

University of Virginia School of Nursing

PHD ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

“The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) represents the highest level of formal education to prepare individuals to advance the scholarship of discovery for a given discipline.¹ The PhD is a prerequisite for academia and certain leadership roles in multiple disciplines within institutions, and for the development of independence in scientific or scholarly pursuits outside academia. The PhD is a research-focused degree that prepares individuals to independently create, translate, and communicate new knowledge as leaders within institutions of higher education and outside of academia. Conferral of the PhD demonstrates the graduate’s strong scientific emphasis within the discipline, as well as an understanding of the importance of translational science, dissemination of innovations, and engagement in interdisciplinary collaboration. In the field of nursing, the PhD graduate is prepared to steward the profession, develop its science, define its uniqueness, maintain its professional integrity, and educate the next generation of nursing professionals. To achieve its vision of improving health outcomes for all people, particularly those in populations experiencing social and health inequities, the profession must produce and support PhD-prepared nurses, nurse educators, and nurse scientists who reflect the broad diversity of society as a whole.”²

¹ AACN (2010). *The research-focused doctoral program in nursing: Pathways to excellence*.

² AACN (2022). [The research-focused doctoral program in nursing: Pathways to excellence](#).

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About this handbook

The content in this handbook is specific to the PhD program in the School of Nursing (SON) and is meant to be used in conjunction with the [University of Virginia Graduate Record](#) which contains information about various topics applicable across programs and schools. Additionally, resources for students in all nursing programs are available on the [SON Community website](#). The PhD program in Nursing is housed in the UVA School of Graduate Arts and Sciences (GSAS). Therefore, GSAS requirements for degree conferral apply to the PhD in Nursing. Where possible, hyperlinks to resources are provided to assist students, advisors, and faculty in finding and navigating information.

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

PhD Program Overview

Philosophy

A University is a community of scholars with a central purpose of enriching the human mind. Within this community, the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) 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 goal of this inquiry is to enhance nursing's contribution to the health of all persons.

Aims

The major purpose of the PhD program in nursing is to prepare scholars with expertise in selected substantive areas who will contribute to nursing science and practice through systematic inquiry. The 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, nation, and world by addressing major nursing and health care issues in a scholarly manner.

Description

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

Outcome Objectives

The three outcome objectives are derived from the PhD program aims and are assessed through multiple mechanisms every academic year.

Advance Impactful and Innovative Nursing Science

Program Outcome: Graduates will generate original, rigorous research that advances nursing science and addresses significant health, healthcare, and societal issues.

Assessment Methods:

- Successful proposal, defense, and completion of a dissertation demonstrating original contribution.
- Oral defense and written dissertation rubric ratings.
- Submission of first-authored manuscript to peer-reviewed journals.

Mastery of Research Methods and Responsible Conduct of Research

Program Outcome: Graduates will apply advanced, ethically grounded research methods consistent with UVA's standards for excellence in research and scientific integrity.

Assessment Methods:

- Performance in required methods/statistical coursework.
- IRB approval and compliance for dissertation research.
- Comprehensive exam rubric rating.

Interdisciplinary and Translational Scholarship

Program Outcome: Graduates will collaborate effectively and demonstrate emerging readiness for leadership in interdisciplinary research and translation into practice and policy.

Assessment Methods:

- Evidence of collaboration through co-authored papers/presentations.
- Participation in grant submissions as PI or key contributor.
- External presentations at local, regional, national, or international levels.

PhD Curriculum

Degree Requirements

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

Program Components

Nurse scientists use a unique and critical lens to examine healthcare-related issues and their scientific contributions improve health and healthcare for individuals, organizations, and communities in meaningful ways. To this end, the PhD program consists of required courses in history, philosophy, research methods, research ethics, scholarly writing, and grant writing; electives/cognates within and outside the SON that enrich the student's knowledge in scholarly areas; and required experiential elements, including a comprehensive exam, dissertation proposal defense, dissertation study, and its defense. PhD students can obtain the skills needed for teaching in a future faculty role. Many students gain teaching experience

through a funded Graduate Teaching Assistantship. See section on opportunities to develop teaching skills.

Required Coursework

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 - Scholarly Writing for Nursing Science
- GNUR 8220 - Philosophy of Science and Development of Nursing Knowledge

Research (29 credits plus 12 dissertation credits)

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

- GNUR 8000 – Seminar in Nursing Science (2 credits)
- GNUR 8110 - Quantitative Research Methods (3 credits)
- GNUR 8120 - Qualitative Research Methods (3 credits)
- GNUR 8130 – Statistical Methods for Health Care Research I (3 credits)
- GNUR 8140 – Statistical Methods for Health Care Research II (3 credits)
- GNUR 8230 - Historical Inquiry in Nursing (3 credits)
- GNUR 8410 – Grant Writing Seminar (3 credits)
- GNUR 8435 – Scholarship in Research Ethics **or** BIMS 7100 - Research Ethics **or** PHSE 7650 - Ethics and Law in Human Subjects Research (1 credit)
- GNUR 9110 – Research Practicum (4 credits minimum)
- GNUR 9890 – Dissertation Seminar (1 credit per semester)
- GNUR 9998 – Doctoral Research (pre-dissertation proposal defense (1-12 credits)
- GNUR 9999 – Dissertation Research (post-dissertation proposal defense (12 credits)

Students planning to use qualitative research methods for their dissertation study should take a second advanced qualitative methods course. Students planning to use quantitative research methods for their dissertation study should take an additional advanced quantitative methods course that is specific to the method they plan to use for their dissertation research. Additionally, a course in mixed methods is highly recommended.

GNUR 9110: Research Practicum (4 credits)

The goal of the research practicum is for students to have experiences in aspects of research

that will facilitate embarking on a career of research and scholarship. The research practicum is an important pedagogical aspect of the PhD program regardless of funding source or student status. Given that publication is a vital outcome of any PhD program, the research practicum mechanism is an ideal one from which to publish.

Not all research training experiences will be the same. 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.

Decisions regarding research training experiences ultimately rest with the primary research mentor and the student using the following guidelines:

- Overall description: This course provides the student with an opportunity to develop and refine research skills by participating in an ongoing research study with faculty mentorship.
- Overall objectives: The objective of the research practicum is to provide PhD nursing students with hands-on experience in the design, implementation, and evaluation of nursing research generally, and specifically to gain the skills and knowledge needed for their proposed area of research. Through mentored participation in research activities, students will develop skills in data collection, analysis, and dissemination of findings to support the student's ability to contribute to the advancement of nursing science and practice. The student will work with their advisor to identify specific activities and outcomes for the semester. On successful completion of this practicum, the student will have advanced in one or more of the following domains:
 - Research Design and Methods: Students will gain proficiency in applying appropriate research methodologies to investigate complex healthcare issues relevant to nursing, using qualitative, quantitative, or historical approaches.
 - Data Analysis and Interpretation: Students will demonstrate the ability to analyze and interpret data using advanced statistical, qualitative, or historical methods, linking findings to broader theoretical frameworks and clinical practice implications.
 - Dissemination of Research Findings: Students will develop skills in the effective dissemination of research outcomes, including preparing manuscripts for publication, presenting at scientific conferences, and translating research for clinical- or policy-related audiences.
- Considerations unique to each individual practicum experience:
 - Realistic, objective goals and outcomes to ensure meaningful research training experiences. These should be documented in the Individual Development Plan
 - Measurable outcomes for each goal should be written, agreed upon and monitored. Outcomes may include development of protocols, publications, presentations, or other objective evidence.
- An average of four hours per week per credit should be devoted to practicum work.
- Ideally, the student will be a part of a research team.
- It is highly desirable that the student participate in a variety of research endeavors across the practica.

GNUR 9890: Dissertation Seminar

The purpose of this course is to provide support to ensure adequate progress and

professional development for PhD students who have successfully completed their comprehensive exams.

GNUR 9998: Doctoral Research (1-12 credits)

Credits in GNUR 9998 are intended for students who have not yet defended their dissertation proposal. Students may be taking other courses, preparing to take the comprehensive exam, or preparing their dissertation proposal.

GNUR 9999: Dissertation (12 credits)

Credits in GNUR 9999 are intended for students who have passed their dissertation proposal defense and who are conducting their dissertation study.

Cognates and Electives

Students must have a total of at least 15 credit hours of cognates plus electives. All cognate and elective credits must be graded on an A through F scale. It is **strongly recommended** that at least 6 credits within the total number of cognates and electives be allocated to advanced methods courses.

Cognate Minor (9-12 credits)

The cognate requirement includes coursework in a single cognate field or a 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 by departments outside of the School of Nursing (not GNUR classes).

Electives (3-6 credits)

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

Suggested Plan of Study

Fall, Year 1:

- GNUR 8000: Seminar in Nursing Science
- GNUR 8130: Statistical Methods for Health Care Research I
- GNUR 8210: Scholarly Writing in Nursing Science
- GNUR 8220: Philosophy of Science and Development of Nursing Knowledge
- GNUR 8435: Scholarship in Research Ethics or other research ethics course

Spring, Year 1:

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

Fall, Year 2:

- GNUR 8410: Grant Writing Seminar
- Cognates/Electives

Spring, Year 2:

- Cognates/Electives

Variable Semesters

- GNUR 9110: Research Practicum (4 credits, minimum)
- GNUR 9890: Dissertation Seminar (1 credit per semester)
- GNUR 9998: Doctoral Research (1-12 credits)
- GNUR 9999: Dissertation (12 credits, minimum)
- Cognates and Electives

Progression Through the PhD Program

The student is responsible for ensuring that each step in fulfilling degree requirements is completed and that an official record is kept. Because the PhD program is guided by both the GSAS and the SON, all students and faculty must be informed about and submit proper documents for both Academic Divisions.

Academic Advising

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 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 an advisor change form with the signatures of both the former and the new advisors to the School of Nursing Registrar. A copy is sent to the PhD Program Lead.

Individual Development Plan (IDP)

Students complete and update their Individual Development Plan (IDP) each semester (see Appendix A). The IDP provides students and advisors with a consistent mechanism to guide experiences, identify needs, and track growth during their doctoral training. Additionally, the Benchmarks section of the IDP should be submitted in March of each year. This section is provided to the PhD Program Lead and is used to ensure student progression and to provide data for PhD program outcomes.

Benchmarks of Student Progression

By the end of the first year

- Successfully complete first-year coursework
- Prepare abstract for submission to a local, regional, or national conference
- Complete CITI training
- Complete IDP (fall and spring)
- Submit Benchmarks by March 15

By the end of the second year

- Successfully complete required courses, cognates, and electives
- Prepare and submit a manuscript (literature review, concept analysis, other) for publication
- Complete the comprehensive exam
- Prepare a draft of dissertation proposal
- Complete IDP (fall and spring)
- Submit Benchmarks by March 15

By the end of the third year

- Prepare a grant proposal
- Successfully defend dissertation proposal
- Submit IRB proposal
- Conduct dissertation research
- Complete IDP (fall and spring)
- Submit Benchmarks by March 15

By the end of the fourth year

- Defend dissertation
- Complete IDP (fall and spring)
- Submit Benchmarks by March 15

Approval of Program of Study

Certification that the student has completed all required and recommended course work for the PhD degree is granted by the registrar and advisor prior to the student sitting for the comprehensive examination. To be officially approved, the [Request to Write Comprehensive Exam](#) form must be submitted by the student.

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

Comprehensive Exam

All students are required to write and pass a comprehensive exam prior to the defense of the dissertation proposal. The purpose of the exam is to demonstrate the student's ability to synthesize knowledge in the student's area of expertise, visualize the long-term development of a program of research in that area, and place the planned dissertation research in the context of that program of research and the area of knowledge (see Appendix B for the Comprehensive Exam Evaluation Tool).

The comprehensive exam is an opportunity for the student to:

- Synthesize knowledge in the selected field from a nursing perspective, summarizing the current state of knowledge and identifying areas in which further research is needed. Students will identify key concepts, research questions, and methodological approaches for addressing research questions; Describe how the student foresees developing a program of research in the content area over the five to seven years, including:
 - Identifying the topic of the dissertation research;
 - Showing how the dissertation will contribute to the overall content area and describe its significance to knowledge development and to nursing;
- Demonstrate competency in research methodology related to the areas of inquiry in which the student is developing expertise
- Demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical foundations of the selected field.

Students [apply](#) to take the comprehensive exam after completion of course work requirements as represented in the plan of study. The comprehensive examination may occur during the last semester of course work but: (1) if coursework is completed in the spring or summer, the comprehensive exams must be completed by the end of the following fall

semester; (2) if coursework is completed in the fall semester, the comprehensive exam must be completed before the start of the following fall semester. Students may apply to the PhD Program Lead for a one-semester (maximum) extension. Failure to complete the examination within the allotted timeframe constitutes a failure to make satisfactory progression and can be grounds for involuntary withdrawal from the program.

Guidelines

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

Substantive Statement

A strong substantive statement typically includes elements such as state of the science, significance, research questions, conceptual framework, methodological considerations, synthesis of evidence or literature, and conclusion, woven into a cohesive narrative. The statement should clearly define the student's area of expertise, critically engage with major theories and evidence, identify knowledge gaps, and explain how the student's future research will contribute to the field.

The substantive statement should be 8-10 pages long, double-spaced, 11-point Arial or Times New Roman with 1" margins. The following template can be used to help organize the substantive statement. It is important to note that the template is only a guide, should be adapted as needed, and is not intended to be a substitute for discussions between the student and their advisor regarding the substantive statement.

Section 1. State of the Science

- Brief the review of the literature
- Manuscripts the student has written or contributed to that pertain to the student's area of research
- Research gaps and how the student's research study seeks to fill them

Section 2. Research Questions

- Main questions driving the research study

Section 3. Significance

- Importance and relevance of the student's research topic and contributions to the field

Section 4. Theory & Epistemology

- Description of epistemological lens and (1 or 2) conceptual framework(s) underpinning the research study

Section 5. Methods

- Description of relevant methods being considered for the research study

Section 6. Relevant Coursework

- Summary of PhD coursework that supports the student's research topic; can be a brief summary table but should include relevant courses (core courses as well as cognates/electives) and highlight skills/knowledge gained; can also include relevant educational and professional development activities/trainings

Section 7. Conclusion

- Brief summary of the substantive statement, why the research area is important and next steps

Request to Write Comprehensive Exam

One month prior to the anticipated date of the comprehensive exam, the student will complete the request form, meet with the SON registrar, and notify the Director of the PhD Program by email of the intent to sit for the exam.

Comprehensive Exam Committee

A committee of three faculty will be formed by the PhD Program Lead. The student's advisor will chair the committee and will advise the student in recommending to the PhD Program Lead a second member who is an expert in the student's subject area. The PhD Program Lead will choose a third member from among the PhD Program Committee members. The committee will formulate a set of questions that the student is to address in the written examination.

Exam Process

Upon receiving the examination questions, the student will have exactly 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. The student may not receive help from any persons or generative AI in answering the questions nor may they rely on assistance from any entity for writing. The following information is provided with the comprehensive exam:

To support your development as an independent scientific thinker and writer, the use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot) are not permitted for drafting, writing, or editing any content for your comprehensive exam. Your exam must reflect your own original work, from concept to final draft. The use of standard editing and proofreading tools (e.g., Grammarly) are permitted as long as they are used without any generative AI functionality enabled. Misuse of generative AI in violation of this policy will be treated as academic misconduct.

After receiving the student's responses, the committee may take up to three weeks to read and evaluate the written examination. The committee members, using the Comprehensive Exam Evaluation Tool, will evaluate the student's performance on the written examination and return it with a recommendation of Pass, Failure with Revision, or Failure without Revision to the PhD Program Lead and Program Manager. Exams receiving a recommendation of "Failure with Revision" require that the student complete specific remedial assignments designated by her or his chair with the approval of the examination committee and administration of a second exam, in part or whole, which may include different questions from the first exam. The advisor, committee, and student will develop a clear timeline for completion. "Failure without Revision" on the first or second examination will mark the end of the student's progression in the program. Please refer to the University policy for additional details regarding appeal and grievance procedures.

Dissertation

Students who have passed the comprehensive examination are eligible to begin the dissertation

phase. The dissertation chair is responsible for certifying that all necessary courses have been completed.

Dissertation Advising

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

The dissertation chair must be a tenured/tenure track PhD program faculty member in the School of Nursing. A professor emeritus may serve on a dissertation committee as a member once they retire; they may continue to chair a dissertation committee only if it is underway at the time of changing from fulltime to emeritus.

The dissertation chair must be the committee member most competent to supervise the research as a whole but need not be the primary resource person for all aspects of the study. A recommended approach for students in identifying a dissertation chair is to be informed about faculty members' research interests and areas of expertise. The student and chair will work chair often intensively during the dissertation period, so careful selection is essential. The chair assumes primary responsibility in assisting the student in developing a continued plan of study, monitoring the student's progress, and guiding the student throughout the dissertation research project.

Dissertation Committee

With the help of the dissertation chair, the student selects members of her/his dissertation committee. The dissertation committee is the group of faculty that determines whether a candidate's dissertation is acceptable for a PhD degree.

Per GSAS guidelines, the dissertation committee will consist of a minimum of four tenured or tenure-track members of the faculty of GSAS [in this case, including the School of Nursing]. One member of the committee will serve as a representative of the GSAS to affirm that the student has been assessed fairly and with due rigor. This representative is appointed by the student's director of graduate studies and must hold a primary appointment outside of the student's department [here, the School of Nursing]. This representative may be drawn from the tenured or tenure-track faculty of other graduate schools at the University but must hold a PhD. A director of graduate studies may petition to permit a reader from outside the University who holds a PhD to serve as one of the four core members of the committee by providing the associate dean with the reader's CV and a statement regarding the reader's particular suitability for the committee. This external reader may not serve as the representative of the Graduate School. Once these minimum requirements have been met, additional committee members from within the University or other institutions may be added.

A student's advisor may petition the PhD Program Committee to allow a reader who is not a tenure track faculty member of a University of Virginia School other than the School of Nursing. They should do so by sending the potential reader's cv and a statement of suitability for the dissertation committee to the Chair of the PhD Program Committee. Such faculty

members should have a robust program of externally funded research and experience mentoring graduate students. They may not serve as the Representative of the Graduate School.

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

To formalize the committee, signatures from all committee members are obtained by the PhD student and recorded on the form, [PhD Dissertation Committee Member Appointment or Member Change](#), found on the [School of Nursing website](#). Changes in committee membership must be approved by the chair and the student and the form mentioned above must be submitted.

Dissertation Proposal

The dissertation proposal demonstrates a student's ability to identify a significant problem in nursing science, critically evaluate gaps in existing knowledge, articulate clear research questions, and design a rigorous, well-justified study that advances the field.

Preparation

The dissertation proposal should align with the chosen dissertation format. Three formats are permitted:

- Manuscript option dissertation
- Traditional chapter-based dissertation
- Historical dissertation

Regardless of format, the proposal must provide sufficient detail for the committee to evaluate the study's significance, feasibility, and methodological rigor.

For students pursuing the manuscript option, manuscripts may be in progress or already submitted by the time of the proposal defense. With committee approval, these manuscripts may replace corresponding sections of the proposal (e.g., a submitted literature review may substitute for a proposal literature review). For students pursuing the traditional chapter-based format, the proposal should include the first three chapters of the dissertation: introduction, background/literature review, and methods.

The table below provides an overview of typical components of the dissertation proposal, by type of planned dissertation. Students are strongly encouraged to discuss the appropriate format with their advisor, as the specific components may vary or need to be adjusted based on the student's planned research and/or trajectory.

Table 1: Dissertation Proposal Components

3-Manuscript	Historical	Traditional Chapter
Specific aims page	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of the topic and its significance • Research questions • Thesis statement (summary of the argument) 	Chapter 1: Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of the concepts • Brief statement of the problem • Specific aims
Background <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive literature review identifying key knowledge gaps • Theoretical or conceptual framework guiding the study • Significance and innovation of the proposed study 	Historiography <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive literature review identifying key knowledge gaps • Theoretical or conceptual framework guiding the study • Significance and innovation of the proposed study 	Chapter 2: Literature review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive literature review identifying key knowledge gaps • Theoretical or conceptual framework guiding the study • Significance and innovation of the proposed study
Methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study design and justification • Study team (if applicable) • Sample & setting • Measures (if applicable) • Data collection procedures • Data analysis procedures 	Methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study design and justification • Archives & other primary sources to be used • Research plan • Methods/theories for interpretation and analysis 	Chapter 3: Methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study design and justification • Study team (if applicable) • Sample & setting • Measures (if applicable) • Data collection procedures • Data analysis procedures
Human participant and ethical considerations	Human participant and ethical considerations (if applicable)	
Manuscript plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of three planned manuscripts including purpose/aims, methods, and target journals 	Dissertation chapter outline <p>Include brief summary of each chapter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction • Chapter 1 • Chapter 2 • Chapter 3 • Conclusion 	
Dissertation timeline		
Bibliography	Bibliography	Bibliography
Appendices (as applicable) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruments • Permissions • Supporting materials (e.g., literature tables) 	Appendices (as applicable) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting materials 	Appendices (as applicable) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruments • Permissions • Supporting materials (e.g., literature tables)

Formatting and Length

The proposal should be double-spaced, 1-inch margins, 11-point font Arial or Times New

Roman, APA format, and include a title page. Proposals are typically **25–40 pages**, excluding the title page, references, and appendices.

Process and Expectations

Students are strongly encouraged to work closely with their chair and committee throughout proposal development. Sharing draft sections in advance of the dissertation proposal defense supports more productive feedback and a stronger, more cohesive proposal.

Committee members serve in an advisory role, providing guidance within their areas of expertise. Final decisions regarding the research focus and methodology are made collaboratively by the student and chair, even when differing perspectives arise.

Proposal Defense

Once a defense date is established by the chair, students, and committee members, students must complete the [PhD Announcement of Dissertation Proposal Defense](#). Final proposal documents must be submitted to the committee **at least two weeks prior** to the scheduled defense. Proposals submitted less than two weeks prior risk having to reschedule the proposal defense.

The proposal defense is a two-hour working session in which differences of opinion can be debated and resolved. Students are advised to take careful notes of the questions raised and decisions reached during the proposal defense. Committee members' suggestions are intended to ensure the study's feasibility and quality.

The committee chair leads the proposal defense. The proposal must be defended in the presence of the dissertation committee and formally approved by all committee members. If the committee decides that the proposal has not been adequately developed or defended, the defense must be rescheduled within three months. Failure to pass the proposal defense on the second try results in forced withdrawal from the program. Upon successful completion of the proposal defense, the advisor will inform the Program Manager to distribute the [PhD Dissertation Proposal Approval Sheet](#) for committee members to sign.

Admission to Candidacy

After the dissertation proposal has been successfully defended, the student is granted candidacy status. The program manager will enter this status (PHDCAND) in SIS. PhD candidacy signifies that all PhD work except the dissertation has been successfully completed. When you [publish as a PhD candidate](#), use PhD [cand.] and not PhD(c).

Dissertation Research

After the dissertation proposal has been approved, the student may submit their protocol to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval. Once approved by the IRB, the process of data gathering may begin. It is advisable to reach an understanding at the outset about authorship, assignment of other credit, and any [copyright issues](#) that may result from the study.

Administrative Approval

It is the responsibility of the student and the advisor to obtain appropriate administrative

approval to conduct research in the proposed setting(s).

Technical Requirements in Writing the Dissertation

One of three options for the final dissertation is acceptable. A decision about the format should be made and approved by the chair and committee members at the time of the proposal defense. While there are no formatting requirements or restrictions by GSAS, the student should be consistent in their use of the particular style manual (e.g., APA) selected for the dissertation.

Traditional Dissertation

Five (5) chapters (introduction, literature review, methods, results, discussion), title page, abstract, and references are required. Appendices may include copies of instruments, interview questions, and other materials used for the study.

Manuscript Dissertation

Final dissertation includes the dissertation proposal, journal titles and author guidelines for submission of three manuscripts, and three first-authored publishable manuscripts based on the dissertation research. At least one of the manuscripts must report study findings. The final product must also include a title page, abstract, introduction, and concluding narrative to tie the manuscripts into a comprehensive project. Selected journals are decided by the student and their advisor with committee input. The student must be the first author on each manuscript. PDFs of already published articles are acceptable. Copyright releases are provided where applicable.

Historical Dissertation

The chair, student, and committee members should discuss preferences and clarify a process for reviewing drafts of the dissertation early in the dissertation-writing phase. Some prefer to read the entire draft and others prefer to review each chapter or manuscript separately.

Scheduling the Dissertation Defense

When the dissertation has been written and the dissertation chair agrees that it is ready for defense, the student has the responsibility to distribute the finished copy of the dissertation to committee members and to arrange a location, a date, and a 2-hour block of time that is satisfactory to all committee members for the oral defense of the dissertation. The student must distribute the final version of the dissertation **at least two weeks** prior to the defense date. Distribution less than two weeks in advance risks rescheduling the defense date.

Oral Defense

The chair leads the oral defense. They introduce the student and committee to the audience and outline the structure of the oral defense. Typically, this includes:

- A 30-minute oral presentation of the dissertation study including the research problem, background and significance, research questions or hypothesis or aims, methods, findings, limitations, and implications;
- Questions and comments from visitors in the audience;
- Further discussion, questions, comments, and examination from the chair and committee only (public is excused);
- Conferral among the chair and committee (student is excused). During this closed session, the committee identifies changes or additional work that should be completed, and

- determines the outcome of the dissertation defense (pass, does not pass);
- The student is invited to return to the room and discusses 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 typically, as a matter of convenience, sign the [Final Examination](#) form. 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 committee members will sign the Final Examination form with a recommendation of approval until and unless these major changes or additions have been presented and defended and the entire dissertation found satisfactory. The Approval of Final PhD Dissertation for Submission to Libra form will be signed by the Chair when all changes or additions have been submitted and found acceptable.

Reporting the Results of the Dissertation Defense

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

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

Students are required to communicate with their advisor regarding the necessity of continuing to keep the study protocol active with the IRB (HSR/SBS). Once manuscripts from the study have been published, the protocol should be closed as there is a financial charge to keep a study open.

Application to Graduate and Thesis Submission

The GSAS process must be followed carefully. For guidance, please see Thesis Submission and Graduation for detailed information. See also Table 1: Timeline.

The application to graduate must be submitted via SIS by:

- February 1 if the degree is to be conferred in May
- July 1 if the degree is to be conferred in August
- October 1 if the degree is to be conferred in December

NOTE: 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.

Additional guidelines:

- Copyright guidelines must be followed. For guidance, see [Copyright Essentials](#).
- The [Final Exam Form](#) must be submitted to GSAS as a requirement of the degree.
- The [Survey of Earned Doctorates](#) must be completed during the semester in which the student is receiving their degree.
- Per [Provost Policy 014](#), all graduate students who submit a dissertation as a condition of a degree program do so electronically through Libra, the permanent digital repository of the University Library. Upload the final, approved version of the dissertation via [Libra](#).

Table 2: Timeline

Anticipated graduation month	May	August	December
Apply for degree in SIS	January 15	June 30	September 30
Complete Survey of Earned Doctorates	During final spring semester	During spring semester or summer	During final fall semester
Submit PhD Final Dissertation Defense Announcement	2 weeks prior to defense date	2 weeks prior to defense date	2 weeks prior to defense date
Dissertation submitted to entire committee	March 15	June 15	October 15
Oral defense on or before	April 1	July 1	November 1
Submit Approval of Final Dissertation and GSAS Final Exam form	Upon completion of dissertation defense and approval by committee	Upon completion of dissertation defense and approval by committee	Upon completion of dissertation defense and approval by committee
Upload to Libra	April 30	July 31	November 30

Note that application for degree in SIS and Libra submission dates are set by the University and are not changeable. More information is available [here](#).

Opportunities and Resources

Opportunities for teaching

Students are encouraged to develop their teaching skills while in the PhD program and should discuss opportunities with their advisor. This can be accomplished in several ways. The UVa Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) offers workshops and seminars every semester on basic and advanced teaching skills. The Center also offers information on developing a teaching portfolio. In their GTA role, students can develop the skills of preparing a lecture, writing examination questions, grading written assignments, and/or providing clinical supervision. Students should discuss these opportunities with the course professor and establish expectations early in the semester. Students may also seek employment as a clinical instructor in the undergraduate program. The SON offers courses in nursing education and pedagogy.

PhD+

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

Program and Academic Policies and Procedures

Student Responsibilities

Students are responsible 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](#) and the [SON Registrar’s web site](#). Students are also responsible for completing an Individual Development Plan with their advisors each academic year and for providing updates on their progress and achievements each spring when requested by the PhD Program Director.

Visiting Students

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

Research Related Guidelines

Acknowledgement of External Funding

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

Human Subjects and Animal Care and Use Protections

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

The dissertation chair is jointly responsible, with the student, for the accuracy of the information provided on any Institutional Review Board (Health Sciences Research or Social and Behavioral Sciences) and must be included in the protocol.

Students are required to communicate with their advisor regarding the necessity of continuing to keep the study protocol active with the IRB (HSR/SBS). Once manuscripts from the study have been published, the protocol should be closed as there is a financial charge to keep a study open.

Academic Related Policies

Below is information most commonly requested by students. For a complete review of academic policies related to the doctoral program, see the [UVA Graduate Record](#).

Grades

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

For certain courses in which the department does not require a final examination, permission can be granted to grade those courses on an S/U (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory) basis.

A report of IN (incomplete) on a graduate course is changed by the University Registrar to a failing grade if the course is not completed by the end of 200 days. Students in which no grade was recorded (NG on the transcript) are also changed to a failing grade after 200 days. Failing grades recorded in this manner have the same effect on the student’s record and status as failing grades assigned by instructors.

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 distinguish between 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 the criteria of the authorship guidelines above. The guiding principle is that authorship should reflect meaningful contribution to the final product. In no case should

authorship be awarded in an honorary fashion.

Financial Resources

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

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

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

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

Awards

NRSA: National Research Service Awards

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

Barbara Brodie PhD Scholar Award

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

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

The Phyllis J. Verhonick Award

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

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

University and External Funding Opportunities

The [Office of Graduate Studies and Post-Doctoral Programs](#) maintains a list of University and external funding opportunities for PhD students.

Additional Sources of Grant Support

There are several additional sources of grant funding. Students are encouraged to explore organizations in their specialty area and consult with their advisors regarding the appropriateness of a particular grant mechanism. Examples of sources of funding are listed on below and additional sources are updated each semester on the Office of Nursing Research web site (ONR). <https://community.nursing.virginia.edu/onr/> . Due to changing deadlines, students should read the funding opportunity announcement, program announcement, or foundation's website for specific deadlines.

Table 3: External Award Examples

Sponsor	Type of Award/Program
NIH	Institutional National Research Service Awards (NRSA) All Academic Research Enhancement Awards (AREA), except those involving AIDS-related research New Research Grants, Conferences, and Career Development Awards, all Program Project and Center Grants Interactive Research Project Grants Competing Continuation, Supplemental and Revised Grants Individual National Research Service Awards (NRSA) Predoctoral Individual NRSA's to Promote Diversity in Health-Related Research All AIDS-Related Grants
AHRQ	Health Services Dissertation Research Predoctoral Fellowship Awards for Minority Students (F31) Mentored Clinical Scientist Development Award; Independent Scientist Award; Small Project Grant Program Small Grant Program for Conference Support Individual Postdoctoral Fellowships Health Services Research

ANF Internally Funded and Externally Funded Nursing Research Grants www.ana.org
NOTE: The dissertation proposal must have been defended.

STTI Small Grant Program

ONF Small Research Grant
Career Development Awards

CDC <http://www.cdc.gov/grants/>

AAHN H-31 Predoctoral Award Research grants at www.aahn.org

APPENDIX A: Individualized Development Plan

The IDP is distributed to students depending on their year in the program. Questions on the IDP are provided below. However, which questions appear on the IDP depends on the year. For example, the Year 4 IDP does not include questions about coursework because by that time, coursework should be completed.

Coursework

- Completed 1st year core courses?
- Completed cognates and electives?
- Which cognates and electives have you taken?

Comprehensive Exam

- When do you anticipate taking the comprehensive exam?

Research Goals

Research practicum focus

- What specific activities will be the focus of your research practicum this semester? (study design, literature review, supporting IRB submission, data collection/analysis, manuscript/abstract preparation)

Scholarly dissemination

- What is the focus of your abstract/manuscript this year? (literature review, concept analysis, data-based manuscript, none)
- Have you discussed authorship, the journal or conference where the paper or abstract will be submitted, and the timeline for submission?
- What support or feedback will be most helpful in completing this project?

Developmental Reflection

- What 1-2 research skills do you most need to strengthen this semester?
- What specific activities (courses, practicum work, writing, mentoring) will support this development?

1=emerging; 2=developing, 3=proficient/strong

Research Skills	1	2	3
Critical reading of the literature			
Research design			
Statistical analysis and interpretation			
Understanding manuscript submission/ responding to reviewers			
Ability to provide useful peer review			
Identifying need for and seeking advice			
Time management			
Nursing theory/conceptual frameworks			
Identifying funding mechanisms			
Grant writing			
Scholarly writing			

Dissertation Progress

- Brainstorm ideas for your dissertation study
- What are the specific aims of your study?
- What designs are you contemplating?
- What instruments, data sets, resources do you anticipate needing?
- Dissertation proposal defense date
- What resources or support do you anticipate needing?
- Dissertation committee members
- Planned dissertation defense date

Funding and Professional Development

- What research grants or fellowships do you plan to submit?
- What assistance do you need in preparing these applications?
- What conferences do you plan to attend?

Challenges and Support

- Describe any challenges that may affect progress this semester
- What strategies can be used to address these challenges?
- How can the PhD program best support you?

Teaching Goals and Development

- What is your GTA assignment this semester?
- Briefly describe your GTA responsibilities and teaching activities
- How will you assess your progress in teaching (e.g., feedback from faculty member, observation from faculty, self-reflection)?

Complete the teaching skills table 1=emerging; 2=developing, 3=proficient/strong

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

Mentoring

- What aspects of mentoring have been most beneficial?
- What changes or additional support would improve your mentoring experience?
- What have been your GRA experiences this semester so far?

Long-term Professional Goals

- What are your long-term professional goals?
- What guidance or experiences would help you achieve those goals?

- Are there factors that could negatively affect your progress?

Benchmarks (submit to Program Lead by March 15 annually)

Complete the following table as appropriate

Benchmark	Date Planned	Date Completed	TBD
Comprehensive Exam			
Proposal Defense			
Dissertation Defense			

Benchmark	Date Accepted	Citation (APA format) or “in progress”	Submitted/in review/in revision
Manuscript			
Manuscript			
Manuscript			

	Citation (see examples below)
Conference presentation	
Conference presentation	
Conference presentation	
Grant proposal	
Grant proposal	
Grant proposal	
Other product	
Other product	

For conferences: Please list any podium or poster presentations at conferences that you are listed as author (either the presenter or a co-presenter). Use APA format and make clear whether a poster or a presentation. Follow example below.

Bhandari, S., Bullock, L., & Sharps, P. (2009, October; under review; accepted for publication). Coping among pregnant, rural, low-income women facing intimate partner violence. Poster session presented at the National Conference on Health and Domestic Violence, New Orleans, LA.

For grant proposals: Please list any grant proposals submitted (NRSA, other), including title, funding agency, amount requested, your role, and all sponsors and co-sponsors, and current status (not funded, funded, pending). Please format as the examples below.

Bullock, L. (PI) (2005-2010; submitted September 2005; not funded). Nursing support: Better infant outcomes in violent homes. NIH/NICHHD. Funded: R01: HD045542.

APPENDIX B: Comprehensive Exam Evaluation Tool



PhD Program Comprehensive Exam Evaluation Rubric

Student Name: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Committee Member Name: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Date: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Committee Member's Evaluation: Pass Fail (with revision) Fail (without revision)

The committee has up to three weeks from receipt of the completed exam to grade it and should submit their completed rubric to the student's advisor. The advisor will submit the completed rubrics to the PhD Program Lead and Program Manager for PhD Program, and will notify the student of their exam results.

Criterion For each attribute that a committee member feels is unacceptable, a short explanation should be provided. Comment sections are provided at the bottom of the rubric for explanations of the overall evaluation of the examinee's performance if desired.	Not Acceptable (important aspects are neglected or incomplete)	Acceptable (meets requirements)	Distinguished (exceeds requirements)
Scientific Content			
Demonstrates ability to select, organize, and summarize the current state of knowledge related to the areas of inquiry in which the student is developing expertise.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Synthesizes and critically evaluates the supporting literature relevant to the student's area of inquiry.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Develops a logical argument for the basis of their research project that is supported by evidence drawn the literature.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates capacity for original thought.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Demonstrates a high level of knowledge of research method(s) related to the areas of inquiry in which the student is developing expertise.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Describes the theoretical perspectives and conceptual issues that inform the student's conceptual or historical framework.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rhetorical Aspects			
Achieves general cohesion of ideas within each response	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creates a logical text and organizational structure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Technical Aspects			
Uses correct spelling and punctuation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employs proper grammar and usage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adheres to scientific style (e.g., APA, Chicago), as determined by faculty review committee.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

APPENDIX C: Thesis Submission and Graduation Steps

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

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

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

APPENDIX D: Graduate Research Assistantships

Guidelines for Graduate Research Assistantships

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

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

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

As hourly research assistants (RAs). These hourly roles are for specific, short-term research projects. Faculty directly hire students to carry out these responsibilities.

As students enrolled in a research practicum credit. Students are required to complete 4 credits of research practicum minimum over the course of their PhD program. This work is intended to augment the students' education and training as a researcher. Students are not paid for this work. The work may be completed under the supervision of the faculty advisor or another faculty (but requires the faculty advisor's approval).

GRA Best Practices

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

Expectations of Advisors

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

The advisor should:

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

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

Expectations of Students

Students should:

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