



# **PhD Student Handbook**

## **2019-2020**

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## OVERVIEW OF PHD PROGRAM

The PhD Program in Nursing (*thereafter, the PhD Program*) offered by the University of Memphis (U of M) Loewenberg College of Nursing (LCON) is a terminal research degree that prepares nurses to teach and conduct research in academic nursing and healthcare settings. The PhD Program is designed for those who plan to assume a role as nurse researcher/scholar/educator in academic nursing as well as healthcare settings through research experimentation and theory application to generate new knowledge.

### Program Outcomes

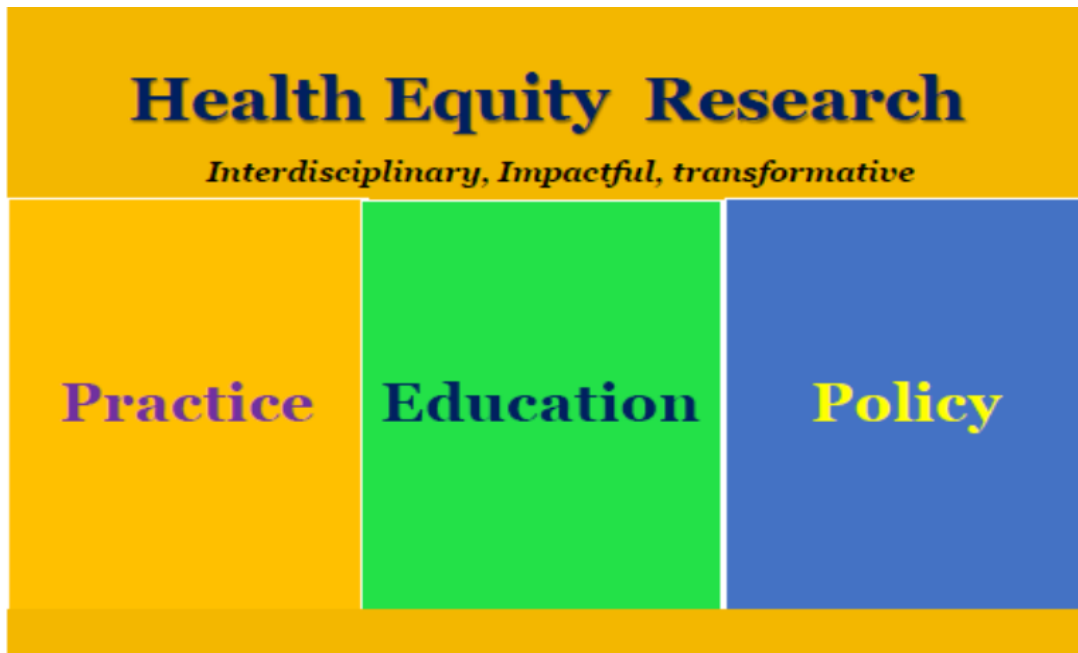
Graduates of the PhD program will be prepared to

- 1) conduct rigorous nursing and interdisciplinary research,
- 2) generate new knowledge that guides nursing practice, and
- 3) lead educational research in program and course design, clinical education, and the evaluation of learning that prepares nurses of the future.

Graduates will be prepared to fill the gap of PhD prepared faculty in academic nursing to educate future nurses, clinicians, leaders, and nurse scholars/researchers as well as to prepare nurse researchers/scientists to help transform healthcare to be equitable, affordable, and high quality.

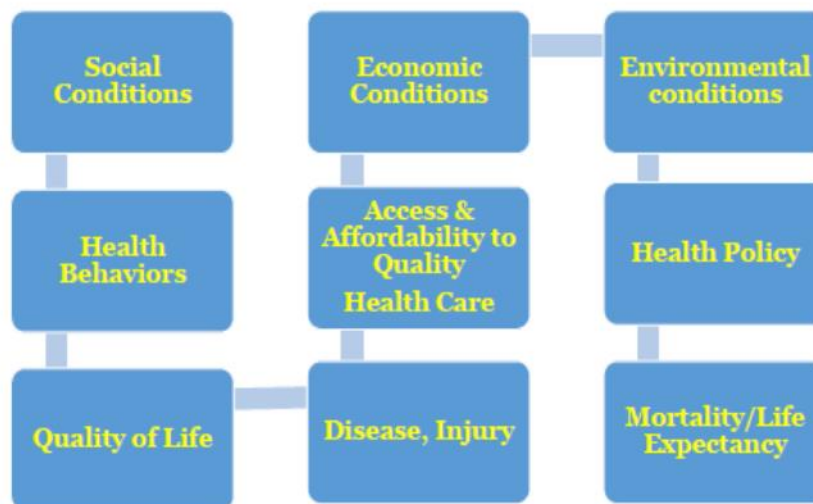
### Faculty

Faculty in nursing and at U of M have a variety of research backgrounds and conduct research in several areas centered around the theme Health Equity Research. Health Equity is defined as “attainment of the highest level of health for all people” (*Healthy People 2020*). Examples of faculty research/scholarly work are improving health behaviors (e.g., obesity, physical inactivity, women health, pediatric asthma management, medication practice in the community dwelling elders), reducing health disparities, clinical management of chronic diseases, building a culture of health for urban children and families, quality of life across human lifespan, nursing interventions for the vulnerable, equitable healthcare policies, educational strategies to retain minority nursing students. The model below details how each focus area distinctly highlights the correlation of these concepts in the PhD Program.



**Health Equity** is defined as the “Attainment of the highest level of health for all people”  
 According to Healthy People 2020

## Health Equity Framework



Reference: Healthy people 2020: Social Determinants of Health; Health Disparities and Health Equity

## **Role of Doctoral Student**

Being a doctoral student differs from being an undergraduate or master's student in many important ways. The doctoral student pursues a terminal degree. As you plan, navigate, and revisit your personal objectives for the doctoral study, you keep in mind the word *professionalism*. You are now in a PhD program preparing you to be a leader in nursing. Your doctoral education will provide you with the ability to demonstrate ethical choices based on high moral and ethical principles, as well as the values and professional practices that are implicit in nursing decisions. Your doctoral education will also prepare you to consider community stewardship, equity, social justice, and accountability in all your professional actions and require you to commit to personal, institutional, and professional development.

Although you may or may not be enrolled in courses over the summer, full time doctoral students who have assistantships should acknowledge the year round commitment required. You will be expected to actively invest your time in pursuing research and publications, reading(s) and learning that academic education entails, to be an involved member of the academic community, and to make concerted efforts pursuing opportunities consistent with your career interests. Taking the initiative is extremely important, and how much you gain from your doctoral education will depend largely on how much you invest in it. The PhD faculty will teach, guide, mentor, and coach you to support your success in the PhD Program.

## **ADMISSION POLICIES**

### **Admission Requirements**

*Admission Requirements* additional to those of the U of M Graduate School. International applicants will be expected to submit a minimum score of 550 on the paper, a 210 on the computer-based, or 79 on the internet based Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).

Additionally, applicants will:

1. possess an unencumbered RN license or equivalent in the student's state/nation of residence.
2. earned Master's Degree with minimum GPA of 3.0. If a GPA is not available, the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) is required from with scores from the last five years with a minimum of verbal and quantitative score of 140 and analytical writing score of at least 3.0.
3. provide three letters of reference from individuals familiar with the applicant's capabilities for doctoral study and for future performance as a nurse scholar and researcher. Generally, two letters from former professors will be expected.
4. submit a personal statement of approximately 750-1000 words indicating his/her present interests and career goals, including how the PhD in Nursing will prepare the student to

achieve those goals. Please describe how the applicant's research interests can be strengthened by identifying 2-3 potential faculty with expertise in the research area.

5. provide a writing sample (e.g., published paper, or coursework from previous degree program is acceptable).
6. provide a copy of the applicant's curriculum vitae (CV) or resume.
7. interview via phone, face-to-face, or Skype will be required.

The PhD Program Committee will review all submitted materials. Admissions decisions are made on the overall quality of the applicant's professional background in nursing, scholarship, academic ability (based on GPAs, undergraduate and graduate coursework completed, research conducted, recommendations, and interviews) as well as the applicant's "fit" for the program in terms of academic background, research interests, and career goals.

The PhD Program Committee will review all submitted materials. Admissions decisions are made on the overall quality of the applicant's professional background in nursing, scholarship, academic ability (based on GPAs, undergraduate and graduate coursework completed, research conducted/interested, recommendations, and interviews) as well as the applicant's "fit" for the program in terms of academic background, research interests, and career goals.

### **Transfer Credit Evaluation**

Previously earned doctoral credits may be considered for transfer by the student's advisory committee in accordance with the Graduate School policy; however, residency requirements stipulate that the last thirty semester hours of credit for the doctoral degree (including 9 dissertation hours) must be earned at the U of M.

Credit towards a graduate degree does not transfer automatically. In general, however, graduate work completed at another institution in a program accredited at the graduate level may be accepted in a graduate degree program at the University, with the following provisions. (1) They relate to the content of the graduate program and/or are comparable to those offered at the University. (2) They do not exceed time limitations set for doctoral programs.

Credit previously earned at another institution must be presented for evaluation no later than the end of the student's second semester of enrollment. Forms are available on-line or from the Graduate School Graduation Analyst. Only transcripts received directly from an issuing institution are considered official.

Approved transfer credit may be accepted for one-half the number of semester hours of course credit toward a doctoral degree. Individual academic units may set more stringent limitations.

Credit will be transferred to apply toward a doctoral program upon approval of the student's advisory committee.

Courses proposed for transfer credit must meet the following two requirements. (1) a minimum of 750 contact minutes for each semester credit (2250 for a 3-hour course). (2) a minimum of 3 hours of class work per week for 3 hours of credit.

Grades earned at another institution will not be computed in the University cumulative grade point average, nor will they be accepted for transfer, unless they are "B" (3.0) or better. No credit will be transferred unless it meets with the approval of the major advisor or program graduate coordinator.

### **CURRICULUM**

The PhD Program requires the completion of 60 semester credit hours beyond the master's degree or 54 semester credit hours beyond the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree. The following tables display program requirements.

<b>Curriculum Component</b>	<b>Hours Required</b>
Nursing Science Core	6
Research Core	18
Education Core	6
Health Equity Core	6
Electives	12
Dissertation	12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>



## Post-MSN Course Requirements (60 Credits)

Course prefix and number		Course title	SCH	New courses needed (Y/N)	Distance Learning (Y/N)
Nursing <i>Science</i> Core: 6 hours					
NURS 8111		Philosophy of Science	3	Y	Y
NURS 8112		Middle-Range Theories in Nursing and Health Equity	3	Y	Y
<i>Research</i> Core: 18 hours					
NURS 8311		Doctoral Research Seminar I	3	Y	Y
NURS 8312		Doctoral Research Seminar II	3	Y	Y
NURS 8313		Responsible Conduct of Research	1	Y	Y
NURS 8314		Doctoral Research Practicum	2	Y	Y
NURS 8211		Qualitative Methods	3	Y	Y
NURS 8213		Quantitative Methods	3	Y	Y
PUBH 7150		Biostatistical Methods I	3	N	Y
<i>Education</i> Core: 6 hours					
EDPR 8541		Statistical Methods & Apps in Education	3	N	Y
ICL 8003		Curriculum Design and Evaluation	3	N	Y
<i>Health Equity</i> Core: 6 hours					
NURS 8113		Health Equity Research	3	Y	Y
PUBH 7160		Social and Behavioral Science Principles	3	N	Y
<b>Electives: 12 hours - Students are required to complete 6 hours of coursework in the Education Focus Area from this list of electives.</b>					
Online Course Options					
Education Focus Area	HIAD 8541	Issues and Trends in Teaching Adults	3	N	Y
	ICL 7030	Assessment and Evaluation	3	N	Y
	EDPR 7561	Qualitative Methods in Education	3	N	Y
	EDPR 7521	Intro to Education Research	3	N	Y
	HIAD 8410	Overview of Higher Education	3	N	Y
	HIAD 8420	Legal/Ethical Issues in Higher Education	3	N	Y
	LEAD 7000	Intro to Education Leadership	3	N	Y
	EDPR 7121	Learning and Cognition	3	N	Y
On-Ground Course Options					
Education Focus Area	ICL 8004	Innovative Curricula	3	N	N
	ICL 8054	Creativity in Teaching and Curriculum	3	N	N
	EDPR	Culturally Diverse Students	3	N	N
	HIAD 8420	Legal and Ethical Issues in Higher Education	3	N	N

Research Focus Area	HIAD 8403	Research in Higher and Adult Education	3	N	N
	EDPR 8543	Research Design and Analysis	3	N	N
	HIAD 8406	Designing Research in Higher and Adult	3	N	N
	PSYCH 8309	Focus Group Research	3	N	N
	PSYCH 8312	Qualitative Research /Psychology	3	N	N
	EDPR 7512	Psychometric Theory and Educational	3	N	N
	EDPR 8511	Measurement and Evaluation	3	N	N
	PUBH 8311	Applied Categorical Data Analysis	3	N	N
	ICL 8953	Writing for Academic Publications	3	N	N
	EDPR 8547	Sampling Design and Survey Methods	3	N	N
Health Equity Focus Area	PUB 8130	Social Determinants of Health	3	N	N
	HADM 7204	Quality and Outcomes Management in Healthcare	3	N	N
	HADM 7107	Health Care Ethics	3	N	N
	NURS 7811	Global Perspectives on Nursing and Health Policy	3	N	N
	SOCI 7583	Rural and Urban Poverty	3	N	N
<b>Dissertation:</b> 12 hours					
NURS 9000		Doctoral Dissertation	1-12 hours	Y	Y

## Post DNP Course Requirements (54 Credits)

Course prefix and number		Course title	SCH	New courses needed (Y/N)	Distance Learning (Y/N)
Nursing <i>Science</i> Core: 6 hours					
NURS 8111		Philosophy of Science	3	Y	Y
NURS 8112		Middle-Range Theories in Nursing and Health Equity	3	Y	Y
<i>Research</i> Core: 18 hours					
NURS 8311		Doctoral Research Seminar I	3	Y	Y
NURS 8312		Doctoral Research Seminar II	3	Y	Y
NURS 8313		Responsible Conduct of Research	1	Y	Y
NURS 8314		Doctoral Research Practicum	2	Y	Y
NURS 8211		Qualitative Methods	3	Y	Y
NURS 8213		Quantitative Methods	3	Y	Y
PUBH 7150		Biostatistical Methods I	3	N	Y
<i>Education</i> Core: 6 hours					
EDPR 8541		Statistical Methods & Apps in Education	3	N	Y
ICL 8003		Curriculum Design and Evaluation	3	N	Y
<i>Health Equity</i> Core: 6 hours					
NURS 8113		Health Equity Research	3	Y	Y
PUBH 7160		Social and Behavioral Science Principles	3	N	Y
<b>Electives:</b> 6 hours - <b>Students are required to complete 6 hours of coursework in the Education Focus Area from this list of electives.</b>					
Online Course Options					
Education Focus Area	HIAD 8541	Issues and Trends in Teaching Adults	3	N	Y
	ICL 7030	Assessment and Evaluation	3	N	Y
	EDPR 7561	Qualitative Methods in Education	3	N	Y
	EDPR 7521	Intro to Education Research	3	N	Y
	HIAD 8410	Overview of Higher Education	3	N	Y
	HIAD 8420	Legal/Ethical Issues in Higher Education	3	N	Y
	LEAD 7000	Intro to Education Leadership	3	N	Y
	EDPR 7121	Learning and Cognition	3	N	Y
On-Ground Course Options					
Education Focus Area	ICL 8004	Innovative Curricula	3	N	N
	ICL 8054	Creativity in Teaching and Curriculum	3	N	N
	EDPR	Culturally Diverse Students	3	N	N
<b>Dissertation:</b> 12 hours					
NURS 9000		Doctoral Dissertation	1-12 hours	Y	Y

**Loewenberg College of Nursing  
PhD Curriculum Full-Time  
Post-MSN Sample Plan of Study**

**Year 1**

<b>Spring</b>		<b>Fall</b>	
NURS 8111 Philosophy of Science	3	NURS 8213 Quantitative Methods	3
NURS 8112 Middle Range Theories in Nursing and Health Equity	3	PUBH 7150 Biostatistical Methods I	3
NURS 8113 Health Equity Research	3	NURS 8311 Doctoral Research Seminar I	3
Total	9	Total	9

**Year 2**

<b>Spring</b>		<b>Fall</b>	
NURS 8312 Doctoral Research Seminar II	3	NURS 8314 Doctoral Research Practicum	2
NURS 8211 Qualitative Methods	3	EDPR 8541 Statistical Methods & Apps in Education	3
PUBH 7160 Social and Behavioral Science Principles	3	ICL 8003 Curriculum Design and Evaluation	3
		NURS 8313 Responsible Conduct of Research	1
Total	9	Total	9

**Year 3**

<b>Spring</b>		<b>Fall</b>	
NURS 9000 Doctoral Dissertation	3	NURS 9000 Doctoral Dissertation	3
Elective	3	Elective	3
Elective	3	Elective	3
Total	9	Total	9

**Year 4**

<b>Spring</b>			
NURS 9000 Doctoral Dissertation	*6		
Total	6		

- Student may enroll in up to 9 dissertation credits to maintain full-time status or convert to part-time status

**Loewenberg College of Nursing  
PhD Curriculum Full-Time  
Post DNP Sample Plan of Study**

**Year 1**

<b>Spring</b>		<b>Fall</b>	
NURS 8111 Philosophy of Science	3	NURS 8213 Quantitative Methods	3
NURS 8112 Middle Range Theories in Nursing and Health Equity	3	PUBH 7150 Biostatistical Methods I	3
NURS 8113 Health Equity Research	3	NURS 8311 Doctoral Research Seminar I	3
Total	9	Total	9

**Year 2**

<b>Spring</b>		<b>Fall</b>	
NURS 8312 Doctoral Research Seminar II	3	NURS 8314 Doctoral Research Practicum	2
NURS 8211 Qualitative Methods	3	EDPR 8541 Statistical Methods & Apps in Education	3
PUBH 7160 Social and Behavioral Science Principles	3	ICL 8003 Curriculum Design and Evaluation	3
		NURS 8313 Responsible Conduct of Research	1
Total	9	Total	9

**Year 3**

<b>Spring</b>		<b>Fall</b>	
NURS 9000 Doctoral Dissertation	*3	NURS 9000 Doctoral Dissertation	*9
Elective	6		
Total	9	Total	9

*Or Part Time (using the previous table)*

**Year 4**

<b>Spring</b>		<b>Fall</b>	
NURS 9000 Doctoral Dissertation	*6		
Total	6		

- Student may enroll in up to 9 dissertation credits to maintain full-time status or convert to part-time status

**Loewenberg College of Nursing  
PhD Curriculum Part-Time  
Post-MSN Sample Plan of Study**

**Year 1**

<b>Spring</b>		<b>Fall</b>	
NURS 8111 Philosophy of Science	3	NURS 8113 Health Equity Research	3
NURS 8112 Middle Range Theories in Nursing and Health Equity	3	PUBH 7150 Biostatistical Methods I	3
Total	6	Total	6

**Year 2**

<b>Spring</b>		<b>Fall</b>	
NURS 8211 Qualitative Methods	3	NURS 8213 Quantitative Methods	3
PUBH 7160 Social and Behavioral Science Principles	3	NURS 8311 Doctoral Research Seminar I	3
	6		6

**Year 3**

<b>Spring</b>		<b>Fall</b>	
NURS 8312 Doctoral Research Seminar II	3	EDPR 8541 Statistical Methods & Apps in Education	3
Elective	3	ICL 8003 Curriculum Design and Evaluation	3
		NURS 8313 Responsible Conduct of Research	1
Total	6	Total	7

**Year 4**

<b>Spring</b>		<b>Fall</b>	
NURS 8314 Doctoral Research Practicum	2	NURS 9000 Doctoral Dissertation	3
Elective	3	Elective	3
Elective	3		
Total	8	Total	6

**Year 5**

<b>Spring</b>		<b>Fall</b>	
NURS 9000 Doctoral Dissertation	6	NURS 9000 Doctoral Dissertation	3
Total	6	Total	3

**Loewenberg College of Nursing  
PhD Curriculum Part-Time  
Post-DNP Sample Plan of Study**

**Year 1**

<b>Spring</b>		<b>Fall</b>	
NURS 8111 Philosophy of Science	3	NURS 8113 Health Equity Research	3
NURS 8112 Middle Range Theories in Nursing and Health Equity	3	PUBH 7150 Biostatistical Methods I	3
Total	6	Total	6

**Year 2**

<b>Spring</b>		<b>Fall</b>	
NURS 8211 Qualitative Methods	3	NURS 8213 Quantitative Methods	3
PUBH 7160 Social and Behavioral Science Principles	3	NURS 8311 Doctoral Research Seminar I	3
	6		6

**Year 3**

<b>Spring</b>		<b>Fall</b>	
NURS 8312 Doctoral Research Seminar II	3	EDPR 8541 Statistical Methods & Apps in Education	3
Elective	3	ICL 8003 Curriculum Design and Evaluation	3
Total	6	Total	6

**Year 4**

<b>Spring</b>		<b>Fall</b>	
NURS 8314 Doctoral Research Practicum	2	NURS 9000 Doctoral Dissertation	6
Elective	3		
NURS 8313 Responsible Conduct of Research	1		
Total	6	Total	6

**Year 5**

<b>Spring</b>		<b>Fall</b>	
NURS 9000 Doctoral Dissertation	6		
Total	6		

## **RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS**

All students are expected to actively participate in mentored research and publications with their faculty, faculty advisor, and/or faculty researchers while enrolled. For students on graduate assistantships, this work will be part of their contracted duties. Part-time students not supported by assistantships also will be required to work collaboratively on research with their faculty advisor and/or other faculty members. Students will be allowed to gain course credit for these research experiences by registering for an Independent Study. Similar to other doctoral programs at the U of M, credit hours gained from an independent study will not count toward the 60 total credits required for graduation but may be used to maintain full-time academic standing.

## **CREDIT LOAD**

Full-time doctoral students must register for a minimum of 9 credits hours per semester throughout their tenure in the program, which will also fulfill the University's residency requirement prior to graduation. Part-time students are expected to carry a minimum of 6 credits per semester, unless permission is granted from the advisor for a reduced course load. Formal requests for an exception to this policy must be submitted to the PhD Program Director and will be reviewed by the Associate Dean of Academic Programs for approval.

## **PROGRESSION AND RETENTION**

Retention requirements are per policies stipulated by the U of M Graduate School. As a doctoral student, grades are not the only or even primary metric for your academic success. Academic performance does matter, but research and other scholarly pursuits are important measures of success and are critical to be competitive for post-graduate training opportunities and professional positions. In terms of course performance, no more than seven (7) credit hours in which a grade of C or below was earned will be counted toward degree requirements. In order to remain eligible for departmental funding, you must maintain an overall grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4-point scale. A minimum of 3.0 is also required for graduation. According to the U of M Graduate School, grades of "D" and "F" will not apply toward any graduate degree, but will be calculated in the GPA. Please note that grades from other institutions are not computed in calculating the GPA.

Students are expected to maintain "Good Standing" which means that progress has been judged as satisfactory by the faculty. In making this assessment, the faculty expects that you are maintaining at least a B average, that you do not have a grade below a B in a core course, and that you are making satisfactory progress toward your degree on all measures on which you are evaluated (i.e., course work, research productivity including, collaborative presentations and publications, and professional behavior).



Faculty are committed to working with each student accepted into the program. We make every effort to help students who are struggling in order to facilitate successful completion of the PhD Program. We might, for example, design a plan for remediation, along with re-assessment after some determined interval, to assess progress. During this time, a student would normally be placed on probation, and we would provide as much support and direction as possible in an effort to help the student to succeed. Written feedback will be given to the student at the conclusion of a remediation program to clearly indicate whether the problem was successfully resolved, and the student has the opportunity to discuss the matter directly with the faculty.

Under rare circumstances, a student may be asked to leave the program. Dismissal typically occurs after a period of probation in which expectations for remediation are clearly stated. Reasons for dismissal can include failure to perform adequately in courses, inadequate progress toward program milestones (such as comprehensive exam and dissertation), and unethical or unprofessional behavior. In the case of failing several courses or egregious misbehavior that cannot be safely rehabilitated, a student may be dismissed from the program without a period of probation.

*Graduation Requirements:* All of the University of Memphis Graduate School requirements. Additionally, students must complete a minimum of 48 semester hours of graduate course work beyond the master's degree and 42 semester hours beyond the doctor of nursing practice degree plus 12 hours of NURS 9000 (Doctoral Dissertation) for a minimum of 60 and 54 graduate credit hours, respectively.

### **TIMETABLES FOR COMPLETION OF DEGREE REQUIREMENTS**

Students should negotiate their planned deadlines with their advisor as early as possible in their graduate career and re-evaluate their plan at least annually to see whether any changes should be made. Full-time students normally are expected to finish the program in about 4 years and part-time students in 5 years.

### **QUALIFYING (COMPREHENSIVE) EXAMINATION**

**Overview:** Prior to enrolling for dissertation hours (NURS 9000), a student must successfully complete both a written and oral comprehensive examination. The examination will assess mastery of areas covered in the doctoral program. The content of the examination will consist of theory and methodology, and nursing issues central to the student's main research area. Since the examination is designed to test each student's knowledge of the field, it is not confined to material covered in classes.

**Eligibility Requirements:** Prior to initiating the examination process, a student must have completed at least 30 credit hours of coursework in the program. Additionally, he/she is required to be enrolled during the semester he/she proposes to take the comprehensive exam.

**Composition of Committee:** The committee will be composed of a minimum of 3 faculty members including the primary advisor who is from the College of Nursing. The student should form the committee in consultation with his/her primary advisor.

**Timeline:** Preparation for the comprehensive examination should begin during the semester in which the student is enrolled in NURS 8314 Doctoral Research Practicum. A student will complete the written portion of comprehensive examination during the designated semester and then take the oral exam within two weeks of the completion of the written exam.

**Evaluation:** The student's comprehensive examination will be reviewed by the committee in relation to:

- Quality of written and oral examination
- Ability to conceptualize and analyze the topic in depth
- Capacity for original thought and substantive knowledge in the focused area
- Integration of state of the art knowledge

University policy does not consider comprehensive examinations similar to a course; therefore, the results of the examination are not appealable. University policy allows you to take the comprehensive examination twice; failure to pass on the second attempt results in dismissal from the university. The dismissal may be appealed (see Retention Appeals in the Graduate Catalog).

### **Fall Semester Comprehensive Exam Schedule\***

Mid-March	Submit request for taking the comprehensive exam in Fall
End of March	The PhD Program Committee will form the Comprehensive Exam Committee in consultation with the faculty advisor, and the PhD Program Director.
Mid-April	First comprehensive exam committee meeting to discuss types of questions and nature of reading list
End of April	Compile reading list and study questions in consultation with the faculty advisor and individual committee members
Mid-May	Final approval of questions and reading lists by committee
June and July	Prepare for the comprehensive exam
August	Schedule comprehensive exam in consultation with your faculty advisor and committee over the three week period
Within two weeks of the written exam	Assessment by the committee and comprehensive Oral Exam

### **Spring Semester Comprehensive Exam Schedule\***

Mid-October	Submit request for taking the comprehensive exam in Spring
End of October	The PhD Program Committee will form the Comprehensive Exam Committee in consultation with the faculty advisor, and the PhD Program Director.
Mid-November	First comprehensive exam committee meeting to discuss types of questions and nature of reading list
End of November	Compile reading list and study questions in consultation with the faculty advisor and individual committee members
Mid-December	Final approval of questions and reading lists by the committee
January and February	Prepare for the comprehensive exam
March	Schedule comprehensive exam in consultation with PhD advisor and committee over the three week period
Within two weeks of the written exam	Assessment by the committee and comprehensive Oral Exam

*\*Exact date for each phase needs to be decided in consultation with the Advisor and the Committee*

Once the student passes both the written and oral parts, she/he is given the Doctoral Candidate status.

**Preparation for the Comprehensive Exam:** After forming the committee, the student meets with all members to plan for the exam. Expectations, format, and timing of the written and oral components of the exam, and coverage will be discussed. Each of the committee members will be responsible for one of the exam questions (described below). In consultation with the respective committee member, the student will produce a reading list for exam questions. Each list will be submitted to all committee members for review and possible feedback. Individual reading list typically contains 25-30 current reviews, seminar articles, and empirical studies.

The comprehensive exam committee chair will coordinate receiving the questions from committee members one week in advance of the first comprehensive exam for each of the students. Questions are discussed among the committee members and modified based on the feedback from members. The chair will coordinate distributing the questions, collecting the responses, and distributing them to the committee members. Prior to the commencement of the exam, the chair will also set the date for the oral exam within two weeks of the last exam in consultation with the committee members. The committee members can provide oral feedback to the student at their discretion one week prior to the oral exam. However, they are not required to provide any feedback prior to the oral exam.

**Written Component:** The written portion of the examination will test the student's competency in four areas: (1) philosophical and epistemological perspectives; (2) theoretical and conceptual knowledge; (3) methodological preparedness in both quantitative and/or qualitative techniques; and (4) content knowledge of the student's main research area. Written exam questions will be distributed to the student and the student will be allowed two weeks to complete the written exam questions. Responses should be typed in Times New Roman, 12-point font, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, and should be approximately 15-20 pages, excluding references and graphics.

**Oral Component:** During the oral exam, mastery of the subject area as noted earlier will be further assessed through a question/answer session with the committee. The Committee will ask questions related to the written portion of the exam and general knowledge in the field of nursing. The oral exam will last approximately one and a half hours.

**Evaluation:** Committee members will independently evaluate the student's written answers as well as his/her performance on the oral exam. If a student does not perform at a satisfactory level on a particular question, the committee may allow the student to retake the exam at the discretion of the committee. A student will be allowed to retake the

comprehensive exam a maximum of one time. The committee decides whether the second oral exam necessary.

**Academic Integrity:** Students are expected to work on the questions independently. No collaboration is allowed among students. Any questions regarding the exam should be first raised to the primary advisor. The student may then be advised to consult with the faculty responsible for writing the question.

All written work submitted must be the student's original work and conform to the guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA) that are available online and via their publications. This means that any substantive ideas, phrases, sentences, and/or any published ideas must be properly referenced to avoid even the appearance of plagiarism. The LCON will follow University of Memphis policies and procedures regarding investigating, documenting, and responding to plagiarism. See "Academic Conduct" below and [http://www.memphis.edu/studentconduct/misconduct\\_process.htm](http://www.memphis.edu/studentconduct/misconduct_process.htm) for specific University definitions and policies.

## **DISSERTATION**

### ***Getting Started***

The PhD students are highly recommended to think about your general research area in the first semester. The student may select articles on topics in his/her related field to expand knowledge and/or confirm own area of research interest. The student may discuss evolving ideas with his/her faculty advisor from the beginning of the semester and continue dialoguing via online discussion and /or meeting with faculty. This process helps students engage with faculty and identify faculty who may serve on your dissertation committee. The student will finalize his/her dissertation committee after passing the qualifying (comprehensive) examination. Once the student has successfully passed the required qualifying (comprehensive) examination, the student is ready to begin his/her dissertation proposal.

### ***Advisor and Dissertation Committee***

Students are assigned a faculty advisor during their first semester of enrollment in the PhD program. This assignment is made based on compatibility of the student and faculty research interests. Students should consult with their advisor prior to registering for courses each term so that she or he may help the student to choose courses consistent with their educational and professional goals. It is expected that students will develop a professional relationship with their assigned advisor and seek advice on a regular basis. By initiating regular advising meetings, students ensure professional success and enhance academic performance. If the student in the dissertation proposal phase, make sure to discuss with his or her dissertation chair about the following:

- Turnaround time
- Authorship on research papers related to the dissertation
- Opportunity to seek PhD student related federal grants
- Plan for taking or not taking summer courses
- Expectations for proposal hearing
- Recommendations for other members of your dissertation committee
- Frequency of meetings
- Development of a plan and tentative time frame through defense

Since the dissertation is a major piece of scholarly work, it is inevitably time consuming. The student needs to allow considerable time for reviewing literature, considering theoretical or conceptual framework, designing methodology, writing and rewriting, routing of paperwork submitted to the committee for their review prior to his/her proposal hearing. After the student successfully defends his or her proposal, the student needs to dedicate time for conducting research, collecting and analyzing data, writing research results and implications and submitting to the Committee for review and decision for the dissertation defense. The student shall allow faculty at least 15 working days (three weeks) from submission to providing feedback.

By the end of the first academic year, the student should begin to assemble his or her dissertation committee. The PhD faculty advisor may serve as chair of the dissertation committee or the committee may be chaired by a seasoned researcher/professor from another discipline at the U of M and co-chaired by a nursing faculty (*as part of the faculty mentoring*). The dissertation committee may consist of four faculty members with at least two members being from the College of Nursing. The committee chair must hold at graduate faculty status and with experience in the PhD Program. Other committee members may be from inside or outside of the U of M. In the event of an invited committee member from outside the U of M, the Graduate School guidelines for such appointments need to be followed.

([http://www.memphis.edu/gradschool/graduate\\_faculty/gradfacproc.php](http://www.memphis.edu/gradschool/graduate_faculty/gradfacproc.php)). The Dissertation Faculty Committee Form must be completed and submitted to the graduate school as soon as the committee is formed. The Faculty Committee Form can be accessed at [http://www.memphis.edu/gradschool/pdfs/td\\_committee\\_form.pdf](http://www.memphis.edu/gradschool/pdfs/td_committee_form.pdf).

### ***Dissertation Proposal***

The *pre-proposal* should be a 2-3 page document that provides the rationale and preliminary research question(s) and study design of the dissertation. It helps orient potential committee members to your research and serves as a starting point for committee discussions leading to the full proposal. The pre-proposal should be approved by the major advisor and then submitted to individuals who are asked to serve on the committee.

The student must submit a written dissertation *proposal* for the dissertation committee prior to conducting his/her research. The proposal will constitute the first 3 chapters of the dissertation (introduction, literature review, methodology). The proposal should also discuss expected result and include references.

The Introduction should be an overarching literature review and research questions/hypotheses. The literature review should be a detailed review of literature on the topic of interest. The Methods section should include sub-sections that are appropriate for your project, such as Design, Procedures/Intervention, Measures, and Data Analysis (including proposed outcome analyses and power calculations, if appropriate). Expected Results may be a paragraph or two that describe what findings are expected based on hypotheses, as well as potential obstacles and their solutions. The References section should be formatted in APA style and include all citations.

Each student's dissertation proposal must be reviewed and approved by the dissertation committee. For this purpose, the student will submit her/his dissertation proposal to the committee and ask for an oral defense within 4 weeks after submission of her/his dissertation proposal.

As a reminder the student must also submit a proposal to the University Human Subjects Review Committee for human subject research after committee approval prior to collecting data. After the approval of the proposal you will carry through the research project and write up the results with committee advisement.

### ***Dissertation Guidelines***

All doctoral students must complete an original investigation presented in the form of a dissertation. The dissertation must contain original research based on either primary data collection or secondary data analysis. The empirical data for the dissertation may be quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods in nature. The research work needs to be of publication quality, and acceptable to the LCON and to a committee of dissertation readers.

The traditional doctoral dissertation consists of a statement of the problem, specific aims, and related hypotheses; a literature review; explanation of research methodology, data collection procedure, analysis of data, presentation of results; and a discussion of findings and their nursing implications. Students may use qualitative approaches to research and thus students need to follow principles of qualitative research in dissertation. Students also have the option of completing a manuscript-oriented dissertation as an alternative to the traditional dissertation. In case of the second option, students should prepare three published or publishable quality manuscripts on the subthemes derived from the main dissertation topic. These three manuscripts will consist of the three chapters of the dissertation and should be accompanied by the first introductory chapter that introduces the overarching theme and one concluding chapter

that synthesizes all of the findings. Students should discuss both options with their advisor before deciding on a dissertation strategy.

A satisfactory investigation and its presentation in the form of a dissertation approved by a committee complete the written portion of the dissertation requirement. The material contained in the dissertation must be of publication quality in scientific journal(s) in the relevant field.

- 1) Prepare pre-proposal (2 to 3 pages)
- 2) Discuss and revise based on the major professor's feedback
- 3) Form Dissertation Committee in consultation with the major professor
- 4) Distribute the approved proposal to the Dissertation Committee
- 5) Receive initial feedback from the committee (within 2 weeks)
- 6) Develop full dissertation proposal (7-10 pages) and distribute to the committee
- 7) Defend the proposal, receive feedback during the defense, revise and resubmit
- 8) Submit IRB (allow 6 weeks for approval)
- 9) Continue work on the first three chapters, including introduction, literature review, & methods
- 10) Collect and analyze the data
- 11) Complete the results and discussion chapters
- 12) Provide major professor with various chapters (receive feedback within 3 weeks)
- 13) Send complete draft to the major professor (receive feedback within 2 weeks)
- 14) Revise accordingly and resubmit to Chair (receive feedback/approval within 2 weeks)
- 15) When Chair approves, send the complete and revised draft to the Committee (receive feedback within 2 weeks)
- 16) Incorporate others' feedback (within 2 weeks)
- 17) When major professor indicates that it is ready for defense, schedule a defense date.

### ***Oral Defense of Dissertation***

When the student's committee has agreed that the dissertation is ready for defense, the student should schedule the oral defense. At the defense, the student presents their dissertation work to his/her committee and all other interested persons. The student and entire dissertation committee must attend the defense. For some reason, if one of the committee members cannot attend the defense in person, she/he can attend the defense either via video, skype, or telephone. The student presents her/his work for approximately 30 minutes followed by an open question and answer session with guests. After guests' questions are answered, they are dismissed, and the student responds to questions from their committee members. After this questioning, the committee votes to approve or disapprove the dissertation. The total defense will last approximately one and a half hour.

The student should bring the partially completed "Thesis/Dissertation Defense Results" form (<http://memphis.edu/gradschool/form/defense.php>) with her/him to their defense. Once the



student has successfully defended her/his dissertation, the committee will complete the form and submit it to the graduate coordinator.

When scheduling the oral defense, the student should be mindful of the graduate school deadlines for submitting completed dissertations. The deadlines can be found at

<http://www.memphis.edu/gradschool/deadlines.php>.

The candidate's oral defense of the dissertation before a faculty committee is the final step for the doctoral degree requirements.

### **GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

Students must apply to graduate and submit the doctoral candidacy form in the semester before they plan to graduate. The forms are located in your MyMemphis portal on the "My Degree" tab. Deadlines and specific instructions for filling out these forms can be found

<http://www.memphis.edu/gradschool/graduation.php>.

Following successful defense of the dissertation, the student should make the necessary changes/corrections suggested by his/her committee and submit one plain-paper copy of his/her dissertation to the Graduate School before the dissertation review deadline

(<http://www.memphis.edu/gradschool/deadlines.php>). After receiving the reviewed dissertation from the Graduate school, the student should make all necessary changes and submit an electronic copy of his/her dissertation before the final deadline using the Electronic Thesis/Dissertation website. For detailed instructions, visit <https://umwa.memphis.edu/etd/>.

### **ASSISTANTSHIPS AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

The LCON is committed to seeking opportunities that provide financial support to its students. Students are also encouraged to seek individual funding early in their program. Faculty will mentor students when applying for NINR Individual Predoctoral Awards.

These graduate assistantships provide in-state tuition and a stipend in return for 20 hours of work per week with faculty in LCON. A graduate assistant is a student who, under faculty supervision, performs functions related to teaching, research and/or service, and in doing so, receives valuable, practical experience. Graduate assistants (GAs) must maintain a 3.00 GPA and be registered for at least 9 credits to retain their assistantships. Additionally, GAs must adhere to the work schedule determined jointly by the supervisor and the student at the beginning of each semester. GAs who fail to perform their duties satisfactorily may be terminated from their appointments.

Students are encouraged to seek funding to support their graduate studies, including research fellowships. Students should work in close consultation with their major professor to prepare such applications. Because fellowships typically involve a commitment of college resources to support the student's education, students should not submit any application for funding without

the explicit approval of their major professor.

### **ACADEMIC CONDUCT**

The U of M's Code of Student Conduct defines academic misconduct as all acts of cheating, plagiarism, forgery and falsification. The term "cheating" includes, but is not limited to: using any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes or tests; using sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; acquiring tests or other academic material before such material is revealed or distributed by the instructor; misrepresenting papers, reports, assignments or other materials as the product of a student's sole independent effort; failing to abide by the instructions of the proctor concerning test-taking procedures; influencing, or attempting to influence, any University employee in order to affect a student's grade or evaluation; any forgery, alteration, unauthorized possession, or misuse of University documents. Academic dishonesty also includes furnishing false information to any University official, faculty member or office; and forgery, alteration, or misuse of any University document, record, or instrument of identification. See [http://www.memphis.edu/studentconduct/misconduct\\_process.htm](http://www.memphis.edu/studentconduct/misconduct_process.htm) for specific University definitions and policies.

### **TRAINING IN THE RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH**

In addition to the NURS 8313 Responsible Conduct of Research course for one-credit, the LCON requires doctoral students to demonstrate training in the responsible conduct of research by completing CITI training. As of October 31, 2011, researchers (including students and faculty) at the University of Memphis who apply for IRB review must have a current CITI certification on file. Your certificate of completion will be forwarded to the IRB Administrator by CITI once you have completed training.

The following are basic learner instructions to logon to the CITI site for the first time:

1. New Users need to register at [www.citiprogram.org](http://www.citiprogram.org) for CITI online training. Once there, simply click on "New Users Register Here".
2. Under the "Select your institution or organization" page, select your institution (University of Memphis) in the "Participating Institutions" drop down box.
3. Next, proceed to create your own username and password and select the Learner group.
4. The file: ([Steps to registering with CITI.ppt](#)) will also help you register with CITI for the first time.

### **WITHDRAWING FROM THE PROGRAM AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Occasionally, students' career interests or personal circumstances change and they decide to withdraw from the program. In such circumstances, we strongly suggest that the student schedule a meeting with his or her faculty advisor and the PhD Program Director. In some cases, a student may benefit from a "Leave of Absence" instead of a withdrawal, and your faculty advisor can provide you with information about this option, if needed. The final decision is made by Associate Dean for Academic Programs in consultation with PhD program advisor and Director.

## LCON ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT FOR PHD STUDENTS

The student is required to complete this form each spring term. Next, the faculty advisor and student should discuss and review the information therein, and the faculty submits the form to the Associate Dean of Academic Programs.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Review: \_\_\_\_\_

Year in the Program: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Discuss and evaluate the progress toward completion of degree requirements that has been made in the past academic year. Please indicate if your progress is on target as specified by your program plan.
2. Discuss specific research goals for the upcoming year and how they will be accomplished. If you will be completing your comprehensive exam or defending your dissertation, please list committee members.
3. List any publications in the past academic year.
4. List any presentations in the past academic year.
5. List any awards or honors received in the past academic year.

Student Signature/Date\_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Advisor Signature/Date\_\_\_\_\_

PhD Program Director Signature/Date\_\_\_\_\_

Associate Dean of Academic Programs Signature/Date\_\_\_\_\_