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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 theory 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 and subsequently with a dissertation chairperson 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 a rationally unified plan of study and research. The program is designed so that study in nursing is supported and complemented by a cognate area outside the School of Nursing, and by electives. The dissertation research completes the student's training.
Program Components

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 (28 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:

- BIMS 7100: Research Ethics or PHSE 7650: Ethics and Law in Human Subjects Research (offered in odd Years, fall)
- GNUR 8110 Quantitative Research Methods
- GNUR 8120 Qualitative Research Methods
- GNUR 8130 Statistical Methods in Health Care I
- GNUR 8140 Statistical Methods in Health Care II
- GNUR 8150 Statistical Methods in Health Care III*
- GNUR 8230 Historical Inquiry in Nursing
- GNUR 8410 Proposal Writing Seminar I
- GNUR 8420 Proposal Writing Seminar II
- GNUR 9110 Research Practicum
- GNUR 9999 Dissertation

*In consultation with the advisor, students may substitute a statistics or design course specific to their plan of study for GNUR 8150 Statistical Methods in Health Care III. For students completing a dissertation in history, GNUR 8190 (odd years, summer) should be completed instead of GNUR 8150.

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 on the basis of individual interest. These should complement the total program of study and may be taken both within and 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.

Dissertation (12 credits)
A culminating experience which requires the student to plan and implement a research study of significance to nursing.

BSN to PhD Students
Students completing their Master’s degree while in the PhD program may substitute the following Masters courses for PhD courses:

- In place of GNUR 6050, Theoretical Foundations of Nursing
  Take GNUR 8220, Philosophy of Science and Development of Nursing Knowledge.

- In place of GNUR 6054, Research and Biostatistical Processes in Health Care
  Take the PhD research courses: GNUR 8110, 8120 and the Stats sequence.

Students entering the PhD program without a Master’s degree have several options for progressing through the program. All students are encouraged to take Master’s-level courses in their first year. Students who enter the program with a clear idea of what they want to study for their dissertation would also take GNUR 8410 in the spring of their first year and GNUR 8420 in the summer of their first year. This would allow them to submit an early NRSA proposal. Students who are unsure of what they want to eventually study for their dissertation are encouraged to take Master’s-level courses (particularly specialty courses in their first year of the PhD program). With the approval of their advisor, any Master's-level course could be counted as an elective.

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 nine credits of course work as a special 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.
Recommended Plan of Study for Full-Time Students

Year 1 Fall
- 8130 Statistics I
- 8210 Scientific Process in Nursing
- 8220 Phil of Science/Development of Nursing Knowledge
- Cognate/elective (or PHSE 7650: Ethics & Law)

Year 1 Spring
- 8110 Quantitative Research Methods
- 8140 Statistics II
- 8230 History of Health Care
- 8410 Proposal Development I
- BIMS 7100 Research Ethics (if not taken PHSE 7650)

Year 1 Summer
- 8420 Proposal Development
- 9110 Research Practicum

Year 2 Fall
- 8120 Qualitative Research Methods
- 8150 Statistics III
- Cognate/elective
- Cognate/elective
- 9110 Research Practicum

Year 2 Spring
- 9110 Research Practicum
- Cognate/elective
- Cognate/elective
- Cognate/elective if took PHSE 7650: Ethics & Law in the fall of Year 1

Cognates and electives may be taken in different terms and years from those shown here. Students are advised to verify when courses they wish to take will be offered. Some courses are offered only in alternate years; others may be affected by such factors as faculty leaves.

Four credits of Research Practicum, GNUR 9110, are taken at any time mutually agreeable to the student and the faculty member. In consultation with the advisor, students develop research experiences with faculty both internal and external to the School of Nursing.

**Note:** The proposed plan of study for PhD students in the non-accelerated format can be found on the SON website. All students, regardless whether in the accelerated or non-accelerated format, must be enrolled in 12 credits per term until they complete the degree.
Research Practicum Guidelines

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, full or part time.

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 8 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 will 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 student portfolio.
- 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 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://artsandsciences.virginia.edu/gradschool/forms/index.html).
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 or other awards such as the Brodie award. 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 Protection

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. Human subjects protection requirements are very specific. Students will encounter these requirements in the following situations:

1. When conducting research for classroom assignments.
2. When conducting unfunded research such as the PhD dissertation.
3. When applying for internal or external research funding.

The University of Virginia has two Human Investigation Committees, The Institutional Review Board for Health Sciences Research (IRB-HSR) and The Institutional Review Board for Social and Behavioral Sciences (IRB-SBS). Students need to work with their advisor to determine which committee is appropriate for each study.

The Human Investigations committees of the University of Virginia are charged with ensuring that federal regulations concerning the protection of human subjects are met for all research conducted in the University. All research on human subjects must be approved by them prior to the collection of data from subjects. The researcher is responsible for seeking approval from the committee. When research is approved the researcher forms a contract with the committee called the investigator agreement. PhD students who conduct research on human subjects must agree to and follow the terms of that contract.

All researchers must complete training on human subjects protection prior to seeking approval for any research study. This training must be completed annually until a research study is finished. Training can be completed on-line at http://www.virginia.edu/vprgs/irb/training.html by clicking on investigator training. When planning to initiate a research study PhD students should take the following actions:

1. Contact your PhD advisor to review applicable human subject regulations.
2. Go to http://www.virginia.edu/vprgs/irb/index.html and check on general information. Read about requirements for protection of research subjects.
3. Using the information from the website prepare a protocol for review by the committee using website guidelines for exempt, expedited, or full committee review.
4. Your advisor must review and sign the application.
5. Provide your advisor with the approval form, consent form with HSR or SBS approval stamp, and the investigator agreement.
Developing skill in ensuring protection of human subjects is an essential component of the PhD student’s education. Failure to comply with requirements at a minimum can delay implementation of your research project and at worst losing approval. Should the latter occur, the PhD student’s completion of the research component of their PhD education could be severely jeopardized and completion of requirements for graduation delayed.

The dissertation chairperson 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.

Procedures and time delay in obtaining administrative and research review clearance vary with the research setting and type of research. HSR/SBS meeting schedules are posted on their web site.

**Students are required to close all studies with the SBS/HIC prior to graduation.**

*Minimum Credit Requirements for Registration and Fees*
For the Doctor of Philosophy degree, a student must complete a minimum of 49 semester hours of graduate course work, 24 of which must be graded, beyond requirements for the master’s degree, plus 12 or more semester hours of dissertation research.

After completing course work, a student may pay the research fee rather than the higher tuition rate for the semester in which the student defends the dissertation proposal or the completed dissertation. Even if a student has met all course requirements; they must be enrolled as a fulltime student at the research rate if using any University resources for every session (including the summer session). A student working on the dissertation away from the university, without the use of any University resources (faculty, library, email, etc), may request to register as a Non-Resident. The Non-Resident form can be downloaded from the GSAS website forms page. A student must be registered, at the regular tuition rate or the research rate, for the semester in which the dissertation is defended.

*Residency Requirements*
Since GSAS students are required to be enrolled full-time (12 credits) every semester, there is no additional residency requirement.

*Full-Time Course Load*
A full-time course load consists of 12 semester hours of course work in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, and all students in the Graduate School must be enrolled for 12 credits every semester. Each student’s plan of study is determined in collaboration with the student’s faculty advisor. GNUR 9998 Doctoral Research must be registered for concurrently with course work until the time a dissertation chairperson is selected. Credits from GNUR 9998 are counted in the total program hours of credit. For example, a student enrolling in 9 credits of classes would also enroll in 3 credits of GNUR 9998.

*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 the next regular semester. Students in which no grade was recorded (NG on the transcript) are also changed to a failing grade after one month. 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.

Time Limitations for Completion of Degree
Students must complete all requirements for the degree including the dissertation within seven years of matriculation. Establishing a program plan and a timetable at the outset and adhering to them closely help to ensure steady progress. This is especially important at the dissertation stage, when the only structure is that created by the student. Many adult students have serious family and employment obligations that compete for the time and effort needed for PhD study. It is expected nevertheless that they will sustain the focus and momentum necessary to complete their studies within the seven-year limit. In case of interruption of work by military service, time spent in service will be excluded from the computation of this seven-year period.

Voluntary Withdrawal
A graduate student may voluntarily withdraw from the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences up to one week immediately preceding the beginning of course examinations. An official application to withdraw must be obtained from the Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Office and must be approved in writing by the Dean, with a statement of the reason for the withdrawal. The student must report to the Dean of Students Office for an exit interview. All student identification cards are to be deposited with the Dean of Students at the time of withdrawal. The official withdrawal form will be forwarded to the University Registrar, who notifies all other administrative offices of the withdrawal action.

A student who withdraws from the University for reasons of ill health must notify Student Health Services, and subsequent medical clearance from Student Health Services is among the requirements for readmission.

Failure to comply with the above regulations will subject the student to suspension from the University by the Vice President for Student Affairs.
Readmission to the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences is not automatic; after absence of less than two years, a former student must apply for readmission to the Graduate School. The Reinstatement form can be downloaded from the GSAS Forms website.

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 Teaching Resource Center (TRC) offers workshops and seminars every semester on basic and advanced teaching skills. The TRC 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.

Financial Resources

The School of Nursing Office of Admission and Student Services offer assistance to students needing financial aid. A limited number of Institutional Fellowships are available to full time graduate students of outstanding merit. In addition, Federal Nurse Traineeships are available to students in both the Masters and PhD programs, subject to certain restrictions. These resources are available to full-time students who meet the requirements.

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 after Fall 2010 are required to serve as a Graduate Teaching Assistant for at least one semester. Financial aid may include tuition remission, graduate assistantships, or both. Virginia residents will receive full tuition remission. Out-of-state students will receive the same amount of tuition remission as Virginia students. In addition, out-of-state students will receive a tuition adjustment (to cover the difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition rates) during each semester in which they accept employment as Graduate Teaching Assistants for at least 10 hours per week. Graduate Teaching Assistants are also 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. PhD students may receive an additional year of support (3rd year for MSN-prepared individuals, 4th year for those entering with a BSN) if they serve as a Graduate Teaching Assistant for the full academic year.

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.
PhD students who are considering becoming full-time nursing faculty after completion of the program may borrow from the School’s Nurse Faculty Loan Program which provides loans for academic expenses (plus books) to fulltime students. Individuals who become full-time faculty members at an accredited nursing program in the US, could have NLFP loans cancelled by up to 85 percent.

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 Admission and Student Services no later than April 1. Returning graduate students should apply by April 1.

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

**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 course work (GNUR 8410) and as a progression requirement. Application forms are available on the NIH web page at [http://www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov). Further information is available on the NINR web page at [http://www.nih.gov/ninr](http://www.nih.gov/ninr).

**Additional Sources of Grant Support**
There are several additional sources of grant funding. Students are encouraged to explore organizations in their specialty area. Sources of funding and due dates are listed on the next page.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sponsor</th>
<th>Type of Award/Program</th>
<th>Deadlines</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NIH</td>
<td>Institutional National Research Service Awards (NRSA)</td>
<td>January 25, May 25, September 25</td>
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<td></td>
<td>All Academic Research Enhancement Awards (AREA), except those involving AIDS-related</td>
<td>January 25, May 25, September 25</td>
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<td>research</td>
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<td></td>
<td>New Research Grants, Conferences, and Career Development Awards, all Program</td>
<td>February 1, June 1, October 1</td>
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<td>Project and Center Grants</td>
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<td>Interactive Research Project Grants</td>
<td>February 15, June 15, October 15</td>
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<td>Competing Continuation, Supplemental and Revised Grants</td>
<td>March 1, July 1, November 1</td>
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<td>Individual National Research Service Awards (NRSA)</td>
<td>April 5, August 5, December 5</td>
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<td>Predoctoral Individual NRSAs for Minority Students, and Predoctoral Individual</td>
<td>May 1, November 15</td>
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<td>NRSAs for Students with Disabilities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>All AIDS-Related Grants</td>
<td>May 1, September 1, January 2</td>
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<td>AHRQ</td>
<td>Health Services Dissertation Research</td>
<td>January 15, May 15, September 15</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Predoctoral Fellowship Awards for Minority Students (F31)</td>
<td>May 1, November 15</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mentored Clinical Scientist Development Award; Independent Scientist Award;</td>
<td>February 1, June 1, October 1</td>
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<td>Small Project Grant Program</td>
<td>March 24, July 24, November 24</td>
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<td>Small Grant Program for Conference Support</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Individual Postdoctoral Fellowships</td>
<td>April 5, August 5, December 5</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Health Services Research</td>
<td>February 1, June 1, October 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>American Nurses</td>
<td>Internally Funded and Externally Funded Nursing Research Grants</td>
<td>May 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foundation</td>
<td><strong>NOTE:</strong> The dissertation proposal must have been defended.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sigma Theta Tau</td>
<td>Small Grant Program</td>
<td>December 1</td>
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<td>Oncology Nursing</td>
<td>Small Research Grant</td>
<td>November 1, December 1</td>
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<td>Foundation</td>
<td>Career Development Awards</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDC</td>
<td>Injury Prevention &amp; Control</td>
<td>Feb 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>American Association</td>
<td>H-31 Predoctoral Award</td>
<td>April 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>of History of Nursing</td>
<td>Research grants at <a href="http://www.aahn.org">www.aahn.org</a></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Awards

Barbara Brodie Ph.D. 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. Full or part-time student at the time of application.
3. Defended/approved dissertation proposal related to 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. Vehronick Award
The Phyllis J. Vehronick 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, and 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 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 graduation and receives a plaque and check.

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](http://www.virginia.edu/vpr/gradstudies/students.html)

Progression through the PhD Degree

The student and the advisor have joint responsibility for insuring that each step in fulfilling degree requirements is completed and that an official record is kept.

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” ([http://www.nursing.virginia.edu/students/Registrar](http://www.nursing.virginia.edu/students/Registrar)) 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 Ph.D. Program.

The student and advisor jointly plan the student’s program of study, using the Planner feature in the Student Information System (SIS). The paper copy of the Program of Study should be submitted to the SON Registrar within the first year of study and every time a change is made to the plan.

As the student progresses through required courses, he/she needs 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 Chairperson 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 registrar and dissertation chair prior to the student sitting for the comprehensive examination. To be officially approved, the certification of completion of course work must be signed by the School of Nursing Registrar, the Assistant Dean for Academic and Student Services, and the dissertation chairperson. The form is available on the School of Nursing Registrar’s webpage.

**Submitting Written Assignments**
Students should check with faculty regarding the acceptability of submitting written assignments by e-mail. Faculty has the discretion to accept either electronic or written copies. If a written copy is desired, it is the student’s responsibility to print and submit paper copies. The faculty is not expected to print copies of student assignments. For assignments with a specific due date, the date the assignment is submitted to the post office is acceptable.

**Dissertation Advising**
As soon as the student has identified a problem area for research, a Dissertation Chairperson is selected. The Dissertation Chairperson may or may not have served as the academic advisor. The identification and selection of the dissertation chairperson 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 Chairperson should be made based on the student’s proposed area of research and the faculty member’s expertise and scholarly interests.
The Dissertation Chairperson must be a PhD program faculty member in the School of Nursing. The Chairperson must also be either tenured, on tenure track, or have R-level research funding (or the equivalent). A current list of PhD program faculty is available from the Office of the Associate Dean. A professor emeritus may serve on or chair a dissertation committee.

The Dissertation Chairperson 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 become informed about faculty members’ research interests and areas of expertise. The student and chairperson will work together, often 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 chairperson, 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:

This committee, chaired by the primary advisor, will consist of a minimum of four members of the graduate faculty. One member of the committee must hold a primary appointment outside of the student’s department and will serve as the Dean’s representative to affirm that the student has been assessed fairly and in accord with Graduate School policy. Once these minimum requirements have been met, additional committee members from within the University or other institutions may be added. Through its chair, the dissertation committee may invite other members of the departmental faculty to take part in the examination; the doctoral examination may be given before the entire faculty of the department concerned. The result of the examination and the names of the committee members and their departmental affiliations must be reported to the Graduate School by May 1st for May graduation, August 1st for August graduation, and December 1st for December graduation (or the next business day in the event that a deadline falls on a weekend). No candidate may be admitted to the final examination until the committee has accepted the dissertation and the candidate has satisfied all other degree requirements set by the Graduate School and the department or program. Preliminary examinations may, in addition, be required by individual departments.

The above describes the minimum number of people for a committee: three from the candidate’s department or program and one who acts as the “Dean’s representative” from another department.

General faculty members are eligible to serve on dissertation committees with approval of the Director of the PhD Program.
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. Committees can be any size as long as these minimum requirements are met. 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. Once the minimum GSAS requirements have been met, additional committee members from other institutions may be added. They may not serve as the Dean's representative, nor will the Dean's office provide financial support for their participation.

Changes in dissertation chairperson must be approved by the Director of the PhD Program in the School of Nursing and the student.

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” from the SON Registrar website (www.nursing.virginia.edu/registrar under Forms/PhD Specific Forms). Committee membership must be approved by the Associate Dean of the School of Nursing.

**Changes in PhD Committee Membership**

Changes in committee membership must be approved by the chairperson and the student. Change requests are to be made on the form, “PhD Dissertation Committee Appointment or Change” from the SON Registrar website (www.nursing.virginia.edu/registrar under Forms/PhD Specific Forms). This form must be signed by the Director of the PhD program and the Registrar.

**Scholarly Accomplishment: Research Grant Application**

Students are required to develop and submit a research grant application for peer review. This may be done at any time, but early submission is encouraged. It is acceptable and desirable for students to prepare the application with the advisor’s (sponsor’s) help. The application is not an examination but a learning experience. The advisor or sponsor will participate (GNUR 8420: Proposal Writing II) in the preparation of the complete application as the advisor deems appropriate in accordance with the requirements of the application and the funding agency. A student registers with the advisor or sponsor she/he is working with for Proposal Writing II.

*Grant Application Guidelines*

**Student Responsibility**

1. Identify and approach faculty advisor/sponsor/co-sponsors who match content/methodology of study.
2. Register for GNUR 8410 and GNUR 8420.
3. Decide on research topic and level of funding at which student is eligible.
4. Develop a curriculum (training) plan that supports the research focus of the project.
5. Write all applicant sections of the proposal.
6. Follow CNR time line for proposal submission.
Faculty Advisor Responsibility

1. Meet with student as needed to clarify ideas, topics, etc. Approve curriculum (training) plan.
2. Work closely with student on development of proposal – proofread and correct drafts.
3. Supervise student as GNUR 8420 faculty.
4. Write sponsor section of proposal including overall PhD program curriculum plan and specific plan for the applicant. Discuss current and future plans for working with the student.
5. Assist with obtaining HIC approval.

ONR Responsibility

1. Director meets with student as needed to clarify ideas, topics, and provide guidance regarding proposal development.
2. Arrange for outside editorial review.
3. Assist with HIC approval as appropriate.
4. Assist student in getting proposal information on NIH forms.
5. Assure entire proposal package complete and follows agency guidelines.
6. Arrange for sign off and timely delivery.

Comprehensive Examination

Knowledge Synthesis and Research Program

All students are required to take the Comprehensive Examination

The comprehensive examination may occur within the last semester of course work, but must be held no later than six months after completion of course work requirements as represented in the Plan of Study, and 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. The comprehensive exam evaluation tool can 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 5 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). Complete the request form, and all included instructions from the SON Registrar webpage and return it to the Director of the PhD Program, www.nursing.virginia.edu/registrar under Forms/PhD Specific Forms.
2. 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.

3. The student will draw up a bibliography of literature in his or her area of expertise, including certain methodologies if desirable, concerning which he or she is an expert. The list will be submitted to and approved by all the members of the committee. Committee members may add to the bibliography or suggest deletions as appropriate.

4. The committee will meet without the student and 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 years to seven years, including
   - Identifying the topic of the dissertation research;
   - Showing how the dissertation will contribute to the overall content area and describing its significance to knowledge development and to nursing;
   - Showing how the dissertation will serve as the cornerstone of a program of research, describing the steps to be taken over the next 5 to 7 years to build that program of research.

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.

6. After receiving the student’s responses, the committee may take up to three weeks to read and evaluate the written examination.

7. The committee members using the Comprehensive Exam grading rubric will evaluate the student’s performance on the written examination (SON Registrar website) and return it with a recommendation of Distinguished, Acceptable, or Failure to the Director of the PhD Program. An initial finding of “Failure” will mean that the student will be given the option either to drop out of the program or to complete specific remedial assignments designated by her or his chair with the approval of the examination committee. If the second option is chosen, a plan with a clear timeline should be established that is agreeable to both 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 will mark the end of the student’s progression.

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 chairperson 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 chairperson 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 the traditional three chapters (introduction, literature review and methods). Or the current government form for a major research grant such as an R01 or its equivalent that is approved by the dissertation chair and the Director of the PhD program. 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.

For History Dissertations: Chapter One: Introduction, Brief review of the secondary literature with identified gaps, Purpose, Research questions and methods, including a detailed list of primary archival sources to be accessed in the study. The chapter should include a timeline outlining when the student plans to visit archives, as well as milestones in the process and the projected end point/dissertation defense month. Chapter Two: Historical Context: This chapter should fully set the stage for the time and place where your study will focus. It should include information related to the social, political, and economic conditions of the period. In addition, the state of the art of nursing and medicine during the period of the study should be described. Secondary literature on the topic will be referenced in this chapter, and the Chicago Manual of Style, 15th edition should be used for references.

Proposal Defense and Approval

Depending on the committee members, it may not be necessary to get feedback from them regarding the final draft of the proposal prior to the defense. It may be suitable to wait to get members’ reactions at the proposal defense. Of course, 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 insure 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 PowerPoint 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 “Announcement of Dissertation Proposal Defense” form to confirm the meeting (SON Registrar webpage). Although the student is responsible for arranging the meeting and distributing copies of the proposal, the committee chairperson will conduct all sessions. The student must bring a copy of the “Dissertation Proposal Approval Sheet” (SON Registrar webpage) to the defense, in order to get committee members’ signatures. Names of the committee members must be typed under their respective signature line on the “Dissertation Approval Sheet.” After the proposal is accepted, a signed copy of the proposal and the approval form is filed with the School of Nursing Registrar. If the committee decides that the proposal has not been adequately developed or defended, the defense must be re-scheduled within 3 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. 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 HIC approval, the process of gathering the research data may begin. If the student’s dissertation involves the use of primary or secondary data on human subjects, both administrative approval and human study approval must be obtained before data collection begins.

Administrative Approval

The student must secure a letter from the appropriate official in the research setting, which states that the study described may be conducted there. When the study is to be conducted in a setting outside of the University, administrative approval must be obtained prior to requesting approval from the Human Investigation Committee. If the study is to be conducted within the University of Virginia Hospital, approval must be obtained from the Human Investigation Committee before securing administrative approval from the Hospital.

Dissertation Research as Part of Funded Grants

PhD students who elect to do dissertation research with Principal Investigators who have funded grants must secure copyright permission from their dissertation chairperson 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 chairperson 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.

After making required revisions, the student prepares a final draft of the dissertation and an abstract. Guidelines for the title page and “Physical Standards for Preparing Theses and Dissertation” must be adhered to (Section E: Appendices). Additional copies may be obtained from the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. Early in the semester the student plans to graduate, he/she must apply to graduate in SIS.

Final Dissertation

There are two options for the final dissertation. Both options must follow GSAS guidelines regarding font, paper type, etc. (see GSAS webpage). 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 (3 chapters or the approved grant application), journal titles for submission of 3 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.
   - Student must submit journal names and author guidelines to dissertation committee for approval.
   - 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.

Scheduling the Final Defense of the Dissertation

When the dissertation has been written and the dissertation chairperson 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 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 “Announcement of Dissertation Defense” (SON Registrar webpage) to the chairperson and all members of the dissertation committee, to the Director of the PhD Program, and to the Associate Dean for Academic Programs.

Students are encouraged to use the rooms in the Rotunda for the dissertation defense. The following rooms are available in the Rotunda. To schedule a room in the Rotunda call the Rotunda Administrator, Leslie Comstock at 924-1019. Rooms in the SON may also be used (reserve through Renee Breeden).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROOM</th>
<th>Number of People allowed</th>
<th>With or without table</th>
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<tr>
<td>North Oval Room</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Table</td>
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<tr>
<td>Board Room</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower West Oval Room</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>No table</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Oral Defense**

It is the student’s responsibility to bring the following to the oral defense of the dissertation: a title page with spaces for signatures and the “Dissertation Approval Sheet” (GSAS Forms webpage). Remember: Names of the committee members must be typed under their respective signature line on the “Dissertation Approval Sheet.” The student gives both documents to the chairperson at the beginning of the session.

Typically, the student begins the oral defense with a twenty- to thirty-minute oral summary of the research problem and its significance; research questions, hypotheses, or aims; methods; findings; limitations; and implications. In the ensuing discussion, committee members may question the student about any aspect of the research itself and the relevant contextual and methodological considerations. The committee chairperson will invite members of the audience to ask questions or make comments.

Ideally all members of the committee are present in person for the defense. In the event of an emergency in which the chair cannot be present, the following protocol will be followed: (1) telephone conference call with chair present by phone. (2) vice-chair (a member of the committee appointed by the chair in consultation with the student) assumes responsibility of chair.

After this public session, the student and the audience are 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 title page of the Dissertation Approval Sheet and the Report of the Final Defense. The chairperson, however, will not sign, date, or submit either form or return the signed title page to the student until 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 forms 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**

When the student has passed the oral defense and all required changes or additions have been made and judged satisfactory by the chairperson and the committee, the chairperson gives the student the signed title page, which is to be included in the final version of the dissertation. The student must then complete GSAS’ “Final Examination Form.” Per the instructions on this form, once complete, it must be submitted to the department graduate administrator, which, for Nursing PhD students, is the School of Nursing Registrar.

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 Report of Final Examination, that the degree not be awarded. In such a situation, the committee should submit to the Dean of the School of Nursing the Report of Final Examination with the committee’s recommendation, along with a written report detailing the rationale for the recommendation.

**Submitting the Dissertation for Inspection and Approval**

Follow the guidelines presented by the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences: [http://gsas.virginia.edu/enrolled-students/thesis-submission](http://gsas.virginia.edu/enrolled-students/thesis-submission).

**Application for Degrees**

PhD degrees are granted in December, May and August. The student must be registered during the fall semester to graduate in December, during the spring semester to graduate in May, and during
the summer semester to graduate in August. The student pays the research fee for the semester in which the student defends the dissertation. A PhD student who wishes to become a candidate for a degree must file the degree application with the Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences on a form available at the Graduate School Office (see GSAS forms webpage). The SON Registrar signs for the Department secretary and the Director of the SON PhD Program signs as Department Chair. All PhD degree applications must be submitted no later than February 1 if the degree is to be conferred in May or July 1 if the degree is to be conferred in August or 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.

To provide essential information for the printed program at graduation, candidates must submit a copy of the Title Page of the dissertation (signed or unsigned) to the Graduate School Office and the School of Nursing Registrar by April 1 for May graduation, July 1 for August graduation, or by December 1 for December graduation.

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)

Doctoral Nursing Student Organization Bylaws

Article I. Name: The official name of this organization is the Doctoral Nursing Student Organization at the University of Virginia.
Article II. Purpose: The purpose of this organization is:

1. To facilitate communication among PhD students and between PhD students and faculty.
2. To provide a mechanism for student representation on School of Nursing committees and University committees and organizations.
3. To represent the PhD nursing program within the University, the community, and to prospective PhD students.

Article III. Membership: The membership consists of students pursuing a PhD in nursing and is consistent with the University’s policy of non-discrimination. It is a policy of the University of Virginia not to discriminate in the administration of any of its programs, procedures or practices on the basis of age, color, disability, national or ethnic origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, or veteran status.

Ad Hoc Members: Consistent with Article II, Item 1, students who are not admitted to the PhD program but are enrolled in PhD courses in the School of Nursing or students enrolled in PhD nursing studies at other universities can participate in DNSO social activities as ad hoc members. Ad hoc members are not required to pay dues and are excluded from DNSO activities under Article II, Items 2 and 3.

Article IV. Organizational structure: The organizational structure consists of the following officers:

An Executive Committee that consists of ten members: the president, the past-president, the president-elect, treasurer, secretary, student representative to the School of Nursing Research Committee, student representative to the School of Nursing PhD Program Committee, a Chairperson of the Social Events Committee, a First-Year PhD Student Class Representative, and a faculty advisor appointed in the fall of each academic year. The Executive Committee meetings are open to all members of the DNSO.

1. A President who is responsible for convening the general and executive committee meetings and for coordinating ongoing organizational activities. The President is to communicate as necessary to the Dean of the School of Nursing and other faculty about matters of concern to the DNSO. In addition, the President is to serve as the chairperson of the Executive Committee.
2. A Past-President who is responsible for mentoring the President and other officers as needed. The Past-President is a voting member of the Executive Committee.
3. A President-Elect who is to assist the president in the duties of that office, assumes responsibility of the president in his or her absence, and serves as the DNSO representative to the GSAS Student Council (once a month meetings).
The President-Elect becomes the new president of the organization in September of each year.

4. A Treasurer who is responsible for maintaining the treasury in a non-UVa bank account off-grounds in accordance with other student organizations and coordinating all financial management of the treasury with the School of Nursing fiscal manager. The treasurer is responsible for collecting annual membership dues and for preparing the application for funding from the University Student Council and/or the SON Alumni Council.

5. A Secretary who is responsible for the minutes of the general and executive committee meetings and for any necessary correspondence related to the business of the DNSO.

6. A School of Nursing Research Committee Representative who is responsible for participation in the Research Committee as a representative of the DNSO. The student representative of this committee must be a Candidate for the PhD. Meetings of the Research Committee are monthly.

7. A School of Nursing PhD Committee Representative, elected by the students in the PhD program, who is responsible for participation in the PhD Program Committee as a representative of the PhD student members of the DNSO.

8. A Chairperson of the Social Events Committee.

9. A First Year PhD Student Class Representative who is elected by the first year students in the fall of each academic year.

10. A Faculty Advisor who acts as a resource to and for the Executive Committee.

Article V. Elections: The president and president-elect will solicit nominations in the spring and summer semesters of each year. The president-elect, treasurer, secretary, committee representatives, and faculty consultant are to be elected by closed ballot from a slate of nominees compiled by the president and president-elect of the DNSO. Nominations are to be made, if possible, from all class levels. The ballot is to be compiled and elections are to be held prior to the annual PhD student retreat. All elected officers are to assume their responsibilities beginning in the Fall semester for the period of one year and may serve no more than two consecutive terms in the same office. The president will make appointments to any office vacancies as needed.

Article VI. Committees:
1. The Social Committee coordinates events and activities that are designed to promote camaraderie, social support, and DNSO communication. The committee chair is voted on during the annual retreat. Committee membership is comprised of volunteers from the general membership.

2. Ad Hoc Committees are to be appointed by the President.

Article VII. Meetings: The executive committee is to meet, physically or electronically, at least twice a year, at the beginning and end of each semester or more frequently if needed. A general meeting of the membership is to meet at least twice a year. Roberts’ Rule of Order will be followed at both the general and Executive Committee meetings.
Article VIII. **Finances and Dues:** The annual dues for membership in the DNSO are twenty ($20.00) dollars and collected each September. These and other monies are to be placed in the DNSO bank account by the treasurer who is authorized to conduct transactions.

Article IX. **Amendment of Bylaws:** Amending the bylaws is to be based on need as determined by the executive committee and/or general membership and approved and disapproved by a majority vote of the membership.

Revised: May 2008

**AACN Position**

**Updated November 2001**

From: [http://www.aacn.nche.edu](http://www.aacn.nche.edu)

**Indicators of Quality in Research-Focused Doctoral Programs in Nursing**

**Position Statement:** Schools of nursing must consider the indicators of quality in evaluating their ability to mount research-focused doctoral programs. High quality programs require a large number of increasingly scarce resources and a critical mass of faculty and students. The *Indicators of Quality in Research-Focused Doctoral Programs in Nursing* represent those indicators that should be present in a research-focused program.

There is considerable consensus within the discipline that while there are differences in the purpose and curricula of PhD and DNS programs, most programs emphasize preparation for research. Therefore, AACN recommends continuing with a single set of quality indicators for research-focused doctoral programs in nursing whether the program leads to a PhD or a DNS degree.

*Research-focused doctoral programs* prepare students to pursue intellectual inquiry and conduct independent research for the purpose of extending knowledge. In the academic community, the PhD or Doctor of Philosophy degree, is the most commonly offered research-focused degree. However, some schools for a variety of reasons may award a Doctor of Nursing Science (DNS or DNSc) as the research-focused doctoral degree. Individuals educated in research-focused doctoral programs are traditionally prepared to pursue careers in research and teaching. Graduates of these programs also are prepared to pursue careers in the fields of nursing and health care administration and policy. The purposes of the research-focused doctoral degree are to prepare for a lifetime of intellectual inquiry, creative scholarship, and research; provide preparation that leads to careers in government, business, and industry as well as academia; and result in extension of knowledge (CGS, 1977).

*Professional doctoral programs* are relatively new in nursing. The distinguishing factor of these programs is the emphasis on research application. Graduates of the professional degree program are prepared to function in advanced practice roles, as well as administrative, executive,
public policy, and teaching roles.

*The Nursing Doctorate (ND) degree* prepares individuals for practice and is not a research-focused degree.

**Indicators of Quality in Research-Focused Doctoral Programs in Nursing**

**Faculty**

I. Represent and value a diversity of backgrounds and intellectual perspectives.

II. Meet the requirements of the parent institution for graduate research and doctoral education; substantial proportion of faculty hold earned doctorates in nursing.

III. Conceptualize and implement productive programs of research and scholarship that:

A. Are developed over time and build upon previous work;
B. Are at the cutting edge of the field of inquiry;
C. Are congruent with research priorities within nursing and its constituent communities;
D. Include a substantial proportion of extramural funding; and
E. Attract and engage students.

IV. Outcome indicators of productive programs of research and scholarship include:

A. Extramural grant awards in support of research or scholarship;
B. Peer-reviewed publications of research, theory, or philosophical essays;
C. Presentations of research, theory, or philosophical essays;
D. Scientific review activities such as with NIH study sections and other grant application review groups;
E. Editorial review activities;
F. State, regional, national, or international recognition as a scholar in an identified area; and
G. Evidence of influence on science policy throughout the field.

V. Create an environment in which mentoring, socialization of students, and the existence of a community of scholars is evident.

VI. Assist students to understand the value of programs of research and scholarship that continue over time and build upon previous work.

VII. Identify, generate, and utilize resources within the university and broader community to support program goals.

VIII. Devote a significant proportion of time to dissertation advisement; generally each faculty member should serve as the major adviser/chair for no more than 3-5 students during the dissertation phase.

**Programs of Study**

The emphasis of the program of study is consistent with the mission of the parent institution, the discipline of nursing, and the degree awarded. The faculty's areas of expertise and scholarship determine specific foci in the program of study. Requirements and their sequence for progression in the program are clear and available to students in writing. Common elements of the program of
study are outlined below.

I. Core and related course content - the distribution between nursing and supporting content is consistent with the mission and goals of the program, and the student's area of focus and course work is included in:

A. Historical and philosophical foundations to the development of nursing knowledge;
B. Existing and evolving substantive nursing knowledge;
C. Methods and processes of theory/knowledge development;
D. Research methods and scholarship appropriate to inquiry; and
E. Development related to roles in academic, research, practice, or policy environments.

II. Elements for formal and informal teaching and learning focus on:

A. Analytical and leadership strategies for dealing with social, ethical, cultural, economic, and political issues related to nursing, health care, and research;
B. Progressive and guided student scholarship research experiences, including exposure to faculty's interdisciplinary research programs;
C. Immersion experiences that foster the student's development as a nursing leader, scholarly practitioner, educator, and/or nurse scientist; and
D. Socialization opportunities for scholarly development in roles that complement students' career goals.

III. Outcome indicators for the programs of study include:

A. Advancement to candidacy requires faculty's satisfactory evaluation (e.g., comprehensive exam) of the student's basic knowledge of elements I-A through I-E identified above;
B. Dissertations represent original contributions to the scholarship of the field;
C. Systematic evaluation of graduate outcomes is conducted at regular intervals;
D. Within 3-5 years post-completion, graduates have designed and secured funding for a research study OR within 2 years post-completion, graduates have utilized the research process to address an issue of importance to the discipline of nursing or health care within their employment setting;
E. Employers report satisfaction with graduates' leadership and scholarship at regular intervals post-completion; and
F. Graduates' scholarship and leadership are recognized through awards, honors, or external funding at 3-5 years post-completion.

**Resources**

I. Sufficient human, financial, and institutional resources are available to accomplish the goals of the unit for doctoral education and faculty research.

A. The parent institution exhibits the following characteristics:

1) Research is an explicit component of the mission of the parent institution;
2) An office of research administration;
3) A record of peer reviewed external funding;
4) Post-doctoral programs;
5) Internal research funds;
6) Mechanisms that value, support, and reward faculty and student scholarship and role preparation; and
7) A university environment that fosters interdisciplinary research and collaboration.

B. The nursing doctoral program exhibits the following characteristics:

1) Research active faculty as well as other faculty experts to mentor students in other role preparations.
2) Technical support for:

(a) Peer review of proposals and manuscripts in their development phases;
(b) Research design expertise;
(c) Data management and analysis support;
(d) Hardware and software availability; and
(e) Expertise in grant proposal development and management.

3) Space sufficient for:

(a) Faculty research needs;
(b) Doctoral student study, meeting, and socializing;
(c) Seminars; and
(d) Small group work.

C. Schools of exceptional quality also have:

1) Centers of research excellence;
2) Endowed professorships;
3) Mechanisms for financial support to allow full-time study; and
4) Master teachers capable of preparing graduates for faculty roles.

II. State-of-the-art technical and support services are available and accessible to faculty, students, and staff for state of the science information acquisition, communication, and management.

III. Library and database resources are sufficient to support the scholarly endeavors of faculty and students.

Students

I. Students are selected from a pool of highly qualified and motivated applicants who represent diverse populations.

II. Students' research goals and objectives are congruent with faculty research expertise and scholarship and institutional resources.

III. Students are successful in obtaining financial support through competitive intramural and extramural academic and research awards.

IV. Students commit a significant portion of their time to the program and complete the program in a timely fashion.

V. Students establish a pattern of productive scholarship, collaborating with researchers in nursing and other disciplines in scientific endeavors that result in the presentation and publication
of scholarly work that continues after graduation.

**Evaluation**

The evaluation plan:

I. Is systematic, ongoing, comprehensive, and focuses on the university’s and program’s specific mission and goals;

II. Includes both process and outcome data related to these indicators of quality in research-focused doctoral programs;

III. Adheres to established ethical and process standards for formal program evaluation, e.g., confidentiality and rigorous quantitative and qualitative analyses;

IV. Involves students and graduates in evaluation activities;

V. Includes data from a variety of internal and external constituencies;

VI. Provides for comparison of program processes and outcomes to the standards of its parent graduate school/university and selected peer groups within nursing;

VII. Includes ongoing feedback to program faculty, administrators, and external constituents to promote program improvement;

VIII. Provides comprehensive data in order to determine patterns and trends and recommend future directions at regular intervals; and

IX. Is supported with adequate human, financial, and institutional resources.

**Background**

*In order to meet its social responsibility to enhance the health of people through the discovery and dissemination of knowledge, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) has established indicators of quality for research-focused doctoral programs in nursing. Despite steady growth in the number of doctoral programs, graduations have remained relatively flat. At the same time the profession faces a serious future shortage of nursing faculty and an increased demand for doctorally prepared nurses for administrative and clinical positions. Therefore, nursing must explore a range of options for increasing the number of doctoral graduates.*

AACN first developed a set of indicators for quality doctoral education in 1986. A revised set of indicators was approved by the membership in 1993. In 1999, in order to remain current and in response to concerns over an impending shortage of doctorally prepared faculty, a rapid growth in the number and types of doctoral programs in nursing, and concern regarding resources available to support the increased number of programs, the AACN Board of Directors appointed a task force to revise the quality indicators for doctoral programs and address differences among PhD, DNSc/DNS/DSN (hereafter referred to as DNS), and ND degrees.

To address the charge, the task force gathered input from a number of sources. First, 1999 AACN Doctoral Conference participants, in small discussion groups, provided feedback on the relevance and appropriateness of the current indicators and made suggestions for revision. Participants expressed general satisfaction with the 1993 indicators but sought greater specificity,
greater emphasis on outcomes to be achieved, and recognition of all types of doctoral programs.

The nursing and higher education literature and consultants in higher education provided a second source of input for the work of the task force. Consultants included Marilyn Baker of the National Research Council, National Academy of Sciences, and Marsha Landolt, representing The Pew Charitable Trusts’ Re-envisioning the PhD project. Third, in November 1999 the task force conducted surveys of all nursing schools with doctoral programs or proposed doctoral programs and a convenience sample of non-academic settings employing doctorally prepared nurses. Fourth, a representative of the task force participated in the Pew Re-envisioning the PhD project working conference (April 2000) and the Third Biennial International Conference on Professional Doctorates (September 2000). Finally, a forum was conducted at the Fall 2000 AACN Semi-annual Meeting (October 2000) to review the draft indicators.

The Research Versus the Professional Degree

Despite the fact that American graduate education is a model for other nations, there has been a growing concern, in both the academic and practice arenas that PhD programs may have become too focused on scholarly research to the neglect of all other faculty responsibilities and non-academic careers. This concern led to the Pew Foundation sponsored project, Re-envisioning the PhD, designed to rethink the design of doctoral education to address the shortage of academic positions in most fields and the fact that PhD graduates are often viewed as ill-prepared for jobs outside of academe (Nyquist, 1999). Among the major problems uncovered through the project, some affect nursing doctoral programs: program completion rates, relevance of preparation for careers other than in academia, lack of diversity in the student body, and requirements for completing the degree. A number of other significant problems encountered by other disciplines do not affect nursing: over-production of PhDs, long periods of post-doctoral training, a scarcity of academic positions for graduates, and overuse of doctoral students to teach undergraduate courses. A major emphasis of the conference was the need to diversify the career paths beyond the traditional research role for which students are prepared, especially for teaching and positions outside of academe.

Examination of the flaws in PhD education has taken a somewhat different path in Europe and Australia. There the model of PhD education is a research-only program with little or no coursework and an apprenticeship relationship between the student and the major advisor. The emphasis is on developing disciplinary knowledge and not on its application or on the role the student will fill upon graduation. Education, business, and a number of other professional fields have identified needs for knowledge development that is more directly applicable to the problems encountered in the day-to-day practice of the profession.

A growing number of European and Australian fields are responding to perceived gaps in PhD education by developing professional doctorates. Unlike the PhD programs, these programs include substantial coursework, and dissertation research is driven largely by problems encountered in the practice world. Students are primarily seasoned professionals who seek the doctorate to gain skills needed to solve problems in the work world or for career advancement within a bureaucracy.

Distinctions between research and professional doctoral degrees have been a subject of continuing debate within U.S. higher education circles as well. In 1966, the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) endorsed the position that "the professional doctor's degree should be the highest university award given in a particular field in recognition of completion of academic preparation for professional practice, whereas the PhD should be given in recognition of preparation for research whether the particular field of learning is pure or applied (CGS, 1966, p.3)." Later the CGS (1977) proposed that the purposes of the PhD are to prepare for a lifetime of intellectual
inquiry, creative scholarship, and research; provide preparation that leads to careers in government, business, and industry as well as academia; and result in extension of knowledge.

Nursing Doctoral Education

Historically, the growth of PhD education in the U.S. paralleled the growth of professional organizations that exerted pressure for licensure and standards. This led to university-based education for professionals and sowed the seeds for professional doctorates such as the EdD, DPH, DNS, and others (Downs, 1989).

In nursing, the bias has been toward research-oriented preparation. Stevenson and Woods (1986) summarized the development of doctoral education in nursing as including four generations of research-oriented doctorates:

- 1900-1940 EdD or other functional degree
- 1940-1960 PhD in basic or social science with no nursing content
- 1960-1970 PhD in basic science with minor in nursing
- 1970-present PhD in nursing or DNS

The literature contains numerous references to the high degree of similarity between PhD and DNS degrees in nursing. Grace (1989) observed that the structure and content of nursing doctoral programs, particularly the PhD and DNS, became very similar in the 1970s and 1980s with a common core of research, theory, and integrative science.

Downs (1989) was able to detect some subtle differences between the two types of programs, concluding that the DNS programs had more clinical content, and the PhD programs included more statistics and research-focused content. However, Downs also completed an informal review of Nursing Research topics by PhD and DNS authors and found essentially the same number of manuscripts on clinical topics by both types of authors.

Since 1970, most new programs have led to PhD degrees in nursing. Many of the DNS programs have been converted to PhD programs as programs have evolved and gained acceptance in academic circles. New DNS and ND programs also have opened so that the proportion of PhD and DNS programs launched has remained relatively constant across the decades (see Table 1a and Table 1b).

Table 1a. Trends in Nursing Doctoral Programs Started by Type and Decade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade beginning:</th>
<th>Program Totals</th>
<th>Degree Offered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EdD</td>
<td>PhD</td>
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<td>1930</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1b. Total Number of Nursing Doctoral Programs in 1999-2000 Academic Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Program Total *</th>
<th>Degree Offered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EdD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-2000</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Indicates number of doctoral programs and not schools; several schools have had more than one program.

** The total number of DNS programs is less than the sum of programs since a number of schools have closed their DNS programs (Source: AACN, 2000a&b).

Current Situation

Recent literature does not address the differences or similarities between the purposes, content, or quality indicators of the PhD and DNS degrees awarded in nursing. Despite earlier recommendations from leaders in nursing and higher education that differentiated the two types of degrees, few differences have evolved. Both the PhD and DNS degree programs, in almost all instances, are research-focused doctoral programs. The content and course requirements may vary slightly and the emphasis may be on empirical versus applied research, but the focus of the program is to prepare students to pursue intellectual inquiry and conduct independent research for the purpose of extending knowledge.

In a 1999 AACN survey of schools of nursing offering PhD and DNS programs, of the 58 (74%) respondents, only one school offered both PhD and DNS degree programs. This school indicated that there were not separate faculties for the two programs but did require different course work, and an internship was required for the DNS program. In other responding schools the DNS degree was being phased out as the PhD program was approved and offered. Still other institutions offering the DNS degree would offer the PhD if possible. Some schools had long-standing DNS programs and included a strong emphasis on research training.

In order to gather information on the current and potential use and roles of doctorally prepared nurses in the health care delivery system, task force members conducted interviews with a convenience sample of nurse executives from non-academic health care delivery organizations. From these interviews, a fairly consistent picture emerged. The number of doctorally prepared nurses per institution was small (0-4) and these individuals were most frequently employed in managerial, evaluation, or educational roles with relatively few in clinical positions. However, several respondents noted a desire to employ additional doctorally prepared nurses, particularly for clinical and research positions. No respondents foresaw the doctoral degree as a requirement for any organizational positions in the near future.

Despite the addition of 52 doctoral nursing programs in the 1980s and 1990s, there were just 200 more graduates in 1998 than in 1989, and most of that growth occurred prior to 1992. In 1998 the average number of graduations from the 70 existing doctoral programs was less than 6 per program. This slow rate of growth in graduates portends a serious shortage of doctorally prepared faculty. Berlin and Sechrist (1999) provided evidence that the current nursing faculty workforce is aging rapidly and more than a third (38.1%) of doctorally prepared nurses work in settings other than schools of nursing. The median age of graduates of doctoral programs in nursing was 45.7 years with 6.5% of graduates age 55 or older.
The rapid growth of nursing doctoral programs throughout the 1980s and 1990s created concern for some nursing leaders that the number of doctoral programs may have exceeded the faculty and research funding resources available to support quality programs. In 1997, Hinshaw and Berlin analyzed AACN, National Institutes of Health (NIH), and library databases and conducted a survey of school of nursing research offices to identify the characteristics of excellent doctoral programs. Using the AACN quality indicators (AACN, 1993) and the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR) definition of a research-intensive environment, they identified a number of variables that correlated with being a ranked school in the U.S. News and World Report rankings of schools of nursing. These variables included the proportion of doctorally prepared graduate faculty, the number of NIH grants and publications, the presence of a general research office and centers of excellence, the number of students, the proportion of full-time students, and the duration of the doctoral program. Not correlated with receiving a high ranking were the proportion of tenured and doctorally prepared faculty, and Carnegie classification of the institution. In a multivariate analysis, only the number of publications and the duration of the program were selected as important predictors of rankings (Hinshaw & Berlin, 1997).

APPENDIX A

AACN Task Force to Revise Quality Indicators for Doctoral Education

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APPENDIX B

References


