

# PhD Program Handbook

Academic Year: 2026 - 2027



Margaret McCarthy

PhD Program Director and Associate Professor

[margaret.m.mccarthy@uconn.edu](mailto:margaret.m.mccarthy@uconn.edu)

Caitlin Dorrington

Educational Program Coordinator, Research & PhD Programs

[caitlin.dorrington@uconn.edu](mailto:caitlin.dorrington@uconn.edu)

<b>Title</b>	PhD Program Handbook for Graduate Students
<b>Policy Owner</b>	<b>Elisabeth DeLuca School of Nursing</b>
<b>Applies to</b>	All students who matriculate with the 2026-2027 Catalog
<b>Campus Applicability</b>	Storrs
<b>Approved on</b>	May, 18, 2026
<b>Effective Date</b>	August 31, 2026
<b>For More Information Contact</b>	PhD Program Director: Margaret McCarthy
<b>Contact Information</b>	PhD Program Support <a href="mailto:caitlin.dorrington@uconn.edu">caitlin.dorrington@uconn.edu</a>
<b>Official Website</b>	<a href="#">Home   Elisabeth DeLuca School of Nursing</a>  <a href="#">UConn PhD in Nursing   School of Nursing   Nursing PhD Program   Elisabeth DeLuca School of Nursing   University of Connecticut</a>

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## Welcome to UConn

Welcome to the UConn Community of Scholars! This Handbook serves as a reference for faculty and students in the PhD Program within the UConn Elisabeth Deluca School of Nursing. This Handbook supplements the Graduate School catalog.

Faculty and staff will communicate through messages sent to UConn email addresses or those distributed via the UConn Elisabeth Deluca School of Nursing doctoral listserv.

For continuously updated information, please visit the [PhD Program website](#). The [Graduate School](#) and [Registrar's Office](#) websites also provide current information regarding university requirements, necessary forms, and documents. Helpful links can be found at the end of this Handbook.

This Handbook will be updated annually. Please note that after the student has an approved plan of study, Handbook changes that impact the curriculum or scholarly portfolio will not apply unless the student opts for them.

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

Wishing you an enriching and successful journey during your PhD!

Warm regards,

Margaret M. (Peg) McCarthy, PhD, RN, FNP-BC, FAHA, FAAN  
Associate Professor and PhD Director  
UConn Elisabeth Deluca School of Nursing

University of Connecticut  
Office: (860) 486-0593  
Storrs Hall Room 313B  
[www.nursing.uconn.edu](http://www.nursing.uconn.edu)

## Program Overview

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Nursing Program at the University of Connecticut (UConn) Elisabeth DeLuca School of Nursing prepares exceptional, skilled, visionary nursing scientist. Our mission is to cultivate the next generation of nursing clinicians, leaders, scholars and healthcare consumers for the advancement of health among the local, national and global populations.

Key features of the PhD program include:

- PhD Program learner outcomes: Upon completion of course work and all prescribed experiences, our graduates are prepared to:
  - Conduct rigorous synthesis and analysis of philosophical, theoretical, ethical, and empirical foundations of nursing and other disciplines.
  - Engage in independent research, including grant writing, to generate new knowledge using various research methods that consider individual, biological, political, social, and environmental health factors to advance nursing science and promote health for all.
  - Disseminate knowledge to students, trainees, and academic, lay, and professional audiences through oral and written communication to improve healthcare outcomes for all.
  - Assume leadership in academic, research, and scholarly roles in settings such as universities, and/or healthcare organizations, industry, government and research institutions.

Accreditation:

- UConn's School of Nursing degree programs are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education.
- The University of Connecticut is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC).

## Our PRAXIS

One of the most important aspects for a student to learn early on is the PRAXIS statement that guides our behaviors and actions within the Elisabeth DeLuca School of Nursing. All members of the Elisabeth DeLuca School of Nursing are expected to abide by these principles, and they are part of the student evaluation criteria in many courses.

The philosophy of the School of Nursing is directed by six guiding principles, known as PRAXIS:

- Professionalism in behavior, presentation, and conduct

- Respectful of the richness and diversity of others and of
- Self-Accountability for actions
- eXcellence in scholarship, practice, teaching, and service
- Integrity, inquisitiveness, and innovation,
- Service to the profession and the community

The Elisabeth DeLuca School of Nursing expectations are consistent with behaviors that will be required of students in the clinical setting. Rude or disrespectful behavior, bullying or unprofessional conduct is not tolerated. As a student at UConn Elisabeth DeLuca School of Nursing, this extends to interactions that students have on and off campus as well as through social media. (*Elisabeth DeLuca School of Nursing Policy 1.28 PRAXIS and Professional Code of Conduct*)

## Academic Program Requirements and Details

### Program Components

Refer to the University Catalog for official curriculum requirements: [2026-27 Graduate Catalog | University of Connecticut Academic Catalog](#)

### Curriculum Structure

Students must fulfill all credit hours, and course distribution requirements outlined in the catalog. Please see: [2026-27 Graduate Catalog | University of Connecticut Academic Catalog](#)

### Course Sequencing and Progression

Students may be admitted as either BS-PhD or the post-Master's PhD. Students are advised to follow the recommended sequence for their semester of admission for timely completion.

### PhD Required Courses

- GRAD 5910 Responsible Conduct of Research
- GRAD 6950 Dissertation Seminar and Research
- NURS 6101 Grantsmanship: The Pursuit of Scholarly Support
- NURS 6165 Mixed Methods in Nursing Research
- NURS 6200 Philosophical and Theoretical Perspectives of Nursing I
- NURS 6205 Quantitative Methods in Healthcare
- NURS 6210 Introduction to Qualitative Methodology

- NURS 6220 Philosophical and Theoretical Perspectives of Nursing II
- NURS 6230 Applied Statistics and Secondary Analysis for Health Data
- NURS 6250 Key Factors and Multi-Level Influences on Health
- Electives: Six credits in courses supportive of the dissertation area

## Out of Classroom Learning Experience

In addition, to classwork, PhD students are expected to be active members on UConn Elisabeth Deluca School of Nursing faculty committees, attend faculty and student development sessions, participate in a variety of educational opportunities, 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 ensure successful transition to future careers. Opportunities for teaching and research experience will be provided in the required [Teaching](#) and [Research](#) Residencies

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 CSDA depending on the research focus.

## Scholarly Integrity and Compliance

Graduate students must uphold the highest standards of academic and scholarly integrity.

- **Academic, Scholarly and Professional Integrity:** [The Graduate School Conduct Policies](#) and [Community Standards](#)
- **Clinical Compliance:** Required compliance with UConn & Residency site health clearance. [Office of Clinical Placement Coordination \(OCPC\)](#)
- **Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR):** Required CITI training modules must be completed as part of the Elisabeth DeLuca School of Nursing Orientation.

- **Research Compliance:** Students conducting human or animal research must secure IRB/IACUC approval prior to data collection.
- **Authorship and Data Use:** Students should follow departmental and disciplinary guidelines for authorship, data management, and intellectual property.

## Program-Specific Policies and Expectations

This program maintains the following academic standards, policies and procedures

- **Minimum GPA & Grade Expectations**
  - A cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or above must be maintained in order to earn the Master of Science degree. Students must earn a B (3.0) or better in all nursing graduate courses in order to earn credit toward graduation. If a student does not earn a B or better on the first try, a collaborative decision between the faculty of record for the course, the advisor, and the student is made to determine if a repeat of the course is appropriate. A graduate nursing student may only repeat one course with a NURS prefix throughout their graduate study. Earning a grade less than B in a second course will result in dismissal from the program. (*Elisabeth Deluca School of Nursing Policy 1.21 Graduate Courses Grade Expectations*)
- **Grading Policy:**
  - The University has established the following grading policy for [graduate students](#). All intermediate calculations of grades throughout a course will be expressed on a 0.00-100.00 scale and will be recorded to two decimal place precision -e.g., 95.00 or 92.67. Final numeric grades for a course will be based on averaging intermediate grades. Typically, the averaging process will give different weights to different intermediate grades -e.g., exam grades may "count more" than assignment grades. In the conversion of a final numeric grade to a course letter grade, decimal parts below 0.50 will be "rounded down to the closest whole number -e.g., 92.49 becomes 92 and decimal parts at or above 0.50 will be "rounded up" to the closest whole number -e.g., 92.50 becomes 93.
- **Enrollment Expectations**
  - Registration is to be completed at least two (2) weeks prior to the start of the semester to assure a seat in a course. (*Elisabeth Deluca School of Nursing Policy 1.26 Graduate programs registration requirement*)
- **Leaves, Withdrawals, and Continuous Enrollment:**
  - MS program students may change their status or take a leave of absence by completing the appropriate [Graduate School Forms](#)
    - Seeking a leave of absence - [Voluntary Separation Notification](#)

- Returning from a leave or seeking reinstatement ([Request Reinstatement to Graduate Study or Reinstatement from Academic Leave](#))
  - [Continuous Enrollment Requirement](#)
- **Maintenance of Records**
  - Students are to retain the course syllabi and other documents acquired throughout their program as part of their professional portfolio, as these may be needed to pursue other scholarly activities beyond or following program completion.
- **Students with Disabilities**
  - Students who require accommodations should contact the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD), Wilbur Cross Building Room 204, (860) 486-2020 or <http://csd.uconn.edu/>. An assessment must be completed each semester by CSD. Once the student is assessed, appropriate accommodations will be communicated by email to the instructor of record for each course. Only students who complete this process will be granted accommodations.
- **Grievance and Appeals Procedures**
  - Academic Appeals: Grade appeals, probation/dismissal appeals, and thesis/dissertation committee disputes follow Graduate School policy: [Appeal and Hearing Procedures & Graduate School Appeal Form](#) .
  - Harassment/Discrimination Complaints: Students may contact [Office for Inclusion and Civil Rights](#) for confidential reporting and resolution.
  - [Ombuds Office](#) : The University Ombuds Office provides impartial conflict resolution support.

## PhD Program Requirements and Milestones

### Curriculum & Plan of Study

The program of study sequence for required courses is prescribed, yet individualized. See the UConn Elisabeth Deluca School of Nursing PhD Program website for current recommended course sequencing: [Nursing PhD Programs | Nursing PhD Program | Elisabeth DeLuca School of Nursing | University of Connecticut](#)

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 18 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 Area, also referred to as "Related Areas of Knowledge") 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. Students must take Courses Supportive of Dissertation Area (CSDA) (9 credits) in addition to required nursing courses to prepare for the dissertation. These may include relevant content or specialized methods or both. If the student changes the dissertation topic or methods after completing coursework, they may need to take additional CSDA to support its successful completion
5. Students must take CSDA in addition to required nursing courses to prepare for the dissertation. These may include relevant content or specialized methods or both. 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.
6. Enrollment in GRAD 6950 credits is required per the credit allotment on the Plan of Study.
7. Students are required to attend the virtual GRAD 6950 Dissertation Seminar, which continues until the Dissertation Defense
8. 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.

### **Progression and Degree Requirement**

The PhD Admissions and Progression Committee monitors student progress through the program and provides recommendations to the PhD Program Director regarding student progress and any appeals and grievances initiated by School of Nursing students regarding grades received and dismissals from the PhD Program.

1. PhD students are required to complete the degree within 8 years of the date of matriculation with a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.0. Failure to complete the work within the specified

time limit or failure to maintain registration will require re-evaluation of the entire program and may result in a notice of termination.

2. Students must maintain a grade of at least a B (83 or higher) in all courses. A grade of less than a B in a repeated course (one NURS course may be repeated) will result in dismissal from the PhD program.
3. Total course work consists of 49 credits for post MS students and 61 credits for post BS students.
4. Completion of the General Examination in the semester following completion of 75% of content coursework.
5. As indicated in the [Graduate Handbook](#): A graduate student's progress in a degree program must be monitored regularly by the student's advisory committee. If at any time a student's academic performance, progress in a graduate degree program, or professional development and/or suitability is judged by the advisory committee to be unsatisfactory to the degree that dismissal is warranted, the advisory committee must submit its written recommendation that the student be dismissed on such grounds. A student may be dismissed for failure to satisfy any requirement of the student's graduate degree program, including failure to maintain adequate academic progress.
6. Dissertation Proposal
7. Dissertation and Final Oral Defense of Dissertation
8. Students complete a 150-hour [Research Residency](#) and a 150-hour [Teaching Residency](#) as described in the Residency Overview
9. Students will submit updated progress reports and electronic NIH NCBI Biosketches to the PhD Admissions & Progress Committee via the Program Coordinator (due May 10 annually). Biosketches must follow the NIH NCBI guidelines (see Resources at the end of this document) and be completed using the Science Experts Network Curriculum Vitae (SciENCv). These files will be saved to the School's electronic files and included in the student's Scholarly Portfolio.
10. Yearly Submission of Annual Progress Review to Major Advisor by May 10<sup>th</sup>
11. PhD Portfolio (see page 36)

## *The General Exam*

The General Exam **MUST** be completed only after 75% of the program content coursework.

The goal of General Exam is to assess student's readiness for PhD candidacy. The purpose of the exam is to assess the student's mastery of curriculum content.

1. Breadth of knowledge – theory, qualitative methods, and quantitative methods
2. Depth of knowledge in a specific topic area that may be the foundation for their dissertation research
3. Critical thinking skills: Ability to synthesize relevant theoretical and scientific literature
4. Written and oral communication

The General Exam is a two-part process (Written Component and Oral Defense); both parts must be passed. Students are expected to complete the General Exam in the semester after they have completed 75% of the program coursework (e.g., Spring semester of the second year for full-time students in the Post-Masters to PhD program). Part time students must complete the General Exam immediately after completing 75% of the program coursework.

### **General Exam Committee**

Consistent with the rules of the Office of the Registrar, the General Exam Committee must have at least five faculty members, including the student's advisory committee. The General Exam Committee will include the student's Major Advisor, two Associate Advisors, and two reviewers with Graduate School appointments in the Elisabeth DeLuca UConn School of Nursing assigned by the Director of the PhD Program. The PhD Program Director must approve the committee before the student begins the exam.

After the General Exam Committee is approved, the Major Advisor will coordinate the committee members to write the exam questions. The Major Advisor and the two Associate Advisors will each or collaboratively draft one question for three questions total with explicit evaluation criteria (see Rating Form: Written Component of the General Exam page 16). The group will coordinate this to ensure that there is no overlap or redundancy and to assure that the questions adequately address the student's primary area of study, curriculum content, and research methods, as well as the goals of the General Exam. All General Exam Committee members will review and edit the exam questions for rigor, clarity, and minimal content overlap. The PhD Program Director will review and approve all exam questions to ensure rigor and equity of the experience across students.

Exam questions should be finalized within 2 weeks of committee approval and forwarded to the student for the exam's written component.

### *The Written Component:*

The General Exam will consist of three questions. After the General Exam Committee and PhD Program Director approve the questions, the Major Advisor will share the questions with the student, who will have four weeks to answer the questions in writing. The response to each question should be no more than 10 double-spaced pages, excluding references. Once the General Exam commences, the student may not seek help from others (e.g., committee members, peers, faculty, consultants). Students may not use AI (Artificial Intelligence) to answer exam questions and will sign a form to indicate that they have complied with this directive. Students will have four weeks to independently complete the written component. They will submit the completed exam to their Major Advisor, who will distribute responses to the committee for review. If students do not submit their exam to their Major Advisor by the due date or if there is evidence of assistance from others or use of AI to answer questions, they will fail the General Exam.

### **Evaluation**

General Exam committee members will evaluate the responses to all three exam questions. Each committee member will evaluate all the student's responses to the exam questions using the Rating Form: Written Component of the General Exam (see below). Each committee member will rate each response as Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory and provide an overall evaluation of Pass, Conditional Pass, or Fail. Committee members are expected to provide their evaluations to the student's Major Advisor within two weeks of receiving the Written Component. The Major Advisor will aggregate the committee members' overall evaluations and determine the committee's decision on the Written Component. The Major AA will report the committee's decision on the Written Component to the student and committee.

### **Outcomes for the Written Component include:**

- **Pass:** After receiving a unanimous pass vote, from the 5-member General Exam Committee, the student has completed their General Exam requirements.
- **Conditional Pass:** A student may receive no more than one Fail rating and less than majority Pass ratings from committee members. The student will have one week to revise the written document based on feedback from the committee. The committee will score the revised document according to the procedures outlined above.
  - If the revised document receives a unanimous Pass from the committee, the student will proceed to schedule the Oral Defense of the General Exam. If the revised document does not receive a unanimous Pass from the committee, the student will Fail the General Exam. The student can request one opportunity from the Dean to retake the General Exam, starting the process from the beginning with new exam questions.
- **Fail:** A student does not receive a unanimous pass on the written document from the committee members. The student will have one opportunity to retake the Written Component.

The student will start the General Exam process from the beginning with new exam questions. The student must retake the Written Component within a time limit approved by the PhD Program Director and Major Advisor.

### *The Oral Component:*

The student will schedule a two-hour meeting with the committee for the defense of the Written Component. The committee will interview the student regarding the contents of the Written Component and the ability to apply curriculum content (e.g., philosophy, theory, other substance related to the research question qualitative methods, quantitative methods, mixed methods) within the context of the student's stated area of expertise. The process for the oral component of the general exam is as follows:

After receiving a Pass on the Written Component, the student schedules the Oral Component of the general exam. The Oral Component should be held between August 23 and May 22 because most faculty are on academic year contracts. However, it can be held during the summer, with prior approval from the Director of the PhD Program and all members of the student's General Exam committee.

The committee will ask questions assessing the student's breadth and depth of knowledge related to the written document's content and its application to curriculum materials. In addition, it provides the student with the opportunity with skills related to listening and responding that will be required in the final dissertation defense. While additional questions may be posed during the course of the exam as needed, members should submit their questions to the Major Advisor 5 days prior to the Oral Component to assure that all major areas are covered. Questions should relate to content in courses completed to this point.

The oral component is only open to the student, their General Exam Committee, and the Director of the PhD Program.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the student will be excused, and the committee will discuss their evaluations of the Oral and Written Component. Each committee member will provide an overall evaluation of Pass or Fail. The Major Advisor will aggregate the committee members' overall evaluations and determine the committee's decision for the overall exam. The student will attend the meeting, and the Major Advisor will inform the student of the committee's decision. Outcomes for the Oral Component include:

- Pass: Student received a unanimous pass from the 5 member General Exam committee. After passing the Oral Component, the student has completed their General Exam requirement.
- Fail: A student does not receive a unanimous Pass from committee members on first attempt. The student will have one opportunity to retake the Oral Component within 4 weeks of the

original defense. The students will revise their presentation or better prepare for the oral defense, based on feedback from the committee.

- If the revised Oral Component receives a Pass from the committee, the student has completed their General Exam requirement.
- If the revised Oral Component does not receive a Pass from the committee, the student will Fail the General Exam. If a student Fails the General Exam, they have only one opportunity to retake it, starting the process from the beginning with new exam questions.

### **Deadlines**

If a student does not meet stated deadlines for the Written or Oral Components of the General Exam, they will receive a grade of Fail. A student may request an extension of deadlines from the Director of the PhD Program and the General Exam Committee if there are extenuating circumstances.

### **Retaking the Exam**

If a student Fails the General Exam as described above under the written and oral component, they have only one opportunity to retake it, starting the process from the beginning with new exam questions. The timeframe for retaking the General Exam must be approved by the PhD Program Director and Major Advisor.

### **Report on the General Exam**

The General Examination may be given in several components, e.g., written and oral; however, only one Report on the General Exam is to be submitted upon completion of the last section, whether passed or failed. Completion of the Final General Exam Report as a Pass indicates the five member General Exam Committee has unanimously agreed to pass the student.

The Major Advisor should complete the top section of the Report, include the General Exam committee members' (2 Member Advisory Committee and 2 Elisabeth DeLuca School of Nursing Reviewers appointed by PhD Director), printed names, and send it to the PhD Program Director and the PhD Program Coordinator. The PhD Program Director and Program Coordinator will email all committee members to confirm their approval of the GE Report. After all Committee members and reviewers confirm their approval of the GE via email, we will send the emails and the executed report for the General Exam to the Registrar's office, and a copy will be saved in the student's file.

After the student passes the general exam, if their CDSA courses are complete and their proposal has been approved by their committee and accepted by the Graduate School, they advance to PhD candidacy, at which point they may proceed to the PhD degree dissertation phase.

**Rating Form: Written Component of the General Exam**

Please indicate whether the student satisfactorily demonstrated the following skills in the Written Component of their General Exam. Examples of factors to consider under each criterion are provided.

Rating Area	Evaluation	
	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
<p><b>Mastery of Curriculum Content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates appropriate understanding of research methods, data analysis, theory, or philosophy</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Breadth of Knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Synthesizes and evaluates literature across areas of study or disciplines as appropriate to the topic.</li> <li>• Incorporates multiple methods or data analysis techniques</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Depth of Knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates expertise in the content area.</li> <li>• Demonstrates ability to synthesize content and expand and extend it to their own area of interest.</li> <li>• Supports proposed approach to the research based on synthesis and evaluation of the literature.</li> <li>• Describes appropriate and timely research methods to address the research question (s)</li> </ul>		

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Critical Thinking</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates ability to critically analyze the literature related to the research topic.</li> <li>• Identifies strengths and limitations and proposes alternative strategies as appropriate</li> </ul>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Synthesis of Literature</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cites and integrates appropriate literature.</li> <li>• Supports conclusions with evidence</li> </ul>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Written Communication</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presents information in a logical and well-organized manner.</li> <li>• Uses appropriate grammar and sentence structure.</li> <li>• Formats the document and references using standard approaches and adheres to page guidelines.</li> </ul>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Overall Evaluation</b></p> <p>*Reviewers may weigh the rating areas differently in determining their overall evaluation</p>	<p>Pass    Conditional Pass    Fail</p>
<p>Notes in support of overall decision (required if failing) -- may continue reverse-side:</p>	

## *Dissertation and Defense Procedures*

After successfully passing their general exam and meeting course requirements, students may propose their dissertation, which generally occurs in the fall semester of the third year for full-time students in the Post-Masters to PhD program. The dissertation entails a written document and an oral defense. The oral defense is generally held in the spring semester of the fourth year for full-time students in the Post-Masters to PhD program. Dissertation proposals and dissertation defenses are typically not conducted between May 23rd and August 22nd due to faculty work schedules.

### **Dissertation Format:**

There are two options for the dissertation document format. An approved proposal is required for either format.

#### 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; Chapter 4. Results; Chapter 5. Discussion/Application and Conclusions).

#### Manuscript Dissertation

The manuscript style dissertation includes five chapters with the same first (Overview of Problem) and the 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. The student must be 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 from their Major Advisors 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.

### **Proposal Guidelines**

These guidelines pertain to dissertation proposal documents, in which students briefly summarize the significance of the problem under study, the gap that the dissertation aims to address, and substantially detail study procedures. The dissertation proposal is an opportunity for the committee to review and provide feedback on important aspects of the study design and study procedures.

Students work with their Major Advisor to identify the dissertation proposal format most suitable for their dissertation work 1) Five Chapter Dissertation; and 2) Manuscript Dissertation. The dissertation proposal should sufficiently address study procedures. Documents that are essential to study procedures (e.g., interview guides, surveys, data collection tools, etc.) should be included in the proposal as appendices. The dissertation proposal is not to exceed 30 double-spaced pages (excluding tables, figures, appendices, and references).

### **The Five Chapter Dissertation Proposal**

The dissertation proposal should provide a clear and detailed plan for the proposed research study. The proposal demonstrates the significance of the problem, the student's understanding of the literature, and the methodological rigor of the planned study. The proposal should include the following sections:

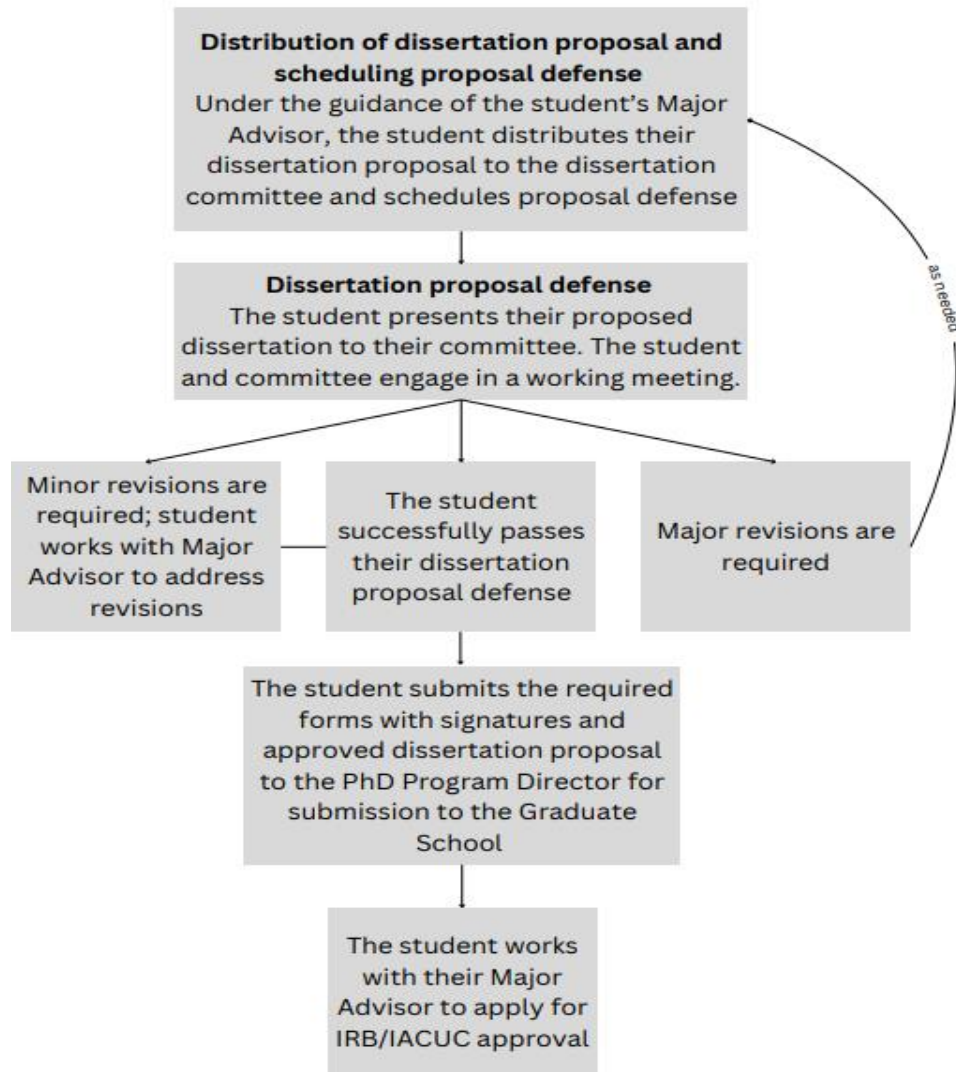
- I. Overview of the Problem should:
  - a. Clearly describe the research problem or phenomenon of interest
  - b. Explain the significance of the problem to nursing, healthcare, health policy, education, or population health
  - c. Present relevant background information and current knowledge gaps
  - d. Identify the purpose of the study
  - e. State the research question(s), aims, objectives, and/or hypotheses
  - f. Describe the conceptual, theoretical, or philosophical framework guiding the study, if applicable
- II. Review of the Literature should:
  - a. Provide a critical and integrative synthesis of the relevant literature
  - b. Summarize what is currently known about the topic
  - c. Identify strengths, limitations, and gaps in existing research
  - d. Demonstrate how the proposed study will contribute to the science or address an identified gap
  - e. Include current and seminal literature relevant to the topic and methodology

- f. Support the rationale for the proposed study design, variables, concepts, or intervention
- III. Study Methods should provide sufficient detail to demonstrate methodological rigor and feasibility and as indicated include:
  - a. Study Design
    - i. Description and justification of the research design (e.g., qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, experimental, observational, secondary analysis)
  - b. Setting and Sample
    - i. Description of the study setting
    - ii. Inclusion and exclusion criteria
    - iii. Recruitment strategies
    - iv. Sampling methods and estimated sample size
    - v. Rationale for sample size or power analysis, if applicable
  - c. Data Collection Procedures
    - i. Description of instruments, measures, interview guides, datasets, or other sources of data
    - ii. Procedures for data collection
    - iii. Timeline and sequence of study activities
  - d. Variables or Concepts
    - i. Definitions of major variables, constructs, or concepts
    - ii. Description of outcomes, exposures, or phenomena of interest
  - e. Data Analysis Plan
    - i. Detailed analytic procedures appropriate to the methodology
    - ii. Statistical analyses and software for quantitative studies
    - iii. Coding, thematic analysis, or other analytic approaches for qualitative studies
    - iv. Integration procedures for mixed methods studies, if applicable
  - f. Rigor and Trustworthiness
  - g. Procedures to ensure validity, reliability, credibility, dependability, or trustworthiness, as appropriate to the design
- IV. Protection of Human Subjects should address:
  - a. Potential risks and benefits to participants
  - b. Procedures to protect confidentiality and privacy
  - c. Data security and storage plans
  - d. Informed consent procedures
  - e. Vulnerable population considerations, if applicable

- f. Institutional Review Board (IRB) considerations and anticipated review category
- V. Timeline should include a projected timeline for completion of the study, including:
  - a. IRB approval
  - b. Recruitment and data collection
  - c. Data analysis
  - d. Manuscript preparation and dissemination
  - e. Expected dissertation completion and defense dates
  - f. A table may be included to illustrate the timeline.
  - g. Funding Sources should identified
- VI. Current or anticipated funding support for the project
  - a. Potential internal or external funding opportunities
  - b. Resources available to support study completion
  - c. If no funding is required, students should indicate that the study can be completed without external financial support.
- VII. References
  - a. Include all citations referenced in the proposal
  - b. Literature should reflect current and foundational scholarship relevant to the study
- VIII. Appendices should contain materials that support the proposal but are not essential to the main narrative and may include:
  - a. Data collection instruments or surveys
  - b. Interview or focus group guides
  - c. Recruitment materials
  - d. Consent form
  - e. IRB documents, if available
  - f. Letters of support or permission
  - g. Tables, figures, or supplementary materials relevant to the proposal

*Proposal Defense Flowchart.*

**Dissertation Proposal Defense Flowchart**



**Dissertation Proposal Process Roles and Responsibilities**

**Student Role:** The student is responsible for:

1. Preparing the proposal according to the Dissertation Specifications listed on the Registrar's Steps to a Successful Graduation webpage (see Resources for link).

2. Distributing their dissertation proposal to dissertation committee under the guidance of their Major Advisor.
3. Scheduling the dissertation proposal meeting.
4. Gathering all signatures on the relevant forms (see below). The student should request assistance from their Major Advisor and the PhD Program Director.
5. Obtaining current CVs for non-UConn Associate advisors/readers and submitting them with the dissertation proposal paperwork to the PhD Program Director.
6. Submitting the completed and 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 UConn Elisabeth Deluca School of Nursing file server.

Required documentation: The student provides the Major Advisor with the following documents:

1. **The Proposal** (a well-labeled electronic file is acceptable; please ask the Major advisor 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.
2. **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:**

1. Recommend readers to the PhD Program Director for approval.
2. Work with the student to ensure that the copies of the CVs of non-UConn members of the Advisory Committee are submitted to the PhD Program Director at the time the proposal is submitted.

#### **PhD Program Director Role and Responsibilities**

1. Ensure Major and Associate Advisors have a Graduate School appointment or if external have been approved by the Graduate School (see
2. Approve readers
3. Receive final version of the proposal and store it in student's file

#### **IRB/IACUC (Animal Use and Care)**

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. Research cannot proceed until IRB approval or exemption has been obtained (see [OVPR](#) for guidance).

### **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.

**Advancement to Candidacy:** To advance to candidacy the student must:

1. Pass the General Examination (Written and Oral).
2. Receive approval from the Graduate School for successfully defending the dissertation proposal.
3. Students may not use the initials PhD(c), these credentials are inappropriate and not recognized by the UConn Elisabeth DeLuca School of Nursing or the University. Students may sign their names with their credentials and then use the words "PhD Candidate," if desired.

### **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 Advisory Committee apprised of progress with data collection and writing. The student should discuss whether the Major Advisor 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 Major Advisor supervises the implementation of the research and the writing of the dissertation, including guiding student interactions with and seeking approval from AAs. The Major Advisor is the standard bearer for quality.

## **Defense of the Dissertation**

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

The dissertation defense is a two-hour 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 at least two weeks for the Advisory Committee and readers to review the complete document. Students will not be permitted to proceed to the dissertation defense until the entire written document is complete and deemed ready for defense by the Advisory Committee and readers.

The examination must be held before the last day to submit paperwork for the semester the degree is to be conferred.

An invitation to the defense will be sent to all committee members and other UConn Elisabeth Deluca School of Nursing faculty members at the request of the PhD Program Director. The invitation will be sent to the UConn Elisabeth Deluca School of Nursing DNP-PHD Listserv two weeks prior to the defense. The defense is open to the UCONN community. No fewer than five members of the UConn 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.

For example: If committee has 2 external readers, the Major Advisor or PhD Program Director will invite other UConn faculty to the event

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

Major Advisors guide doctoral students in preparing for the final defense. Students will provide a 30-35 minute presentation of their dissertation work, followed by questions from and discussion with the Dissertation Committee. Family and friends will be recused during the question and discussion period.

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 Major Advisors 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.

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.

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.

### **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.

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).

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.

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.

Follow steps to submit the dissertation exactly as described in the [Steps to a Successful Graduation/ Doctoral degree](#)- found on the Graduate School website and review the steps with your Major Advisor.

After the Advisory Committee approves the dissertation, the Major Advisor 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.

**Two weeks prior to the defense\*** the student must:

1. Submit the announcement to the Thesis and Dissertation Defense Calendar.
2. Provide the PhD Program Coordinator with the following:
  - a. Legal Name
  - b. Phone Number
  - c. Student ID and NetID
  - d. Title of Dissertation/Project
  - e. Names of all participating Faculty/Mentors

**\*You should always refer to the Steps to a Successful Graduation/ Doctoral degree- found on the Graduate School website for exact time frames. [Doctoral Degrees | Office of the Registrar](#)**

### **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, if no other research activities will be conducted. 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!

## **Community and Professional Engagement Expectations**

All students are expected to:

- Follow communication protocols and ethical standards,

- Refer to the Student Code of Conduct: [Responsibilities of Community Life: The Student Code | Community Standards](#),
- Refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, ELISABETH DELUCA SCHOOL OF NURSING Policy 1.28 PRAXIS and Professional Code of Conduct.

## Finding Your Way: Orientation, Key People and Places

### Orientation

There are two orientations graduate nursing students are required to complete. First, the [Graduate School New Student Welcome](#) which is fully online, asynchronous, and includes [Graduate Student Orientation Mandatory Trainings](#) which must be completed before a student is able to register for any courses.

The second is the ELISABETH DELUCA SCHOOL OF NURSING graduate student orientation which takes place the *Wednesday* prior to the start of the fall semester for summer and fall admits and spring semester for the spring admits. The ELISABETH DELUCA SCHOOL OF NURSING Orientation includes remote, synchronous meetings with faculty and staff. Newly matriculated students are expected to complete all elements of the ELISABETH DELUCA SCHOOL OF NURSING orientation within two weeks of the start of the semester.

It introduces students to:

- Academic policies
- Advising and mentoring structures
- Program expectations
- Campus resources and support systems

For more info, contact: [Caitlin.Dorrington@uconn.edu](mailto:Caitlin.Dorrington@uconn.edu) (PhD program).

### PhD Program Director

Margaret M. McCarthy, PhD, RN, FNP-BC, FAHA, FAAN  
Associate Professor  
[margaret.m.mccarthy@uconn.edu](mailto:margaret.m.mccarthy@uconn.edu)

## Graduate Program Administration, Faculty and Staff

Role	Responsibilities	Contact
Associate Dean of Graduate Studies	Academic & Administrative Operations of graduate programs. (Policies, Procedures)	<a href="mailto:annette.jakubisin_konicki@uconn.edu">annette.jakubisin_konicki@uconn.edu</a>
Enrollment Services	Registration, course permission to enroll.	<a href="mailto:nursingenrollment@uconn.edu">nursingenrollment@uconn.edu</a>
Faculty Advisors	Academic advising, mentoring. Assigned upon admission	<a href="#">Faculty Directory</a>
PhD Program Support Caitlin Dorrington	Administrative/process support	<a href="mailto:Caitlin.Dorrington@uconn.edu">Caitlin.Dorrington@uconn.edu</a>
Office of Clinical Placement Coordination (OCPC)	Compliance, health documents, background clearances	<a href="mailto:ocpc.compliance@uconn.edu">ocpc.compliance@uconn.edu</a>
Student Support Services	Connecting students with resources and supports leading to academic success.	Elisabeth DeLuca School of Nursing Director: <a href="mailto:chelsea.cichocki@uconn.edu">chelsea.cichocki@uconn.edu</a> Graduate School Director: <a href="mailto:kimberly.curry@uconn.edu">kimberly.curry@uconn.edu</a>
Verification Specialist	Elisbeth DeLuca School of Nursing verification for certification or licensure required documents.	<a href="mailto:megan.mcnerney@uconn.edu">megan.mcnerney@uconn.edu</a>

## Advising

### Purpose of Advising

Academic advising is critical to your success and supports:

- Course planning and academic progress
- Navigating policies and procedures
- Preparing for careers or advanced study

## Advising Structure

Advisor Type	Role
Faculty Major Advisor	Discipline-specific guidance, scholarly mentorship as a subject matter expert; guiding and critiquing the student's work.
PhD Advisory Committee	<p><b>Role of Major Advisor (MA)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The PhD Admissions &amp; 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.</li> <li>• File doctoral advisement notes in the student record at least twice yearly.</li> <li>• 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 May 1 via email to the PhD Program Coordinator.</li> <li>• Meet regularly with the student advisement committee to ensure the student's progression in the program. Any member of the advisement committee can ask for a meeting; however, the student is responsible for scheduling the meeting time and location at times and places acceptable to all parties.</li> <li>• Assist the student to develop a reasonable timeline for completion of the dissertation activities and support to ensure time completion of the plan of study.</li> <li>• Mentor student to submit abstracts to scholarly conferences, publish manuscripts, and review and edit all student posters, papers, and presentations.</li> </ul> <p><b>Role of Associate Advisors (AA)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist with developing the student's plan of study to meet PhD Program requirements.</li> <li>• Provide subject matter or methodological expertise to diversify perspectives.</li> </ul>
Project Mentor	A content expert in the field/area of the project's focus.
Professional Staff	Student services – enrollment, registration.

Students must meet with their major advisor at least once per semester, preferably before registration.

## **General Advising Procedures**

School of Nursing policy states that e-mail communications between students and faculty should be addressed within two business days following receipt of message. This is to foster prompt communication between advisors and advisees.

Additional School of Nursing policy states that faculty are expected to provide feedback on proposal/manuscript/project drafts, IRB applications, etc. to students within two weeks following receipt of submission, or in other time frames as mutually agreed upon by both the student and their PhD Advisory Committee members.

Major Advisors with 9-month appointments should notify students of vacation plans and develop timelines for communication during the summer months.

## **PhD Advisory Committee – Structure and Function**

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. Students should select the committee members with guidance from their Major Advisor and Director of the PhD Program.

## **Advisory Committee Composition**

All students must have a Major Advisor. The Major Advisor is a UConn Elisabeth Deluca School of Nursing faculty member with a UConn Graduate School Appointment. The Major Advisor 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 Major Advisor 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 at least three faculty members (one Major Advisor and two Associate Advisors). The Major Advisor guides the student to invite the Associate Advisors.

If the advisory committee consists of three members, decisions must be unanimous. If the advisory committee consists of four or more members, decisions are considered adopted if there is no more than one negative vote, although the major advisor or both co-major advisors must always vote in the affirmative. For Ph.D. students, advisory committee decisions involving the outcome of the General Examination, approval of the Dissertation Proposal, oral defense of the dissertation, or approval of the dissertation itself, must be unanimous.

The 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. Students' advisory committees are accountable directly to the Dean of The Graduate School.

The advisory committee must include at least two associate advisors, one of whom must hold a current appointment to the Graduate Faculty at the appropriate level in the student's particular field of study or area of concentration. An associate advisor must possess suitable academic or scientific credentials in the student's field of study.

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 Major Advisor. The PhD Program Director will assign two reviewers from the UConn Elisabeth DeLuca School of Nursing for the GE.

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 Major Advisor 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.

If deemed appropriate by a graduate student's major advisor or both co-major advisors, the major advisor or both co-major advisors may request that a suitably qualified external associate advisor be appointed to the student's advisory committee by writing to The Graduate School. The request should be accompanied by a curriculum vitae for the individual being recommended for appointment. Such appointments are made on the basis of advanced training and significant experience in the field of study. An appointment as external associate advisor is limited to an individual student's advisory committee and does not imply in any way membership on the Graduate Faculty of the University. Ordinarily, not more than one external associate advisor is appointed to any master's or doctoral student's advisory committee.

Readers, examiners, or other reviewers who have not been recognized as associate advisors by The Graduate School are not members of the student's advisory committee.

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.

### **Role of Student**

- Initiate regularly scheduled advisory meetings.
- Schedule an advising appointment with the Major Advisor before registering for coursework each semester.
- Meet regularly with the Major Advisor to review the student's course of study.
- Address recommendations of the advisory committee in a timely manner.
- Seek assistance when progression issues occur.
- Be proactive in seeking guidance when diverse sources of feedback exist, and decision-making is needed for future progress. Ask questions!
- Collaborate with the Major Advisor to develop a timeline for completion of the dissertation and adhere, as much as possible to the timeline.

### **Role of Major Advisor (MA)**

- 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.
- File doctoral advisement notes in the student record at least twice yearly.
- 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 May 1 via email to the PhD Program Coordinator.
- Meet regularly with the student advisement committee to ensure the student's progression in the program. Any member of the advisement committee can ask for a meeting; however, the student is responsible for scheduling the meeting time and location at times and places acceptable to all parties.
- Assist the student to develop a reasonable timeline for completion of the dissertation activities and support to ensure time completion of the plan of study.
- Mentor student to submit abstracts to scholarly conferences, publish manuscripts, and review and edit all student posters, papers, and presentations.

### **Role of Associate Advisors (AA)**

- Assist with developing the student's plan of study to meet PhD Program requirements.
- Provide subject matter or methodological expertise to diversify perspectives.

### **Roles of the General Exam Reviewers**

- Every general exam committee must have at least two reviewers from the UConn Elisabeth Deluca School of Nursing, hold a Graduate appointment, and be appointed by the PhD Director.
- Critique the student's product and vote on the outcome of the general exam
- All five designated General Exam committee members serve as the official decision-making body and must reach unanimous agreement.

### **Roles of Dissertation Readers**

- Every Dissertation Committee must have two readers. The use of at least one reader outside the university is encouraged. Dissertation readers must hold terminal degrees in areas complementary to the student's program of study.
- Non-UConn dissertation readers must provide CVs to the PhD Program Director
- Serve as final checks and balance as committee members have helped design and implement the study.
- For the dissertation defense, decision-making authority resides exclusively with the three-member advisory committee, which must also reach a unanimous decision.
- Critique the student product and contribute to the deliberation but do not vote on the outcome of the dissertation defense

### **Change of Advisor Procedure**

If a student wishes to make a change of MA, the student must notify the PhD Program Director. After consultation, the student will notify the MA, complete a [Change of Graduate Major Advisor](#), and submit it to the Graduate School.

#### **Change of Major Advisor**

It may be necessary to change a Major Advisor (e.g., if students have substantive changes in research directions or if a faculty member leaves the university).

Requests to change a Major Advisor 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.

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.

### **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:

Student notifies the Program Coordinator of the change. The Program Coordinator will update the files. The Major Advisor will send an email to the registrar ([registrar@uconn.edu](mailto:registrar@uconn.edu)) and PhD Program Director noting the student's name and who the new person is replacing on the committee.

If the new Associate Advisor is outside UConn, the Major Advisor will complete "[Request External Advisor for Advisory Committee](#)" form and send an email to the PhD Program Director noting the student's name and who the new person is replacing on the committee along with their CV.

### **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.

## **PhD Portfolio**

A portfolio of student work is required for program completion, and the student must work with their Major Advisor, the PhD Program Director, and PhD Program Coordinator to make sure all required elements are completed and in their student Portfolio Folder on Share Point before graduation. 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 – these should be reviewed by and approved by the Major Advisor prior to submission of a manuscript or abstract.

- The paper must a full-length manuscript published in a peer-reviewed journal with submission pre-approval by the Major Advisor.
- This paper may be one of the manuscripts in a three-paper Dissertation, noting the need for copyright transfer explained above.
- 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) and the proposal, which must relate to the dissertation topic. It is advisable to submit as many as possible, as there is no guarantee that they will be funded.
- Participation in the UConn Elisabeth DeLuca School of Nursing Research and Scholarship Day
- Attendance required at one(minimal) Dissertation Defense per academic year.
- Research Residency 150 hours See document Nursing PhD Research Residency Overview
- Teaching residency 150 hours See document Nursing PhD Teaching Residency Overview

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 UConn Elisabeth Deluca School of Nursing 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 are obtained during study.

### PhD Plans of Study:

## Post-Master's PhD in Nursing – Part-Time Plan of Study

### Semester 1 (Fall)

NURS 6200: Philosophical and Theoretical Perspectives of Nursing I - 3 credits  
 NURS 6205: Quantitative Methods for Healthcare - 3 credits  
 GRAD 6910: Responsible Conduct in Research - 1 credit 7 credits

### Semester 2 (Spring)

NURS 6220: Philosophical and Theoretical Perspectives of Nursing II - 3 credits  
 NURS 6230: Applied Statistics and Secondary Analysis for Health Data - 3 credits 6 credits

### Semester 3 (Fall)

NURS 6210: Introduction to Qualitative Methodology - 3 credits  
 GRAD 6950: Dissertation Seminar and Research - 1 credits 4 credits

### Semester 4 (Spring)

NURS 6101: Grantsmanship: The Pursuit of Scholarly Support - 3 credits  
 GRAD 6950: Dissertation Seminar and Research - 1 credit 4 credits

### Semester 5 (Fall)

NURS 6165 Mixed Methods Research - 3 credits  
 GRAD 6950: Dissertation Seminar and Research - 2 credits 5 credits

### Semester 6 (Spring)

Courses Supportive of Dissertation Area (CSDA) - 3 credits\*  
 NURS 6250: Key Factors and Multi-Level Influences on Health - 3 credits  
 GRAD 6950: Dissertation Seminar and Research - 2 credits 8 credits

### Semester 7 (Fall)

Courses Supportive of Dissertation Area (CSDA) - 3 credits\*\*  
 GRAD 6950: Dissertation Seminar and Research – 3 credits 6 credits

### Semester 8 (Spring)

Courses Supportive of Dissertation Area (CSDA) - 3 credits  
 GRAD 6950: Dissertation Seminar and Research - 6 credits 9 credits

**TOTAL: 49 Credits**

**CONTENT CREDIT: 34 credits**

**Notes:** Matriculation continued until end (GRAD 6999)

GRAD 6950: Dissertation Seminar and Research needs to total 15 credits

\*NURS 6215 Advanced Qualitative Methods offered as CSDA in Spring

\*\*NURS 6240 Advanced Topics in Applied Statistics for Health Research as CSDA in Fall

Research Residency (150 hours) required prior to Dissertation Proposal Defense

Teaching (150 hours) Residency required prior to Final Dissertation Defense

## Post-Master's PhD in Nursing – Full-Time Plan of Study

### Semester 1 (Fall)

NURS 6200 Philosophical and Theoretical Perspectives of Nursing I - 3 credits	
NURS 6205: Quantitative Methods for Healthcare - 3 credits	
NURS 6210 Introduction to Qualitative Methodology - 3 credits	
GRAD 5910: Responsible Conduct in Research - 1 credit	
GRAD 6950: Dissertation Seminar and Research - 1 credit	11 credits

### Semester 2 (Spring)

NURS 6220: Philosophical and Theoretical Perspectives of Nursing II - 3 credits	
NURS 6101: Grantsmanship: The Pursuit of Scholarly Support - 3 credits	
NURS 6230: Applied Statistics and Secondary Analysis for Health Data - 3 credits	
GRAD 6950: Dissertation Seminar and Research - 1 credit	10 credits

### Semester 3 (Fall)

NURS 6165: Mixed Methods Research - 3 credits	
Courses Supportive of Dissertation Area (CSDA) - 3 credits*	
GRAD 6950: Dissertation Seminar and Research - 2 credits	8 credits

### Semester 4 (Spring)

Courses Supportive of Dissertation Area (CSDA) - 3 credits**	
NURS 6250: Key Factors and Multi-Level Influences on Health - 3 credits	
GRAD 6950: Dissertation Seminar and Research - 2 credits	8 credits

### Semester 5 (Fall)

Courses Supportive of Dissertation Area (CSDA) - 3 credits	
GRAD 6950: Dissertation Seminar and Research - 3 credits	6 credits

### Semester 6 (Spring)

GRAD 6950: Dissertation Seminar and Research - 6 credits	6 credits
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**TOTAL: 49 Credits**

**CONTENT CREDIT: 34 credits**

**Notes:** Matriculation continued until end (GRAD 6999)

GRAD 6950: Dissertation Seminar and Research needs to total 15 credits

\*NURS 6240 Advanced Topics in Applied Statistics for Health Research as CSDA in Fall

\*\*NURS 6215 Advanced Qualitative Methods offered as CSDA in Spring

Research Residency (150 hours) required prior to Dissertation Proposal Defense

Teaching (150 hours) Residency required prior to Final Dissertation Defense

## Post-Bachelor's entry into the PhD in Nursing – Full-Time Plan of Study

### Semester 1 (Fall)

NURS 6200: Philosophical and Theoretical Perspectives of Nursing I -	3 credits
NURS 6205: Quantitative Methods for Healthcare -	3 credits
GRAD 5910: Responsible Conduct in Research -	1 credit
NURS 5020: Statistical Methods in Health Sciences Research -	3 credits
GRAD 6950: Dissertation Seminar and Research -	1 credit
	<b>11 credits</b>

### Semester 2 (Spring)

NURS 6220: Philosophical and Theoretical Perspectives of Nursing II -	3 credits
<b>NURS 5030 Nursing Research for Clinical Scholarship</b>	<b>3 credits</b>
NURS 6230: Applied Statistics and Secondary Analysis for Health Data -	3 credits
GRAD 6950: Dissertation Seminar and Research	1 credit
	<b>10 credits</b>

### Semester 3 (Fall)

NURS 6210 Introduction to Qualitative Methodology -	3 credits
NURS 5870: Health Policy & Population-Based Advocacy for the Scholarship Application	3 credits
Courses Supportive of Dissertation Area (CSDA) -	3 credits
GRAD 6950: Dissertation Seminar and Research -	2 credits
	<b>11 credits</b>

### Semester 4 (Spring)

Courses Supportive of Dissertation Area (CSDA) -	3 credits
NURS 6101: Grantsmanship: The Pursuit of Scholarly Support -	3 credits
Elective	3 credits
GRAD 6950: Dissertation Seminar and Research	2 credits
	<b>11 credits</b>

### Semester 5 (Fall)

Courses Supportive of Dissertation Area (CSDA) -	3 credits**
NURS 6165: Mixed Methods Research -	3 credits
GRAD 6950: Dissertation Seminar and Research -	3 credits
	<b>9 credits</b>

### Semester 6 (Spring)

NURS 6250: Key Factors and Multi-Level Influences on Health -	3 credits
GRAD 6950: Dissertation Seminar and Research -	6 Credits
	<b>9 credits</b>

### Semester 7 (Fall)

GRAD 6950: Dissertation Seminar and Research – up to 200 credits total	credits
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### Semester 8 (Spring)

GRAD 6950: Dissertation Seminar and Research – up to 200 credits total if needed; no penalty for taking more than 15	<b>TOTAL: 61 Credits</b>
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**CONTENT CREDIT: 46 credits**

**Notes:** Matriculation continued until end (GRAD 6999)

GRAD 6950: Dissertation Seminar and Research needs to total 15 credits; can enroll in up to 200 credits total if needed; no penalty for taking more than 15 credits

#### Potential electives/CSDA

\*\*NURS 6240 Advanced Topics in Applied Statistics for Health Research as CSDA in Fall

\*\*\*NURS 6215 Advanced Qualitative Methods offered as CSDA in Spring

Research Residency (150 hours) required prior to Dissertation Proposal Defense

Teaching (150 hours) Residency required prior to Final Dissertation Defense

## Practices for Document Approvals and Submission to the Graduate School Registrar

### Email Approvals

Attach completed document in an email to Advisory Committee as a whole, cc: [jenn.horan@uconn.edu](mailto:jenn.horan@uconn.edu) and request committee “reply all” with 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.

### Electronic Approvals

Attach completed document in an email to advisory committee as a whole, cc: [jenn.horan@uconn.edu](mailto: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](mailto:jenn.horan@uconn.edu).

All members of a student’s advisory committee must provide original signature in 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.

### Seeking Support and Resources

Graduate school can be a rewarding journey, but it's normal to face bumps along the way—whether they’re personal, financial, or academic. If you ever find yourself struggling to keep up or run into challenges that might delay your progress, remember: you're not alone, and help is always available.

Don’t hesitate to reach out early if you need support. Here are some resources just for you:

- Your ELISABETH DELUCE SCHOOL OF NURSING professors and academic advisors—they’re here to guide you
- The Graduate School, offering dedicated support
- The University Ombuds Office, for confidential conversations

- Other campus services such as counseling, accessibility services, and financial aid

Asking for help is not only okay—it's encouraged! Any requests for support will be handled with care and won't affect your academic standing. By connecting with these resources early on, you'll make your path to graduation a little smoother and ensure you have the support you need to succeed.

## University Level Supports

In addition to our world-class faculty scholars and educators in the ELISABETH DELUCA SCHOOL OF NURSING, UConn provides significant [academic support](#) to promote students' success.

- The [Dean of Students Office](#) serves as a centralized resource for connecting students with appropriate university and community programs, offices, and individuals, and to resolve issues that affect the quality of students' academic or community life and personal goals.
- The [Academic Achievement Center](#) is a walk-in service for students to learn effective ways to study, time management strategies, and methods of managing stress.
- Free tutoring is available through the [Writing Center](#) with available expertise to help students refine their writing skills in any course.
- Students with disabilities are provided accommodations through the [Center for Students with Disabilities](#).
- For students whose first language is not English, student support is provided through [International Student and Scholar Services](#). All new international students must complete check-in online through the ISSS website.
- Graduate School [Resources for Current Students](#)

## Funding and Financial Support

Students may be eligible for program- or university-based funding through these opportunities:

- [ELISABETH DELUCA SCHOOL OF NURSING Financial Assistance](#)
- **Fellowships/Scholarships:** Information at [Office of Student Financial Aid Services](#) .
- **Financial Expectations:** Funded students are expected to maintain satisfactory academic progress and may face restrictions on outside employment.

## Student Organizations, Clubs, and Groups

- [Sigma Theta Tau International- Mu Chapter](#) Nursing Honor Society

- [Graduate School Getting Involved](#)

## Graduation and Post-Graduation Support

### Graduation Planning

To graduate, students must:

- [Apply for Graduation](#) by the fourth week of their final semester for each degree they are completing.
  - Enrollment Services submit the plan of study to [degreeaudit@uconn.edu](mailto:degreeaudit@uconn.edu)
- Attend Exit Interviews
- Complete end of program survey.

**Commencement details:** Graduation Ceremonies are the weekend after the completion of finals week of the spring semester. Information regarding the ceremonies, tickets and regalia rental information is provided early in the spring semester to students' in their uconn.edu email.

### Career Preparation and Support

Career planning begins early.

- Letters of recommendation – complete the [Student FERPA Release](#)
- Portfolio Completion– competencies, skills and practicum hours documents.
- [Center for Career Readiness and Life Skills](#)
- [Become Career Ready: Skills Employers Seek](#)

# Appendix

**1. University Graduate Catalog:** [2026-27 Graduate Catalog | University of Connecticut Academic Catalog](#)

**2. Student Code of Conduct:** [Responsibilities of Community Life: The Student Code | Community Standards](#)

## **3. Curriculum**

<https://nursing.online.uconn.edu/#masters>

## **4. Net Id and listserv**

<https://its.uconn.edu/services/applications/uconn-lists-listserv/>

## **5. Writing resources**

<https://writingcenter.uconn.edu/overview-of-grad-support/>

## **6. Insurance**

<https://shs.uconn.edu/insurance-information/>

## **6. Academic calendar**

<https://registrar.uconn.edu/academic-calendar/>

## **7. Forms**

<https://registrar.uconn.edu/forms/> &  
[Forms | The Graduate School](#)

## **8. University of Connecticut Policies**

<https://policy.uconn.edu>  
[Policies and Procedures | The Graduate School](#)

## **9. Financial Support**

**Financial resources for graduate students are listed on our webpage at**  
<https://nursing.uconn.edu/financial-assistance/>