UConn Nursing PhD Program Handbook 2024-2025

UCONN
SCHOOL OF NURSING

Prepared by:

Nancy S. Redeker, PhD, RN, FAHA, FAAN
Senior Associate Dean for Research & Scholarship
nancy.redeker@uconn.edu

Louise Reagan, PhD, APRN, FAANP, FAAN
Director, PhD Program
louise.reagan@uconn.edu

Kathryn Heinzman
Program Coordinator, Research & PhD Programs
Storrs Hall, Room 215
Kathryn.heinzman@uconn.edu

UCONN
SCHOOL OF NURSING

PhD Program
30 Years of Excellence
From 1994 to Today

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UCONN
UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT

Welcome to UConn!

Welcome to the UConn Community of Scholars! This handbook is a reference for faculty and students in the PhD Program in the School of Nursing (SON) at the University of Connecticut (UConn). This handbook supplements the Graduate School catalog.

Our faculty and staff will communicate with through messages to UConn email addresses or those distributed on the SON doctoral listserv.

The PhD Program website will provide continually updated information. The Graduate School and Registrar's Office websites provide current information on university requirements and necessary forms and documents. Helpful links are at the end of this Handbook.

The handbook will be updated annually. Once the plan of study is filed, any changes made to the curriculum or scholarly portfolio do not apply. However, changes in process are relevant to progression in the program.

The Major Advisor, faculty, and staff are always available to address any questions, concerns, or issues.

Best wishes for a smooth and fulfilling PhD experience.

Sincerely yours,

Nancy S. Redeker, PhD, RN, FAHA, FAAN
Professor
Senior Associate Dean for Research & Scholarship
Interim Director, PhD Program
Tel: 860-486-0573
Nancy.redeker@uconn.edu

PRAXIS Pledge

The **PRAXIS Pledge** is the guiding compass for behavior in the SON and UConn. All students are held responsible to and accountable for this pledge; adherence is expected and violations will be adjudicated.

Professionalism in behavior, presentation, and conduct

Respectful of the richness and diversity of others and of self

Accountability for my actions

eXcellence in scholarship, practice, teaching and service

Integrity, inquisitiveness, and innovation

Service to the profession and the community

UConn SON PhD Program – History and Overview

The UConn School of Nursing (SON) PhD Program admitted its first class in August 1994, and the first student graduated in 1999. From the beginning, our focus was on developing and advancing the theoretical, conceptual, and empirical basis for our discipline. We emphasize the use of contemporary research methods to develop new knowledge that addresses the pressing questions in nursing and healthcare.

Our goal is for students to complete the degree in no more than four years to enable them to conduct high quality timely research that addresses critical problems in nursing and health care and serve as nurse scientists and leaders in academic, clinical, and policy roles. Highly organized and motivated students have completed the program in three years. The UConn Graduate School requires that the program be completed within eight years of matriculation.

The UConn SON PhD program supports students to achieve their research and leadership aspirations through learning experiences that reflect current and future health care needs. Therefore, we provide many opportunities for nurses to have a broad range of experiences to grasp the depth and breadth of conducting nursing science in the real world and to obtain leadership skills to advance health.

PhD students complete course work in philosophy of science, nursing theory and qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research approaches. They learn skills in grant writing and the responsible conduct of research. PhD students also complete six credits of Courses Supportive of the Dissertation (CSDA or cognates), which are included in their personalized Plans of Study (see below for more information).

Upon completion of course work and all prescribed experiences (e.g., general exam, publication, and dissertation), our graduates are prepared to:

1. Advance philosophical and theoretical bases of nursing by:
    a. Analyzing knowledge development and its influence on the past, present, and future of the nursing profession
    b. Generating knowledge to support the philosophical and theoretical bases of nursing using empirical, ethical, esthetic, and existential methods
2. Conduct original inquiry that advances nursing science by:
    a. Using cutting-edge research methods to study nursing phenomena that are important to health and health care
    b. Evaluating philosophical bases and assumptions of varied research methods
    c. Integrating knowledge and skills needed to secure competitive funding

3. Provide leadership in resolving significant health care issues by:
   a. Applying expert nursing knowledge to the resolution of health care issues.
   b. Using decision-making and problem-solving processes to influence health care policy.

Out of classroom learning experiences

PhD students are expected to be active members on SON faculty committees, attend faculty and student development sessions, participate in 'Lunch & Learn' sessions, and attend other seminars and learning activities beyond the required course work. Through these socialization activities, students are immersed and supported to forge long-lasting relationships and networks that optimize and enrich their research and leadership trajectories.

Research and teaching experiences

We expect students to seek hands-on research and teaching opportunities in their areas of expertise, while completing their programs of study and receiving formative feedback from expert scholars. These experiences will strengthen students' portfolios and assure successful transition to future careers.

I. PhD Advisory Committee

An Advisory Committee will collectively mentor doctoral students throughout coursework, the general exam, dissertation development, final defense, manuscript preparation, and graduation. The role of the Advisory Committee is to guide professional development and critique the students' work as it progresses.

Members must be carefully and deliberately selected, with consideration of the methodological, theoretical/conceptual, and content expertise and dynamic interactions among the committee members.

A. Advisory Committee Composition

All students must have a Major Advisor (MA). The MA is a SON faculty member with a UConn Graduate School Appointment. The MA is assigned at the time of admission to the PhD Program based on the fit of the advisor's expertise with the student's research interests and/or research methods. The student's research interests should be consistent with the MA's active areas of research. This can be methodological or content-based (e.g., conceptual ideas, theory, health care problem to be addressed).

Advisory committees consist of three faculty members (one Major Advisor and two Associate Advisors). The MA guides the student to invite the Associate Advisors. Configuration of the Advisory Committee must be complete by the end of the first year or upon completion of 12 credits, whichever comes first, consistent with Graduate School policy.

At least one Associate Advisor must be a member of the UConn faculty with a Graduate School appointment, and the third may be a non-UConn faculty member. The student selects Associate Advisors with the guidance of the MA. For the General Exam and the Dissertation, the PhD Program Director will assign two external readers with relevant expertise. The PhD Program Director will approve the committee.

The Advisory Committee must meet regularly to guide the student's work. The communication and coordination of the Advisory Committee rests with the PhD student, who will schedule meetings on a regular basis. Meetings can be in person, by phone, or through electronic means. Regular meetings (i.e., at least monthly with the MA and once per semester with the entire committee) can best help assure continued progression in the PhD program early in students' progression. Meetings will need to be more frequent during the dissertation phase.

All members must have terminal degrees in their respective fields. Associate Advisors from outside the University must meet the criteria for graduate faculty status. Associate Advisors from outside the University must submit up-to-date CVs to the PhD Program Director and Registrar's Office for approval. More information about the UConn graduate degree program advisory system is on the Graduate School website.

B. Committee Roles and Responsibilities

   1. Student
   a. Initiate regularly scheduled advisory meetings.
   b. Schedule an advising appointment with the MA before registering for coursework each semester.
   c. Meet regularly with the MA to review the student's course of study.
   d. Address recommendations of the advisory committee in a timely manner.
   e. Seek assistance when progression issues occur.
   f. Be pro-active in seeking guidance when there are diverse sources of feedback, and decision-making is needed for future progress. Ask questions!

   2. Major Advisor (MA) Roles and Responsibilities
   The PhD Admissions & Progressions Committee works with faculty to determine the best match for the student at the time of admission based on areas of common research interests, methods, and faculty experts.

   a. File doctoral advisement notes in the student record at least twice yearly.
   b. Provide guidance and feedback on drafting and updating the student's biosketch – please see resources at the end of this document for more information. This should be submitted annually by email to the PhD Program Coordinator.
   c. Meet regularly with the student advisement committee to assure the student's progression in the program. Any member of the advisement committee can ask for a meeting; however, it is the responsibility of the student to schedule

the meeting time and location at times and places acceptable to all parties.
   d. Facilitate timely completion of and adherence to the student's plan of study.

3. **Roles of Associate Advisors (AA)**
   a. Assist with developing the student's plan of study to meet PhD Program requirements.
   b. Provide subject matter or methodological expertise to diversify perspectives.

4. **Roles of Reviewers/Readers**
   a. Every general exam and dissertation committee must have at least two external reviewers/readers.
   b. Reviewers/readers must hold terminal degrees in areas complementary to the student's program of study.
   c. Non-UConn committee members must provide CVs to the UConn Graduate School prior to serving.
   d. Serve as final checks and balance as committee members have helped design and implement the study.
   e. Be approved to serve on the committee by the PhD Program Director
   f. Critique the student's product and contribute to the deliberations, but do not vote on the outcome of the general exam or dissertation defense.

5. **Change of Major Advisor**
   It may be necessary to change a MA (e.g., if students have substantive changes in research directions or if a faculty member leaves the university).
   a. Requests to change a MA must be submitted to the PhD Admissions and Progression Committee via the PhD Program Director. The committee will review the request and decide to change the advisor or guide the student in different directions if appropriate. Discussions will be held with all parties before a decision is made.
   b. If a change is approved, a Change in Major Advisor Form must be completed by the student, signed by the original and new advisor, and submitted to the PhD Program Director AND the Registrar's Office.

6. **Change in Associate Advisor**
   The Advisory Committee, with the student, makes the decision to change associate advisors as needed. The process for this is below:

   a. Student notifies the Program Coordinator of the change. The Program Coordinator will update the files.
   b. If the new Associate Advisor is outside UConn, an updated CV must be submitted to the PhD Director and Registrar's Office. This may be sent by email to the registrar (registrar@uconn.edu) and PhD Program Director noting the student's name and who the new person is replacing on the committee.

E. Communication with the Advisory Committee

UConn email is the only email used, and materials circulated through that format are official documents. The times for communication vary based on whether they occur during the academic year or the summer. Although students continue toward program milestones throughout the year, Major Advisor and committee member appointments vary between 9-month, 10-month, 11-month, or 12-month appointments. These schedules must be considered when interacting with the faculty.

1. **Academic Year**
   a. School of Nursing email communications between students and faculty generally will be addressed within two business days following receipt of message.
   b. Advisors are expected to provide feedback on chapter/project drafts, IRB applications, etc. to students within two weeks of receipt.

2. **Summer**
   a. General Exams, dissertation proposal reviews, and/or dissertation defenses are not routinely held May 23rd through August 22nd.
   b. Summer schedules differ, and timelines must be discussed before the end of each semester so that student progression can continue without impeding faculty scholarship and summer activities.
   c. MAs should notify students of plans and develop timelines for communication during the summer months. Independent study credits with MAs are an option to compensate faculty for their time during the summer months for those on 9- or 10-month contracts.

II. PhD Program Requirements and Milestones

A. Curriculum & Plan of Study

The program of study sequence for required courses is prescribed, yet individualized. (See the UConn SON PhD Program website for current recommended course sequencing).

1. An official individualized Plan of Study must be completed by the student and signed by the student's three-person Advisory Committee prior to the completion of the first year of study or the completion of 12 credits, whichever comes first. Submission at this point in the student's progression in the program is consistent with the Graduate School policy. Timely preparation and submission of the plan of study facilitates course offering decisions and serves as a contract between the student and UConn.

2. Students are responsible for submitting the executed form to the PhD Program Director (CC: Program Coordinator). The PhD Program Coordinator will submit the form to the Registrar's Office, and an electronic copy will be uploaded to the student's electronic file on the PhD program computer network.

3. Students may make changes to the plan of study, and these must be approved by the Advisory Committee. Substituting one CSDA (Course Supportive of the Dissertation) for another course requires approval and a change of plan of study submission, whereas a change in the timing of the semester in which the course occurs does not require a change in the plan of study.

4. Each spring, students will submit updated progress reports and electronic NIH NBCI Biosketches to the PhD Admissions & Progress Committee via the Program Coordinator **(due May 1)**. Biosketches must follow the NIH NCBI guidelines (see Resources at the end of this document). These files will be saved to the School's electronic files and will also be included in the student's Scholarly Portfolio.

B. The General Exam (*MUST* be completed within four years of matriculation)

The programmatic goal for the General Exam is that the PhD curriculum prepares students for independent scholarly work. Completion of the General Exam demonstrates student learning and skills for independence based on completed course work. The General Exam is a two-part process (written and oral); both parts must be passed to be successful. The product of the general exam is a publishable manuscript in a peer-reviewed journal on a topic and format approved by the student's three-person advisory committee. The General Exam may be completed after 75% of the program coursework, exclusive of GRAD 6950, has been completed consistent with Graduate School policies.

1. **The Written Component:**

   The overall concept and format for the General Exam must be approved by the student's committee prior to the student commencing work on the General Exam (see General Exam forms [see PhD student resources]).

   a. Acceptable formats include integrated or systematic review (using the PRISMA guidelines), meta-synthesis, meta-analysis, concept or theory analysis, philosophy paper, and secondary analysis of publicly available data. Formats that require IRB review are ***not*** permitted because the project would not be considered independent due to the need for the major advisor to be the PI for UCONN IRB submission.

   b. With the advanced permission of the three-person advisory committee, a student may seek technical assistance on a specific issue, e.g., statistical question, if the issue is beyond what a typical graduate student would be expected to know because of the program of study. Otherwise, the paper should reflect only the student's efforts as would be expected on any exam.

   c. Student self-assesses paper using the Grading Rubric

   d. Once all areas are met on the rubric, the student will submit the completed paper simultaneously to their three-person advisory committee during the academic year August 23rd through April 1st (this end date gives time for the first review and potential defense prior to the end of the academic year). The committee will not provide editorial feedback; they will only determine if the paper is sufficiently developed to proceed to the oral portion of the general exam. The committee may provide general feedback on areas needing revision. For example, the committee may indicate that a problem exists with the analysis, but the feedback may not be specific and may not include any advice on how to address the concerns. ONE revision is acceptable. If the second submission does not meet standards, the student may not continue with the PhD Program at the School of Nursing.

   e. The MA will submit the committee-approved paper to the student's two reviewers/readers (selected by the MA in collaboration with the PhD Program Director). As with the committee members, the reviewers/readers will not provide editorial feedback to the student; they will only determine if the paper is sufficiently developed to proceed to the oral portion of the general exam (pass/fail). The readers may provide general feedback on needed areas of revision, but the feedback may not be specific and may not include any advice on how to address concern. The student may revise and resubmit, ONE TIME, for the approval of the two readers. If the paper is not acceptable after the second review, the student may not continue in the PhD program in the SON.

     f. General exams are usually not reviewed nor defended May 23rd through August 22nd.

2. The Oral Component:

The oral portion of the exam will include discussion and defense of the paper, an overview of the student's program of study underlying it, and a plan for future research, including the dissertation topic. The five-person general exam committee will examine the paper contents and the student's research plan and the student's ability to apply philosophy, theory, and research methods within the context of the student's stated area of expertise.

    a. The PhD Student prepares a presentation adhering to the Grading rubric

    b. The PhD student schedules the oral portion of the general exam (August 23rd through May 22nd).

    c. The Report on the General Exam is used at the oral defense for faculty comments and approval signatures. The PhD Program Coordinator will submit the executed Report on the General Exam to the Registrar's office, and a copy will be saved in the student's file in the SON Q: Drive.

        a. Outcomes for the General Exam are Pass, Pass with Remedial Action Required, and Fail.

        b. Students have one opportunity to retake the oral component if the outcome is a failure.

        c. If the student has completed their masters' coursework and should have their master's degree conferred, a letter requesting this action from the MA should be included in the paperwork submission for the General Exam.

    d. The completed paper must be submitted for publication as part of the student's scholarly portfolio; however, the paper may *not* be applied toward the three-article alternate dissertation option. Following the defense of the general exam, the committee may provide additional feedback to the student to strengthen the manuscript and to enhance its chances for acceptance.

Once the student passes the general exam, they may proceed to the PhD degree dissertation phase, and if their cognate courses are complete and their proposal has been accepted by the Graduate School, they are a PhD candidate.

C. Dissertation and Defense Procedures

1. Dissertation Format:

There are two options for completion of the dissertation - An approved proposal is required for either format.

Commented [BC1]: Do students get only one time to pass the oral component or do they get 2 tries like the written component before they have to leave the PhD program?

Five Chapter Dissertation
The five-chapter dissertation includes a report of a single study (Chapter 1. Overview of Problem; Chapter 2. Review of Literature; Chapter 3. Study Methods; 4. Results; 5. Discussion/Application and Conclusions).

Manuscript Dissertation
The manuscript style dissertation includes five chapters with the same first (Overview of Problem) and last (Discussion/application and Conclusions) chapters as the five-chapter dissertation. The other three chapters consist of manuscripts that have been or will be submitted for publication. At least one of these manuscripts **must be** the primary research report of the dissertation study.

The student and the Advisory Committee will determine the contents of the three manuscripts. Dissertation manuscripts may include one or more research reports, an integrative or systematic review/synthesis paper, or a methods paper. The MA and the Advisory committee collaborate with students on determining authorship. However, It is preferable that the student be the first author on all three papers, as these papers should reflect the students' major contribution to these works. These documents should be consistent with the overall direction of the dissertation research and not represent disparate topics.

Authorship will be determined based on the ICMJE (International Committee of Medical Journal Editors) Standards (see Resources for link) based on the contributions of each author. Authors can include non-members of the Advisory Committee, as appropriate, given their contributions toward the manuscript. Students should seek guidance of their MAs regarding decisions about authorship.

If the manuscript is already published at the time of the defense, the student may need to request a copyright transfer to include the work(s) in the dissertation. It is advisable that the student begin obtaining copyright transfer early in the final dissertation process, if not retained before publishing the manuscript.

Dissertation Proposal Guidelines

1. REQUIRED ARE:
    A. An accurate title.
    B. A concise statement which includes (a) the purpose, importance, and novelty of the study, (b) methods and techniques to be used, (c) availability and location of research facilities, and (d) a statement concerning the use of any human or animal subjects that are involved in the research.
    C. A selected bibliography.

2. The Proposal is to be as brief as possible without sacrificing completeness.

3. Please limit appendices and other attachments to those that are essential.

Proposals of unnecessary length are discouraged since reviewers lack the time to read them.

Within the School of Nursing, it is expected that:
    a. The proposal NOT exceed 10 pages **DOUBLE SPACED** (excluding tables, figures and references).
    b. The exact format will vary by the type of study but, in general, the proposal needs to include:
        A. Title
        B. Brief introduction
        C. Statement and significance of the problem (in lieu of an in depth review of the literature)
        D. Conceptual or theoretical structure for the study
        E. Research question, hypothesis
        F. Methods & design
        G. Population & sampling
        H. Instruments
        I. Planned Analysis
        J. Timeframe
        K. Budget
        L. References
    c. Complete approval (committee and reviewers/readers) is required PRIOR to submitting the IRB application.

4. IRB applications needs to be approved by Major Advisor prior to submission.

2. **Steps to Follow:**
   a. Students must take cognates in addition to required nursing courses to prepare for the dissertation. If the student changes the topic or methods for the dissertation after completing coursework, they may need to take additional cognates to support its successful completion.
   b. Enrollment in GRAD 6950 (15 credits total) is required for graduation.
   c. After students register for dissertation credits, they must participate in the dissertation seminar each semester until it is complete.
   d. After the student has completed 15 dissertation credits (GRAD 6950), they should register for GRAD 6999 instead of registering for more dissertation credits. Students must be registered for graduate coursework each semester. Participation in the dissertation seminar **is required** during this time.
   e. The student prepares the Proposal according to the Dissertation Specifications listed on the Registrar's Steps to a Successful Graduation webpage (see Resources for link).
   f. Initial drafts of the Proposal are sent to the MA **only**; the MA will determine when drafts are ready to be distributed to Associate Advisors for their input/feedback. (This is the process both before and after the proposal is approved). The MA will review the preferred process.
   g. The student's three-person Advisory committee reviews the Dissertation

Proposal. Pending Advisory Committee approval, the student and advisor share the proposal with the readers. Once the proposal is approved, the student may apply for IRB/IACUC approval, as appropriate (See guidelines).

h. Dissertation proposals are typically not reviewed between May 23rd and August 22nd due to faculty work schedules.

3. **Dissertation Proposal Process Roles and Responsibilities**

Student Role

The student is responsible for:

a. Gathering all signatures on the relevant forms (see below). The student should request assistance from their MA and the PhD Program Director.
b. Ensuring that all procedures in the proposed project are approved by the IRB/IACUC before data collection.
c. Obtaining current CVs for non-UConn Associate advisors/readers and submitting them with the dissertation Proposal paperwork.
d. Submitting the completed electronic hard copies of the signed Graduate School forms to the PhD Program Director. Students may request assistance from the PhD Program Coordinator for document submission. Copies of submitted Proposal paperwork will also be saved to the student's file on the SON file server.

Required documentation

The student provides the MA with the following documents:

a. **The Proposal** (a well-labeled electronic file is acceptable; please ask the MA for their preferences). The Dissertation Proposal for the Doctoral Degree form should not be signed by all committee members until the entire proposal process is completed.
b. **IRB/IACUC Approval** document(s). The approval documents must be current. If UConn IRB is not the IRB of record, a copy of the approval document from the IRB of record AND acceptance document from UConn IRB acknowledging non-UConn said IRB of Record. The faculty advisory must be listed as the Principal Investigator on these materials per IRB Regulations

Major Advisor Role and Responsibilities

a. Recommend readers to the PhD Program Director. The PhD Program Director is responsible for selecting reviewers.
b. Submit a signed electronic copy of the Proposal and Doctoral Proposal Review Cover Sheet to the PhD Program Director for distribution to reviewers.
c. Work with the student to ensure that updated copies of CVs are provided and reviewed for all non-UConn members of the Advisory Committee and submit to the PhD Program Director at the time the Proposal is submitted.
d. The readers will use the Doctoral Proposal Review Cover Sheet to provide their

feedback to the student.

PhD Program Director Role and Responsibilities
a. Send the committee approved Proposal and Doctoral Proposal Review Cover Sheet to the reviewers/readers with a request for a two-week turn-around time for the review during the academic year.
b. Notify the MA of the reviewers'/readers' decision/recommendations.

4. **IRB/IACUC (Animal Use and Care) Applications**:
IRB approval must be obtained before submitting the final Dissertation Proposal to the Graduate School. IRB/IACUC applications must not be submitted until final input from the reviewers is addressed. Students may begin the application process while the reviewers have the proposal, but they cannot submit it until all final changes of the review process are accepted. No data can be collected until full approval has been obtained.
   a. CITI training must be complete and up to date prior to IRB submission for all personnel to be included on the project. The link to this is listed in resources at the end of this document.
   b. The MA reviews and approves student IRB and IACUC applications. Before the students submit the applications, MAs notify the UConn IRB office via e-mail to request that the student be added to the faculty member's InfoEd Profile before the application is submitted.
   c. Students submit the IRB application through InfoEd with routing to the MA and the designated SON representative.
   d. IRB approval must also be obtained from other sites that may be involved with the project (i.e., clinical agencies and other universities).
   e. Depending on whether the student will be submitting to the UConn IRB or an external IRB, the procedures vary.
      • For students applying to the UCONN IRB, all IRB materials must be approved by the MA and submitted through InfoEd. The proposal will be routed to the Senior Associate Dean for Research through the InfoEd system for review.
      • For students applying to external IRBs (Institutional Review Board), the procedures in those institutions should be followed and then approved by the UCONN IRB through a reliance agreement. The MA and the Senior Associate Dean for Research will assist the student with this process.

5. **Submission of Proposal to Registrar's Office**
After the reviewers'/readers' and IRB/IACUC approvals, the student provides an electronic copy of the final proposal, IRB approval form(s) and Dissertation Proposal Approval Form to the PhD Program Coordinator who will send the package of information to the Registrar. Copies of all submitted paperwork will be saved in the student's electronic file.

6. **Advancement to Candidacy**

To advance to candidacy the student must:

a. Fulfill the language requirements and any related or supporting areas of study. In the School of Nursing, the language requirement is met thorough the completion of two courses outside the School of Nursing that support the dissertation. These courses are chosen by the student with the Advisory Committee and submitted as an aspect of the Plan of Study). Students must

   b. Pass the General Examination (Written and Oral).

   c. Complete all coursework on the Plan of Study (except GRAD 6950)

   d. Receive approval from the Graduate School Executive Committee has approved the dissertation proposal. A letter of candidacy is sent to students by the Graduate School when students successfully completed all requirements for the degree except the dissertation and oral defense.

   e. Students may *not* use the initials PhD(c), these credentials are inappropriate and not recognized by the School of Nursing or the University. Students may sign their names with their credentials and then use the words "PhD Candidate," if desired.

7. **Completing the Dissertation**

Manuscripts/chapters may be submitted in the format required for the planned journal for submission rather than APA format. These decisions will be made collaboratively between the students and their advisors.

Student role

The student will keep the MA and AA appraised of progress with data collection and writing. The student should discuss whether the MA prefers to receive all chapters together or each component separately. The student needs to address the feedback from the Advisory Committee members in a timely manner, while carefully addressing all the committee recommendations. The student is responsible for the final product.

Major Advisor Role

The MA supervises the implementation of the research and the writing of the dissertation, including guiding student interactions with and seeking approval from AAs. The MA is the standard bearer for quality.

8. **Defense of the Dissertation**

a. Dissertation defenses are typically scheduled during the Academic Year dates of August 23rd through May 22nd. The student works with the MA to determine the best date and time and is responsible for arranging this with the Advisory Committee members.

b. The dissertation defense is an oral examination under the authority of the Advisory Committee. The purpose is to demonstrate mastery of the subject

matter and methods as presented in the dissertation. The student must allow sufficient time for the Advisory Committee to review the complete document. Students will not be permitted to proceed to the dissertation defense until the entire written document is submitted and revised by the Advisory Committee. The examination can be held:

- No earlier than seven business days after a final draft of the complete dissertation has been submitted to the Registrar's Office. The oral examination will not proceed unless this document is complete.
- Before the last day to submit paperwork for the semester the degree is to be conferred.

c. An invitation to the defense will be sent to all committee members and other SON faculty members at the request of the PhD Program Director. The invitation will be sent to the SON DNP-PHD Listserv two weeks prior to the defense. The defense is open to the UCONN community. No fewer than five members of the faculty, including all members of the candidate's advisory committee and readers, shall participate in the final examination unless written approval for a smaller number is secured in advance from the Dean of the Graduate School.

d. If students would like to invite family and/or friends to attend the defense, they should obtain advice from their MAs.

e. MAs guide doctoral students in preparing for the final defense.

f. Decisions about the outcome of the defense (pass, conditionally pass, fail) rest solely with the Advisory Committee who will account for the feedback of other participating faculty members and experts. The vote of the Advisory Committee must be unanimous. The MA shall communicate the results to the student immediately after the examination and send the official report on the examination to the PhD Program Director.

A determination of **"pass"** means that no additional changes are needed, and the dissertation is accepted as presented orally in writing. A **"conditional pass"** indicates that changes are needed, but that the dissertation will be acceptable if these changes are needed. These changes may be editorial or substantive (e.g., correctable flaws in reporting of methods or descriptions/analysis) in nature. A determination of **"fail"** indicates that there are serious and inaccurate flaws in the methods, or verbal or written reports and that significant effort must be taken to conduct new work or make significant changes. Determinations of "fail" are rare and can be avoided with careful collaboration and attention to the Advisory Committee feedback prior to the defense.

g. The student initiates the Dissertation Approval Page, a webform that is routed to the committee after the dissertation defense for their approvals. Please note that the online workflow will require the student to upload the last version of the dissertation as a part of the approval process.

h. After completing the defense, the student must submit all remaining paperwork to Registrar's Office and Open Commons no less than 10 business

days prior to the deadline.

9. **Timelines for Planning the Defense and Submission of Final Product**

   The last day for finishing everything (thereby fulfilling degree requirements) is the last day of classes in the fall and spring terms and August 24th for summer degree conferral. Therefore, a timeline should be planned to account for this.

   a. At the start of the semester in which the student plans to defend, they should review the Steps to a Successful Graduation page on the Registrar's website (see Resources for link).

   b. The defense needs to be scheduled no later than 10 days prior to the last day for submission – the final day for paperwork submission is posted on Academic Calendar (see Resources for link) on the Registrar's website. Defenses are typically scheduled between August 23rd and May 22nd.

   c. Set the defense date with the dissertation committee as early as possible. It is the student's responsibility to coordinate advisory committee schedules for the defense date. Notify the PhD Program Coordinator of the tentative date and confirm it when the date is finally set. The PhD Program Coordinator will reserve a room and technology resources.

   d. Schedule a meeting with the Graduate School office to review the dissertation copy and address details needed in preparation for graduation. A final draft of the complete dissertation must be prepared for review at this meeting. This must use the Graduate School's formatting guidelines (see Resources for link), which are based on APA style, but are slightly different.

   e. After the Advisory Committee approves the dissertation, the MA may schedule a committee meeting to verify that the student is ready for defense **before** going to the outside readers. If so, this must be part of the schedule at the beginning of the semester. The student must deliver the final copy to the committee.

   f. **Two weeks prior to the defense**, the student must:
      - Submit the announcement to the Thesis and Dissertation Defense Calendar.
      - Provide the PhD Program Coordinator the following:
         i. Legal Name
         ii. Phone Number
         iii. Student ID and NetID
         iv. Title of Dissertation/Project
         v. Names of all participating Faculty/Mentors

10. **After the Defense:**

    Students have 10 days to make any corrections and to submit the final copy of the dissertation to Open Commons. If the dissertation does not follow guidelines exactly, it will be rejected. Be sure it meets the Graduate School requirements prior to submission.

    After submitting the dissertation, consider whether to "embargo" it. Embargoing

means that it will not be publicly disseminated. This allows for the student to publish the results, preferably as one to two manuscripts within one to two years of the dissertation defense.

The IRB protocol must be closed, and final reports must be filed. These might be related to the agency where the project was completed, to the funding agency and/or the IRB. All reports must be completed as you are leaving the University. Data analysis might continue (IRB approval is needed for additional analysis), but all other work should be complete.

Attend the School of Nursing Convocation and the University PhD Commencement to celebrate your success!

III. Applications for Grant Funding to Support Research

Students are expected to submit at least one grant application as part of their portfolios for PhD study, and it is desirable to obtain funding for research. If planning to apply for funding, please contact the MA and the Senior Associate Dean for Research and Scholarship early in the process.

All funding requests (grants, scholarships, fellowships) must be submitted through the School of Nursing Research Office. Please initiate the form listed on the School of Nursing Research Website. Please note that these applications should be submitted well before the funding deadlines to allow enough time to prepare the budget and review the proposal. Moving an application for funding through the University takes time; therefore, it is important to work with the MA PhD Program Director and Coordinator early and throughout the dissertation proposal process. Please ask for this support.

Funding awarded directly to the student and not to the school is considered taxable income by federal and state law. It is strongly recommended that all submissions for external funding be submitted through the SON. Please initiate this process by completing the application on the School of Nursing Research website (see Resources for link).

IV. PhD Portfolio

A portfolio of student work is required for program completion, and the student must work with their MA, the PhD Program Director, and PhD Program Coordinator to make sure all required elements are completed. Planning and developing a portfolio should begin early in studies, and it must include the following:
- Latest curriculum vitae and NIH Biosketch
- At least one published paper and one poster or podium presentation at an external meeting
- A copy of a grant application submitted for review by an external organization or

foundation, preferably the NIH, NSF, or a national or international foundation. The student must lead (as PI or similar role) the proposal, which must relate to the dissertation topic. Other pursue grants, scholarships, or other funding mechanisms to support effort (e.g., tuition, stipend) may be supported. It is advisable to submit as many as possible as there is no guarantee that they will be funded.

The development of the portfolio should be planned at the beginning of the program and may be completed as part of coursework throughout the program. The portfolio can be used as marketing materials to assist in seeking future positions. The Scholarly Portfolio contents will be approved by the student's advisory committee and contents maintained in the SON electronic files. The format for the portfolio is individualized to student needs. It may be both in print and electronic formats and should also include information on teaching or research experiences that obtained during study.

V.   Resources and Opportunities for Students

1. **Teaching Opportunities**
   To best prepare for careers in academia, it is best to gain teaching experience while a PhD student. A graduate assistant position may include teaching a course or co-teaching a course with a faculty member.

   There are also options to present guest lectures or teach a class or classes in courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels throughout. The MA, advisory committee can assist in finding potential teaching opportunities.

   The School of Nursing offers a Health Professions Education Certificate program to prepare for careers in academic teaching. This nine-credit sequence of three courses (NURS 5700, 5710 and 5720) is offered online and can be started in any semester. These courses may be used as cognates (courses supportive of the dissertation) depending on the research focus.

   The Graduate School offers a series of one and two credits courses in College Instruction, Fundamentals of Teaching & Learning, Advanced Issues in Teaching & Learning, and a practicum in college instruction. These courses cannot be used as courses supporting a dissertation per Graduate School policy.

2. **Financial Support**
   There are resources available to support the financial cost of the PhD program. A few of these are listed below:
   a. **Graduate Assistantship** (https://grad.uconn.edu/assistantships/) positions provide tuition, salary support, and health insurance. They may be supported by the SON, other units at UCONN, or faculty research grants. Students are required commit a set number of hours per week to work on research or teaching activities
   b. **Nurse Faculty Loan Program (NFLP)** is a US federal loan program designed as both

a recruitment device to doctoral programs and a retention strategy in academia. The program provides tuition and fees AND reasonable costs of attendance (such as books, computer, research supplies) for up to five years. Upon employment in academia, loans are forgiven 20% for the first year, 20% for each of the second and third years and 25% the fourth year; all consecutive but not necessarily at the same institution. The remaining 15% balance is amortized over ten years at the prevailing federal interest rate.

c. The National Institutes of Health supports research training opportunities for U.S. citizens. These are mentored opportunities and support tuition, some expenses, and a stipend. The candidate must have a mentor with a history of NIH-funded research.

d. Other funding opportunities and scholarships may be available through professional organizations. Please refer to the SON website and to the emails circulated by the PhD Program Director and Coordinator for updates on these opportunities.

3. **International Students**

   a. **New Student Check-In**

   All new International Students must complete Check-In online through the ISSS Portal on the ISSS website prior to the first day of classes. The link to Check-In instructions is on the ISSS homepage. New international students can use the computers at ISSS to scan immigration documents, print their I-94 and fill out their online check-in forms. Please check with the ISSS office about current verification procedures.

   b. **International Graduate Student Orientation**

   Storrs campus international Graduate Students are required to attend International Graduate Orientation. Please visit the ISSS website for more information on fees and registration.

   The orientation schedule is available online and is subject to updates. Regional campus international graduate students are required to attend an ISSS session on the visa regulations as part of the academic program's orientation for international students, or through a separate session facilitated by ISSS when the program does not offer a specific international student orientation.

4. **Leave of Absence Policy**

   For the leave of absence and withdrawal policies for the Graduate School, please review information on the Graduate School website.

Practices for Document Approvals and Submission to the Graduate School Registrar

1. **Email Approvals**

   Attach completed document in an email to Advisory Committee as a whole, cc: jenn.horan@uconn.edu and request committee reply all their approval. Approval emails must come from advisor's university email (UConn or the UConn Health Center) stating their approval of the document(s). External advisors should reply to all from their university or company email.

2. **Electronic Approvals**

   Attach completed document in an email to advisory committee as a whole, cc: jenn.horan@uconn.edu. Electronic signatures can be via DocuSign or Adobe Verified Signature. Approvals typed with a Microsoft font should be accompanied by a reply all email noting that advisor's approval. **Wet ink** signed documents should be scanned & emailed to jenn.horan@uconn.edu.

   All members of a student's advisory committee must provide original signature sin one of the above ways.

   No hard copies should be submitted to the Registrar's Office

   The PhD Program Coordinator may assist students with digital approvals and signatures and submission to the Registrar's office.

Resources

UCONN SCHOOL OF NURSING

UConn Nursing PhD Program Information:
https://phd.nursing.uconn.edu/

UConn Nursing PhD Program Curriculum & Plans of Study
Nursing PhD Programs | Nursing PhD Program (uconn.edu)

SON Doctoral Student Listserv: DNP_PHDNURS-L@listserv.uconn.edu

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL AND ACADEMICS

The Graduate School
https://grad.uconn.edu/

The Graduate School Catalog
https://gradcatalog.uconn.edu/

The Graduate School's Formatting Guidelines
https://registrar.uconn.edu/graduation/doctoral-degrees/

Steps to a Successful Graduation
https://registrar.uconn.edu/graduation

Academic Calendar
https://registrar.uconn.edu/academic-calendar/

Registrar Forms
https://registrar.uconn.edu/forms/

UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

NetID and Information Technology
https://netid.uconn.edu/
Home | Information Technology Services (uconn.edu)

Writing Resources
https://writingcenter.uconn.edu/overview-of-grad-support/

Insurance
https://grad.uconn.edu/student-life/grad-student-resources/ga-resources/overview-for-graduate-students/

Information for International Students
https://isss.uconn.edu

RESEARCH & SCHOLARSHIP

Creating an NIH-format Biosketch
https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm

School of Nursing Research and Innovation Office and Grant Procedures
https://nursing.uconn.edu/research-innovation/

Authorship Guidelines
https://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html

Human Subjects Research Guidelines
https://ovpr.uconn.edu/services/rics/irb/

Animal Care and Use Guidelines
https://ovpr.uconn.edu/services/rics/animal/iacuc/

Training in Human Subjects Research
https://ovpr.uchc.edu/services/rics/hspp/citi-instructions/