chair prior to the student sitting for the comprehensive examination. To be officially approved, the Request to Write Comprehensive Exam form must be signed by the School of Nursing Registrar, the Assistant Dean for Academic and Student Services, and the Dissertation Chair. The form is available on the School of Nursing Registrar's web site.

Students do not typically earn a Master's degree as a part of their PhD. Students who wish to obtain a Master's degree must do so with the approval of their advisor, the PhD Program Director, and in accordance with School of Nursing and GSAS requirements.

Dissertation Advising

As soon as the student has identified a problem area for research, a Dissertation Chair is selected. The Dissertation Chair not have served as the academic advisor. The identification and selection of the Dissertation Chair is initiated by the student and the selection of this individual is dependent upon mutual agreement of the student and the faculty member who is asked to guide the dissertation research. The choice of the Dissertation Chair should be made based student's proposed area of research and the faculty member's expertise and scholarly interests.

The Dissertation Chair must be a PhD program faculty member in the School of Nursing. The Chair may be either tenured or on tenure track. A current list of PhD program faculty is available from the Office of the Associate Dean of Academics. A professor emeritus may serve on a dissertation committee as a member once they retire; they may continue to chair a dissertation committee only if it is underway at the time of changing from fulltime to emeritus, in order to finish out the student.

The Dissertation Chair must be the committee member most competent to supervise the

research as a whole but need not be the primary resource person for all aspects of the study. A recommended approach for students to use in identifying a Dissertation Chairperson is to be informed about faculty members' research interests and areas of expertise. The student and Chairperson will work together intensively, over a protracted period, so careful selection is essential. The Chairperson assumes primary responsibility for assisting the student in developing a continued plan of study, monitoring the student's progress, and guiding the student throughout the dissertation research project.

With the help of the Dissertation Chair, the student selects members of her/his dissertation committee.

The Dissertation Committee is the group of faculty who determines that a candidate's dissertation is acceptable for a PhD degree. To quote the *Graduate Record*:

A primary advisor who is a tenured or tenure-track member of the faculty of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences will periodically evaluate the student's progress on the dissertation. Written exceptions to this policy must be sought from the assistant dean in GSAS.

This committee, chaired by the primary advisor, will consist of a minimum of four tenured or tenure-track members of the faculty of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. One member of the committee will serve as a representative of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences to affirm that the student has been assessed fairly and with due rigor. This representative is appointed by the student's director of graduate studies and must hold a primary appointment outside of the student's department [note: here, department refers to School of Nursing]. This representative may be drawn from the tenured or tenure-track faculty of other graduate schools at the University, but must hold a Ph.D. Once these minimum requirements have been met, additional committee members from within the University or other institutions may be added.

The job of the "Dean's representative" on the committee is to simply confirm that the student was treated fairly and that the rules of GSAS were observed. Individuals from other units within the University may be permitted to serve as the GSAS representative. A petition from the Director of the PhD Program to the GSAS Assistant Dean indicating the advantage of having the outside individual serve as the GSAS representative is necessary to obtain that permission. Individuals from other institutions may serve as core committee members, please see: [Graduate Record](#).

Note that the PhD of the School of Nursing is officially granted by GSAS. Tenured or tenure track faculty of the School of Nursing (or any school of the University) may serve as members of School of Nursing PhD committees. For our purposes, the Dean's representative should be outside the School of Nursing, (i.e. from GSAS or another school of the University of Virginia).

To formalize the committee, signatures from all committee members are obtained by the PhD student and recorded on the form, “PhD Dissertation Committee Appointment or Change” found on the SON Registrar website.

Changes in PhD Committee Membership

Changes in committee membership must be approved by the chair and the student. Change requests are to be made on the form, “PhD Dissertation Committee Appointment or Change” found on the SON Registrar website:
<https://community.nursing.virginia.edu/students/forms/> (under Forms/PhD Specific Forms).

Dissertation Proposal

Once a student has passed the examination, and completed course work, he or she is eligible to write and defend the dissertation proposal. The dissertation chair is responsible for certifying that all necessary courses have been completed. The proposal must be defended in the presence of the dissertation committee and formally approved by all committee members.

Developing the Proposal

It is not necessary for the student to consult committee members equally about each aspect of the problem and design. Members should be consulted primarily on those aspects directly related to their areas of special competence. Additional faculty or resource persons may be consulted as needed. It is the joint responsibility of the student and Chair to make the final decisions on problem and method, even if decisions are made that one or more committee members believe to be less than optimal. The committee’s responsibility is to act in an advisory capacity rather than as directors of the research. It is up to the student to recognize useful advice and to integrate the study into a coherent whole.

The proposal should identify the major substantive and methodological issues of the research problem and be written in excellent form. Preferences regarding the format of the dissertation proposal may vary with the committee members, so it is important to gain an understanding of members’ expectations.

The dissertation proposal is in the format of current government form for a major research grant such as an R01, the traditional three chapters (introduction, literature review, and methods) or for historical dissertations a specific format that is approved by your dissertation advisor. The Dissertation Chair can require the use of appendices to expand the methods section if the grant proposal format is selected. The proposal format must be approved by the Dissertation Chair and committee members prior to scheduling the proposal defense.

Proposal Defense and Approval

Students are encouraged to work closely with their advisors and Committee to obtain the necessary feedback regarding their proposal prior to their proposal defense. Preliminary drafts of part or the entire proposal can be very useful in individual discussions with committee members prior to the defense. The proposal defense should be viewed as a working session in which differences of opinion can be resolved. It is a good idea to take careful notes of the issues raised and decisions reached during the proposal defense. Committee members’ suggestions are usually intended to ensure the study’s feasibility as well as quality. It is to the student’s advantage to consider them seriously.

After the proposal has been distributed at least two weeks prior to the defense, the student arranges a meeting of the committee (usually two hours) to discuss the proposal and to rule on its acceptability. A presentation by the student giving an overview of the proposal may be required at the oral defense of the proposal. The student should use the “PhD Announcement of Dissertation Proposal Defense” form to confirm the meeting (SON Registrar web site). Although the student is responsible for arranging the meeting and distributing copies of the proposal, the committee chair will conduct all sessions. The student must bring a copy of the “PhD Dissertation Proposal Approval Sheet” (SON Registrar web site) to the defense, in order to obtain committee members’ signatures. After the proposal is accepted, a signed copy of the PhD Dissertation Proposal Approval Sheet is submitted to the PhD Program Manager to obtain the signature of the PhD Program Director. If the committee decides that the proposal has not been adequately developed or defended, the defense must be re-scheduled within three months. Failure to pass the proposal defense on the second try results in forced withdrawal from the program.

Admission to Candidacy

After the research grant application has been developed and submitted, course work has been completed, the examination has been passed, and the dissertation proposal has been successfully defended, the student is granted candidacy status. The Program Manager will enter the PHDCAND milestone in SIS. PhD candidacy signifies that all PhD work except the dissertation has been successfully completed, and that if the dissertation research is carried out according to the approved proposal and within the time limit, at the completion of the work the student should be awarded the PhD degree.

Dissertation Research

After the dissertation proposal has been approved and after receiving IRB approval, the process of gathering the research data may begin.

Administrative Approval

It is the responsibility of the student and the advisor to obtain appropriate administrative approval to conduct research in the proposed setting(s).

Dissertation Research as Part of Funded Grants

PhD students who elect to do dissertation research with Principal Investigators who have funded grants requiring open access should discuss the need to secure copyright permission from their dissertation chair and/or the Principal Investigator with whom they are conducting the research. It is advisable to reach an understanding at the outset about authorship and credit for any publications that may result from the research.

Technical Requirements in Writing the Dissertation

In general, typewritten drafts of each chapter of the dissertation are submitted to all committee members for their comments and suggestions. Some members prefer to read the rough draft chapter-by-chapter; others prefer to read the rough draft in its entirety. Others prefer not to see the drafts at all. Obtain this information from your committee members early.

The School of Nursing requires that dissertations be written according to the format

recommended by the chair and consistent with the nature of the research. The student should be consistent in the use of the particular style manual selected throughout the dissertation research. There are no formatting requirements or restrictions by GSAS; however, students should adhere to traditional [physical standards](#) if they wish to purchase bound copies from [Printing and Copying Services](#).

After making required revisions, the student prepares a final draft of the dissertation and an abstract. Doctoral students must apply for their degrees online in [SIS](#) by the deadline for the term in which they plan to graduate:

- Fall - September 30
- Spring- January 31
- Summer - June 30

Final Dissertation

There are two options for the final dissertation. Either option is approved by the Dissertation Chair and Committee members at the time of the proposal defense.

1. Traditional Dissertation Option includes:
 - Five (5) chapters (introduction, literature review, methods, results, and discussion).
2. Manuscript Dissertation Option:
 - Final dissertation product includes the dissertation proposal (three chapters or the), journal titles for submission of three manuscripts, and three publishable manuscripts based on the dissertation research (one of the manuscripts must be reporting study findings). The final product must include an abstract, introduction and concluding narrative to tie the manuscripts into a comprehensive project.
 - The student must submit journal names and author guidelines to dissertation committee for approval.
 - The student must be the first author on each manuscript involving others.
 - Copies of the reprints are acceptable and will be submitted when the article has already been published. Legally acceptable releases from copyright owner(s) are submitted where applicable.

Timeline for PhD Student Dissertation

NOTE: BOLD Dates are set by other institutional bodies and thus not changeable (Col 1, 2, 6, 7)
Middle Column Dates (Col 3, 4, 5) are under SON control.

Apply for Degree Online in SIS	SON Advisor Final Review	Complete dissertation submitted to entire Dissertation Committee	Oral Defense on or before	GSAS electronic submission deadline (Libra) "Final/Approved version"	Graduation
Spring – Jan 31	Negotiated	Mar 15	Apr 1	Apr 30	May

Summer – Jun 30	Negotiated	Jun 15	Jul 1	Jul 31	August
Fall – Sep 30	Negotiated	Oct 15	Nov 1	Nov 30	December

Scheduling the Final Defense of the Dissertation

When the dissertation has been written and the Dissertation Chair agrees that it is ready for defense, the student has the responsibility to distribute the finished copy of the dissertation to committee members and to arrange a location, a date, and a time (usually two hours) that is satisfactory to all committee members for the oral defense of the dissertation. The student is expected to allow “a reasonable time” (usually two weeks) between distribution of the finished copy of the dissertation and the scheduled defense to allow committee members time to read the dissertation critically. Committee members have the responsibility to inform the student of the time necessary and to read the dissertation in the agreed-upon time. The student submits the PhD Announcement of Dissertation Defense form (SON Registrar web site) to the Chair and members of the dissertation committee. After the student and Chair have signed it should be submitted to the PhD Program Manager to obtain the PhD Program Director’s signature and for announcement of the defense.

Oral Defense

It is the student’s responsibility to bring the Final Examination Form to the oral defense. (<http://graduate.as.virginia.edu/thesis-submission-and-graduation>). The student gives the form to the chair at the beginning of the session. Ideally, all members of the committee are present in person for the defense. The Chair of the Committee introduces the student and the Committee to the audience.

Typically, the student begins the oral defense with a thirty-minute oral summary of the research problem and its significance; research questions, hypotheses, or aims; methods; findings; limitations; and implications. The emphasis is on the study and its results. After the presentation is concluded the committee chair will invite members of the audience to ask a few brief questions or make comments. The public is then excused and during the ensuing discussion and examination, committee members may question the student about any aspect of the research itself and the relevant contextual and methodological considerations.

After this exam session, the student is asked to leave the room while the committee critiques the dissertation, identifies any changes or additional work to be done, and determines the outcome of the dissertation defense. The student is then invited back into the room and is informed of the result.

The committee discusses with the student any changes or additional work to be done and establishes a time by which such changes or additions are to be submitted. If the changes or additions are minor, committee members will usually, as a matter of convenience, sign the Final Examination Form. The Approval of Final PhD Dissertation for Submission to Libra form (found on the SON Registrar web site) will be signed by the Chair, when all changes or additions have been submitted and found acceptable.

If major changes or additions to the dissertation are required, a date will be established for their presentation and defense. Neither the chair nor the members will sign and date the Final Examination Form with a recommendation of approval until and unless these major changes or additions have been presented and defended and the entire dissertation found satisfactory.

Reporting the Results of the Dissertation Defense

The signed Final Examination Form and the Approval of Final PhD Dissertation for Submission to Libra form should be submitted to the program manager for signature by the PhD Program Director. The signed Final Examination Form will be sent to the GSAS registrar when the Approval of Final PhD Dissertation form has been signed, indicating that the student is ready to upload the final dissertation to Libra. The PHDDEFENSE milestone will be entered in SIS.

In the event that the committee judges the dissertation to be so grossly unsatisfactory in execution that making it acceptable would virtually require starting over, or that the student does not submit and defend the required changes or additions by the agreed-upon date, or that the committee judges the submitted changes or additions to be unsatisfactory, the committee may report that the student has not passed the dissertation and oral defense and may recommend, on the Final Examination Form, that the degree not be awarded. In such a situation, the committee should submit to the Dean of the School of Nursing the Final Examination Form with the committee's recommendation, along with a written report detailing the rationale for the recommendation.

Application for Degrees

Please see Appendix B in this handbook and the GSAS web site, Enrolled Students, Thesis Submission and Graduation: <http://graduate.as.virginia.edu/thesis-submission-and-graduation> . All PhD degree applications must be submitted no later than February 1 if the degree is to be conferred in May, July 1 if the degree is to be conferred in August, and October 1 if the degree is to be conferred in December.

Note that these are GSAS deadlines; the application must be submitted to the SON Registrar at least two weeks prior to these deadlines to allow time for verification of courses and information. All students must "apply to graduate" in SIS in the semester they plan to graduate.

School of Nursing Authorship Guidelines

The School of Nursing will follow the authorship guidelines recommended by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors: <http://www.icmje.org/index.html#authorsur>. These guidelines differentiate criteria for authorship and criteria for acknowledgement.

Collaboration on publications is encouraged. Plans for authorship should be discussed early in the collaboration. While many people may provide general input into a product and contribute ideas to a discussion about a product, not all will make a substantial contribution to the unique ideas and to the work of the project. In general, the leader of a project is responsible for identifying the main contributors to the project. At the time a decision is made to develop a specific product, the identified leader (i.e., the first author; the principal investigator of the study, the faculty member, the student writing a dissertation or capstone project) should identify those who have already made a substantial contribution to the product as well as any additional individuals who are expected to make a similar contribution to the project. Additional authors can be added as needed and revisions to planned authorship may be made based on meeting the criteria of the authorship guidelines above. The guiding principle will be having provided meaningful contribution to the final product.

In no case should authorship be awarded in an honorary fashion.

Adopted by Research Advisory Committee, 3-19-12 (Based on a Revision of the RHCRC Guidelines)

Financial Resources

The School of Nursing Office of Admissions and Student Services offers assistance to students needing financial aid.

Contingent on the availability of funds, it is the intent of the PhD Program to offer students who are making satisfactory progress, financial aid for two years of PhD study (three years for BSN to PhD students). All PhD students admitted beginning fall 2015 are required to serve as a Graduate Teaching Assistant throughout their program if they accept a financial aid package from the School of Nursing that includes tuition remission. Financial aid may include tuition remission, graduate assistantships, or both. Graduate Teaching Assistants are expected to work 10 hours per week and are paid a stipend based on their work assignment and their level of education. Graduate Assistantships are open to both Virginia students and out-of-state students.

The School receives scholarship support from a variety of sources (state, federal, and private) and the ability to award scholarship resources depends on annual allocations from these public and private sources. There are federal and state loan programs. For more information, please see: the Office of Admissions and Student Services.

<https://www.nursing.virginia.edu/admissions/financial-aid/>

Students may augment or extend the basic financial aid package described above by receiving financial aid from other sources, such as research grants or special fellowships. New students interested in receiving financial aid should apply to the Office of Admissions and Student Services no later than April 1. Returning graduate students should also apply by April 1.

PhD students can seek assistance in gaining federal grant support through the National Research Service Awards Program, among others.

Awards

NRSA: National Research Service Awards

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services sponsors a national program of individual pre-doctoral and post-doctoral nurse fellowships. The student should be aware that the intent of the awards program is to prepare biomedical, behavioral, and nurse scientists who will address continuing problems in health-related research of importance to the public. The student's qualifications to do scholarly work, the advisor's credentials, and the merit of the proposed area of research are the major criteria upon which awards are based. Students will be required to complete portions of the National Research Service Awards application as a component of coursework (GNUR 8410) and as a progression requirement. Application forms are available on the NIH web page at <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/oer.htm>. Further information is available on the NINR web page at <http://www.ninr.nih.gov/>.

Barbara Brodie PhD Scholar Award

The Barbara Brodie Scholars Endowment was established in 1988 by the many friends and former students of Barbara Brodie as a permanent tribute to an outstanding teacher, mentor, and friend. Preference is given to historical research. The guidelines for the award are:

1. Minimum 3.5 GPA.
2. Enrolled student at the time of application.
3. Defended/approved dissertation proposal related to nursing history, the humanities or social sciences.
4. Three letters of recommendation

Application forms are available in the Office of Admissions and Student Services and are due by January 30. A review committee from the PhD program faculty will select the recipient.

The Phyllis J. Verhonick Award

The Phyllis J. Verhonick Dissertation Award is given annually to a graduating PhD nursing student whose dissertation is selected as most meritorious. Dissertations are judged by a faculty committee based on the following criteria: The significance of the research problem, the adequacy of the literature review, the appropriateness of the methodology, the clarity of the presentation of findings, the writing style, and the significance of the dissertation to the contribution of nursing knowledge.

Dissertations (or drafts) are submitted to the Director of the PhD Program by February 1. The dissertation is reviewed by a committee of PhD faculty and students are notified in writing regarding the outcome. The recipient is announced at Graduate Hooding Ceremony and receives a plaque and monetary award.

University and external funding opportunities

The Office of Graduate Studies and Post-Doctoral Programs maintains a list of University and external funding opportunities for PhD students. A lengthy list of these opportunities can be found at www.virginia.edu/vpr/gradstudies/students.html.

Additional Sources of Grant Support

There are several additional sources of grant funding. Students are encouraged to explore organizations in their specialty area and consult with their advisors regarding the

appropriateness of a particular grant mechanism. Examples of sources of funding are listed on below and additional sources are updated each semester on the Office of Nursing Research web site (ONR). <https://community.nursing.virginia.edu/onr/> . Due to changing deadlines, students should read the funding opportunity announcement, program announcement, or foundation’s website for specific deadlines.

Sponsor	Type of Award/Program
NIH	Institutional National Research Service Awards (NRSA)
	All Academic Research Enhancement Awards (AREA), except those involving AIDS-related research
	New Research Grants, Conferences, and Career Development Awards, all Program Project and Center Grants
	Interactive Research Project Grants
	Competing Continuation, Supplemental and Revised Grants
	Individual National Research Service Awards (NRSA)
	Predocctoral Individual NRSA's to Promote Diversity in Health-Related Research
	All AIDS-Related Grants
AHRQ	Health Services Dissertation Research
	Predocctoral Fellowship Awards for Minority Students (F31)
	Mentored Clinical Scientist Development Award; Independent Scientist Award;
	Small Project Grant Program
	Small Grant Program for Conference Support
	Individual Postdoctoral Fellowships
	Health Services Research
American Nurses Foundation	Internally Funded and Externally Funded Nursing Research Grants www.ana.org NOTE: The dissertation proposal must have been defended.
Sigma Theta Tau	Small Grant Program
Oncology Nursing Foundation	Small Research Grant Career Development Awards
CDC	http://www.cdc.gov/grants/
American Association of History of Nursing	H-31 Predocctoral Award Research grants at www.aahn.org

APPENDICIES

Appendix A

Comprehensive Exam Evaluation Tool

Appendix B

Thesis Submission and Graduation Steps

Appendix C

Nursing credentials

Appendix D

Individualized Development Plan

APPENDIX A

PhD Program Comprehensive Exam Evaluation Tool

Student Name:	Date:	
Evaluated by:	PASS:	FAIL: <input type="checkbox"/> 1 st attempt <input type="checkbox"/> 2 nd attempt

The committee has up to three weeks from receipt of the completed exam to grade it. Members should submit completed Evaluation Rubrics to the Chair. The Chair will submit the completed rubrics to the PhD Program Director and Program Manager for PhD Program files and reporting. The Chair will notify the student of their pass/fail by email.

Criteria	Not acceptable; important aspects are neglected or incomplete	Acceptable; meets all requirements	Distinguished; exceeds requirements
	1	2	3
Summarizes and synthesizes the current state of knowledge related to the areas of inquiry in which the student is developing expertise.			
Demonstrates ability to select, organize, synthesize, and critically evaluate supporting literature relevant to a problem or issue.			
Demonstrates capacity for original thought.			
Demonstrates competency in research methodology related to the areas of inquiry in which the student is developing expertise.			
Demonstrates ability to analyze theoretical perspectives and strategies for incorporating theory into the conceptual model when appropriate.			
The following section applies to ALL answers			
Rhetorical Aspects			
Achieves general cohesion of ideas within each response			
Creates a logical text structure			
Signals text structure by appropriate headings and subheadings			
Technical Aspects			
Uses correct spelling and punctuation			
Employs proper grammar and usage			
Adheres to scientific style (e.g., APA, Chicago), as determined by faculty review committee.			

Additional Comments:

Appendix B

Thesis Submission and Graduation

Students who have completed all degree requirements in both their program and their school and who have observed the rules and regulations of the University, including the [Honor Code](#), may graduate only after applying for and receiving approval for the degree sought. A transcript of the applicant's previous academic record, detailing the content of his or her baccalaureate degree, must be on file with the Office of Enrolled Students.

Candidates who do not receive a degree in the semester for which their application has been approved must renew their application in proper form at the beginning of the semester in which candidacy for the degree is desired. Candidates who find that they will not be able to receive their degree in the semester for which their application was approved must remove their name from the degree list by May 1 for spring graduation, August 1 for summer graduation and December 1 for fall graduation.

Students must be enrolled or on affiliated status during the semester in which they plan to graduate. Before completing the application for the degree, students should check their transcripts for errors, as errors will not be corrected after a degree has been conferred. Please follow the steps below, following the deadline for the desired term of graduation. Please also note that the following are standard requirements and procedures for the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. Individual departments may maintain additional requirements and procedures.

Please visit the GSAS website for important dates and deadlines:

<http://graduate.as.virginia.edu/thesis-submission-and-graduation>

APPENDIX C

Nursing Credentials

How to list your credentials and title when you publish

<http://ansjournalblog.com/2011/06/29/how-to-list-your-credentials-and-title-when-you-publish/>

Ex: Last name, PhD [cand.] not PhD (c)

APPENDIX D

IDP

Individual Development Plan

Student:

Advisor:

Date Created:

Date Updated:

The Individual development Plan (IDP) is an opportunity for you and your advisor to step back from your daily work, assess your progress, and plan for the future. Your advisor and mentors are invaluable resources to help you propose and execute next steps to become a better scientist.

Steps:

1. Step back and self-assess
2. Set an annual fall meeting with your advisor to complete your IDP in addition to regular ongoing meetings.
3. Lead the discussion! This document contains topics we think are helpful. Please add additional questions or objectives.
4. Complete the Action Plan and make a plan for following up.
5. Meet again in spring to assess your progress.
6. Submit the Outcomes to the PhD Program Director by May 1. NOTE: The IDP is a document that is only for you and your advisor. Only the outcomes will be used by the PhD Program Director.

Research Progress

Number of semesters completed: _____

Comprehensive exam: ___ Date Planned ___ Date completed

Proposal Defense _____ Date Planned _____ Date completed

Final Proposal: _____ Date Planned _____ Date completed

Scientific/Research Goals

1. What specific questions do you intend to answer in your dissertation?
2. How familiar are you with the scientific literature? What do you need to learn more about?
3. What are your near-term research goals? What specific additional training do you need to achieve each of these goals?

Challenges:

1. Describe any challenges you have experienced or anticipate in trying to accomplish the goals you set.
2. What actions have you taken to meet these challenges?
3. How can your advisor help you?

Development Activities

1. What course requirements do you need to complete? What is your plan for completing them?
2. What fellowships/research grants are you applying for? What assistance do you need in completing those applications?

3. What conferences do you plan to attend?

4. What scientific presentations and manuscripts do you have planned for this year? What assistance do you need in completing those?

5. What service do you have planned? How do you feel about the balance of service and research/teaching?

6. What teaching/GTA work do you have? What goals do you have for those assignments?

Competencies (rate each on a scale of 1 (weak) to 3 (strong) and identify target skills for this year:

Research Skills	1	2	3	Target?
Critical reading of the literature				
Research design				
Statistical analysis and interpretation				
Qualitative analysis and interpretation				
Understanding of manuscript submission/ responding to reviewers				
Ability to provide useful peer review				
Identifying need for and seeking advice				
Time management				
Writing for publication				

Teaching Skills	1	2	3	Target?
Syllabus development				
Test/exam development				
Student assessment/grading				
Rubric development				
Lecture skills/Teaching strategies				
Facilitation (group discussion/projects)				
Creating an inclusive and respectful classroom				
Articulate a teaching philosophy				
Faculty peer evaluation				

Mentoring

	Meeting how often?	Is this sufficient?	Do you initiate meetings?	Need help finding or coordinating?
Advisor:				
Committee members (list):				
Other collaborators (list):				

What has been beneficial about this mentoring? What would improve this mentoring?

Goals

1. What are your long term goals?
2. What guidance would help you achieve those goals?
3. Is there anything that might negatively affect your progress?
4. What help can your advisor or the program provide?
5. What are you doing to maintain your wellness?

Action Plan (to be completed in the fall)

1. Accomplishments and Milestones since you started the PhD program and plans for upcoming year.
 - Scheduled comprehensive examination (If yes, date: _____)
 - Passed comprehensive examination (If yes, date: _____)
 - Scheduled dissertation proposal (If yes, date: _____)
 - Successfully defended dissertation proposal (If yes, date: _____)
 - Successfully defended dissertation (If yes, date: _____)
2. What grants do you plan to submit this coming year?
3. What publications and/or scientific presentations are planned for this coming year?
4. What are the target skills (1-2 in research and 1-2 in teaching) you identified for the coming year? What is your plan to obtain those skills?
5. What other additional actions can be initiated or continued by you and your advisor to ensure your success?
6. What is your plan for you and your mentor to follow up on your IDP this year? (Meeting frequency, meetings with other committee members or faculty, etc.)

Outcomes (to be completed by May 1):

Accomplishments and Milestones since you started the PhD program

1. Have you:
 - Scheduled comprehensive examination (If yes, date: _____)
 - Passed comprehensive examination (If yes, date: _____)
 - Scheduled dissertation proposal (If yes, date: _____)
 - Successfully defended dissertation proposal (If yes, date: _____)
 - Successfully defended dissertation (If yes, date: _____)
2. For the time period designated, please list any grant proposals submitted (NRSAs or others), including title, funding agency, amount requested, your role, and all sponsors and co-sponsors, and current status (not funded, funded, pending). Please format as the examples below.
Example of formatting:
Bullock, L. (PI) (2005-2010). Nursing support: Better infant outcomes in violent homes. NIH/NICHD. Funded: R01: HD045542.
3. For the time period designated, please list any publications and year publication submitted OR when it was published. (Note R for peer-reviewed, * for data-based). Please list all publications in APA format.
4. For the time period designated, please list any podium or poster presentations at conferences that you are listed as author (either the presenter or a co-presenter) – please indicate the conference and date of the conference. Please list all presentations and posters in APA format and make clear whether a poster or a presentation.
Example of formatting: Bhandari, S., Bullock, L., & Sharps, P. (2009, October). Coping among pregnant, rural, low-income women facing intimate partner violence. Poster session presented at the National Conference on Health and Domestic Violence, New Orleans, LA.
5. For the time period designated, please note any “media” interview you have participated in (date, agency and a brief synopsis of the focus of the media coverage).
Example of formatting:
Bullock, L. (2011, November). The effects of domestic violence on unborn children and toddlers. [Web video]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/user/UniversityofVirginia>
6. Describe the target skills (1-2 in research and 1-2 in teaching) you identified for the past year and how you met them.
7. What other accomplishments from the past year would you like to share?

Appendix E

Guidelines for Graduate Research Assistantships

As of fall 2023, funded incoming and future PhD students are required to work for 10 (Conway scholars) or 5 (non-Conway scholars) hours per week as GRAs for their advisors. This is in addition to the 10 hours per week of GTA work they are assigned most semesters. To clarify, there are multiple ways that PhD students participate in faculty research:

1. **As GRAs.** This work is part of the students' appointment as a graduate assistant. Students receive tuition remission, wages/stipends and insurance support for this work. This work is covered by the University of Virginia's *Policy Prov-0001 Graduate Assistantships* which specifies:

GRAs conduct academically significant research related to their academic program and their development as future researchers, with a minimum of supervision, under the guidance of a faculty member. Graduate students hired on an hourly basis to conduct short-term research, organize conferences, or provide other types of academic support are not graduate research assistants and are not eligible for tuition remission.

2. **As hourly research assists (RAs).** These hourly roles are for specific, short-term research projects. Faculty directly hire students to carry out these responsibilities.
3. **As students enrolled in a research practicum credit.** Students are required to complete 4 credits of research practicum. This work is intended to augment the students' education and training as a researcher. Students are not paid for this work. The work may be completed under the supervision of the faculty advisor or another faculty (but requires the faculty advisor's approval).

GRA Best Practices

The faculty advisor and student should meet at the beginning of each semester to discuss the work expectations for the semester.

EXPECTATIONS OF ADVISORS

The research duties could be within any of the academic realms of research (e.g. organization and project management; data gathering and/or analysis; writing and/or publication).

The advisor should:

- be specific about what is expected of the student, the timeline, how the student will contribute to the project, and how the student's efforts will contribute to their professional development.
- Meet regularly with the student either face-to-face or via Zoom and provide regular direction and feedback.
- Ensure that the expectations are commensurate with the weekly hours required of the student (5 or 10 hours). They should also recognize that students have academic requirements, and their workload may vary throughout the semester. Faculty should be flexible about hours

worked per week while maintaining the expectation that the number of total hours will average the appropriate amount over the semester.

- Communicate the potential for co-authorship, following the [ICMJE Guidelines](#) (Note: **faculty are strongly encouraged to provide students with opportunities to meaningfully contribute to manuscripts and scientific presentations** in ways that allow ethical co-authorship).

EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

Students should:

- Ensure that they understand faculty expectations.
- Communicate their schedule, keep to deadlines, and let their advisor know when deadlines need to be renegotiated.
- Meet regularly with their advisor and communicate regularly, as agreed, about their progress.
- Fulfill their commitment to the appropriate number of hours each week, understanding that the work may require more time some weeks and fewer other weeks. The total hours should average the appropriate number of weekly hours over the semester.