



# **PhD Student Handbook**

## **2021-2022**

**Contents**

OVERVIEW ..... 3

PHD PROGRAM .....4

ADMISSION POLICIES ..... 6

CURRICULUM ..... 7

SAMPLE STUDY PLANS ..... 13

RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS..... 21

CREDIT LOAD ..... 21

PROGRESSION AND RETENTION ..... 21

TIMETABLES FOR COMPLETION OF DEGREE REQUIREMENTS ..... 22

QUALIFYING (COMPREHENSIVE) EXAMINATION ..... 21

    Overview..... 21

    Eligibility Requirements ..... 22

    Timeline ..... 22

    Preparation for the Examination ..... 24

    Written Component ..... 24

    Oral Component..... 24

    Evaluation ..... 24

    Academic integrity..... 25

DISSERTATION ..... 24

    Composition of Dissertation Committee ..... 25

    Getting Started ..... 24

    Dissertation Proposal ..... 26

    Dissertation Guidelines ..... 27

    Oral Defense of Dissertation ..... 29

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS ..... 28

ASSISTANTSHIPS AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT ..... 30

ACADEMIC CONDUCT ..... 30

TRAINING IN THE RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH ..... 31

WITHDRAWING FROM THE PROGRAM AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE ..... 31

LCON ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT FOR PHD STUDENTS ..... 32

## 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.

### Health Equity Research

The model below is the general description of the research focus of the PhD Program.



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

## Faculty

Faculty in nursing and at UofM 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 include 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 Framework



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

## PhD Program

The goal of the PhD Program in Nursing is to prepare nurse scholars who will build nursing science by leading transdisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary health equity research. The purpose of health equity research is to generate new knowledge, to develop and test innovative interventions, to translate research into practice, and to impact on practice, education, and policy toward achieving health equity.

The PhD Program builds on the foundational core knowledge of nursing and science acquired in the entry and advance levels of nursing education (BSN, MSN or DNP) to develop nurse

scientists who will contribute significant new knowledge to health equity. To that end, the PhD Program provides the student with:

- a broad perspective on philosophy of science and its application to solving challenging health problems facing our nation, particularly those related to achieving health equity;
- middle-range theories from multiple disciplines and their application to frame health equity research;
- experience with common and emerging research design and methods including rigorous training in biostatistics;
- designed research seminars and practicum to mentor and guide research experience;
- mentored research and experiences to foster scientific inquiry and to reinforce knowledge acquisition and develop research skill; and
- commitment to personal, professional, and leadership development and experience stewardship, social justice, equity, and accountability of professional actions.

The PhD Program is designed to support students' seamless progression. For the first semester (spring), students take courses of Philosophy of Science and Middle Range Theories to gain foundational knowledge. We encourage students to take elective courses in the summer to help progress and complete in the timeframe between three and four years. Students are suggested to take elective courses related to research methods. The second semester (fall) courses focus on health equity research, and quantitative research methods, and responsible conduct of research, engaging PhD students with scientific inquiries. The PhD Program faculty work closely with students to plan PhD study in an ongoing basis.

The PhD Program provides graduate assistantships and/or scholarship support for students in need. Full-time doctoral students who have assistantships should acknowledge the year-round commitment required. All PhD students are expected to actively invest time in PhD level scholarly activities such as publications, professional presentations, engage with members of the academic/scientific community, and make efforts pursuing opportunities consistent with student's career interest. Taking the initiative is of importance as how much students gain from PhD education may depend largely on how much students invest in it. The faculty in the PhD Program will educate, mentor, guide and advise students. Working together, students can succeed to earn a PhD degree.

The PhD Program Committee includes members of director of PhD program, faculty in the PhD program, assistant dean for students, and the dean/dean's designee. The PhD Program committee reviews and selects PhD applicants, reviews and revises if needed PhD curriculum, designs and implements PhD qualifying or comprehensive

examination, facilitates and/or serves on PhD dissertation committee, and conducts formative and summative evaluations of the PhD program to ensure program quality.

## **ADMISSION POLICIES**

### **Admission Requirements**

*Admission Requirements* are in line with 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).

Additional requirements in the nursing PhD Program will include:

- possessing an unencumbered RN license or equivalent in the student's state/nation of residence.
- earned BSN, Master's Degree, or DNP 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.
- providing 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.
- submitting 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.
- Providing a writing sample (e.g., published paper, or coursework from previous degree program is acceptable).
- providing a copy of the applicant's curriculum vitae (CV) or resume.
- being interviewed via phone, face-to-face, or Zoom.

### **Admission Process**

Admissions decisions are made on the overall quality of the applicant's professional background, scholarship, academic ability (based on GPAs, undergraduate, and/or graduate coursework completed, research conducted, recommendations, and interviews) as well as the applicant's "fit" for the program research on health equity with strong desire and commitment to pursue a PhD in nursing. The PhD Program Committee will review all submitted materials, conduct applicants' interviews, and make the decision. The decision will be communicated to the applicant by Assistant Dean for Nursing Students.

### **Transfer Credit Evaluation**

Previously earned doctoral credits can be considered for transfer by the PhD Program 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 PhD program 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 PhD program committee.

## **CURRICULUM**

The PhD Program curriculum is designed with several core areas: Nursing Science, Research, Health Equity Research, Elective, and Dissertation.

The PhD degree requires the completion of 60 semester credit hours for Post Master's to PhD; 38 semester credit hours for Post DNP to PhD; or 80 semester credit hours for Post BSN to PhD.

Post BSN to PhD program is an alternative pathway to the Doctor of Philosophy with Major in Nursing available for highly qualified Bachelor of Science in Nursing graduates. The program is streamlined, allowing students to proceed to doctoral-level courses in theory and research without taking the traditional M.S.N. level courses in these areas. Post BSN-PhD students must complete core MSN courses (30 credits) including two designed clinical focused practicum and

internship/residency (a total of 7 credits) to exposure clinical experience guided by clinical expert and faculty. The sample curriculum outlined above would lead to a Nurse Educator specialization/care focus.

Post BSN-PhD students desire to earn MSN on the Nurse Practitioner track need to take NP required courses and clinical to meet requirements of the MSN degree and ensure proper advisement regarding meeting specialty credentialing competencies. Students opting to earn a Master of Science in Nursing while in the Post BSN to PhD program will need to complete 23 credits MSN core courses and 7 courses designed for clinical practice/residency/internship.

### Post-BSN Course Requirements (80 Credits)

| Course prefix and number  | Course title                                       | SCH | New courses needed (Y/N) | Distance Learning (Y/N) |
|---|--|-----|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>MSN Core: 30 credit hours</b>  |  |     |                          |                         |
| NURS 7001 Healthcare Policy (3)   |  |     |                          |                         |
| NURS 7002 Advanced Nursing Research (3) – Integrate NURS 8313 with this course  |  |     |                          |                         |
| NURS 7003 Advanced Role (3)   |  |     |                          |                         |
| NURS 7101/7102 Advanced Health Assessment & Lab (4)   |  |     |                          |                         |
| NURS 7103/7104 Advanced Patho-Pharmacology (4)  |  |     |                          |                         |
| NURS 7205 Evaluation Methods in Nursing Education (3)   |  |     |                          |                         |
| NURS 7990 Scholarly Writing (3)   |  |     |                          |                         |
| NURS 7207 Clinical Focused Practicum (3)  |  |     |                          |                         |
| NURS 7209 Clinical Residency/Internship (4)   |  |     |                          |                         |
| <b>Nursing Science Core: 6 hours</b>  |  |     |                          |                         |
| NURS 8111   | Philosophy of Science                              | 3   | Y                        | Y                       |
| NURS 8112   | Middle-Range Theories in Nursing and Health Equity | 3   | Y                        | Y                       |
| <b>Research Core: 20 hours</b> (integrate Health Equity Research in the research core)  |  |     |                          |                         |
| NURS 8311   | Doctoral Research Seminar I                        | 3   |                          |                         |
| NURS 8312   | Doctoral Research Seminar II                       | 3   |                          |                         |
| 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                       |
| NURS 8113   | Health Equity Research                             | 3   | Y                        | Y                       |
| <b>Electives: 12 hours</b> - Students are required to complete 6 hours of coursework in the research area from this list of electives, and 6 credits elective for designed PhD level relevant to advance career as nurse scientist, scholar, and or educator. |  |     |                          |                         |
| Online Course Options   |  |     |                          |                         |



|   |                       |  |   |   |   |
|---|-----------------------|--|---|---|---|
| Education Focus Area                          | LCL 8003              | Curriculum Design and Evaluation         | 3 | N | Y |
|   | EDPR 8541             | Statistical Methods & Apps in Education  | 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 |
| <b>On-Ground Course Options</b>               |                       |  |   |   |   |
| 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><i>Doctoral Dissertation: 12 hours</i></b> |                       |  |   |   |   |
| NURS 9000                                     | Doctoral Dissertation | 1-12 hours                               | Y | Y |   |

### Post-MSN Course Requirements (60 Credits)

| Course prefix and number                    | Course title                                       | SCH | New courses needed (Y/N) | Distance Learning (Y/N) |
|---|--|-----|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b><i>Nursing Science Core: 6 hours</i></b> |  |     |                          |                         |
| NURS 8111                                   | Philosophy of Science                              | 3   | Y                        | Y                       |
| NURS 8112                                   | Middle-Range Theories in Nursing and Health Equity | 3   | Y                        | Y                       |
| <b><i>Research Core: 18 hours</i></b>       |  |     |                          |                         |
| NURS 8311                                   | Doctoral Research Seminar 1                        | 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                       |
| <b><i>Education Core: 6 hours</i></b>       |  |     |                          |                         |
| EDPR 8541                                   | Statistical Methods & Apps in Education            | 3   | N                        | Y                       |
| ICL 8003                                    | Curriculum Design and Evaluation                   | 3   | N                        | Y                       |
| <b><i>Health Equity Core: 6 hours</i></b>   |  |     |                          |                         |
| NURS 8113                                   | Health Equity Research                             | 3   | Y                        | Y                       |
| PUBH 7160                                   | Social and Behavioral Science Principles           | 3   | N                        | Y                       |

**Electives: 12 hours** - Students are required to complete 6 hours of coursework in the Education Focus Area from this list of electives.

| 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 |
| Research Focus Area           | HIAD 8420                          | Legal and Ethical Issues in Higher Education     | 3 | N | N |
|                               | 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: 12 hours</b> |                                    |  |   |   |   |
| NURS 9000                     | Doctoral Dissertation              | 1-12 hours                                       | Y | Y |   |

**Post-DNP Course Requirements (38 Credits + 16 transfer credits from DNP)**

| Course prefix and number  | Course title                                       | SCH                                      | New courses needed (Y/N) | Distance Learning (Y/N) |   |
|---|--|--|--------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| <b><i>Nursing Science Core: 6 hours</i></b>   |  |  |                          |                         |   |
| NURS 8111   | Philosophy of Science                              | 3  | Y                        | Y                       |   |
| NURS 8112   | Middle-Range Theories in Nursing and Health Equity | 3  | Y                        | Y                       |   |
| <b><i>Research Core: 17 hours</i></b>   |  |  |                          |                         |   |
| NURS 8312   | Doctoral Research Seminar I and II                 | 3  |                          |                         |   |
| NURS 8314   | Doctoral Research Practicum                        | 2  | Y                        | Y                       |   |
| NURS 8211   | Qualitative Methods                                | 3  | Y                        | Y                       |   |
| NURS 8213   | Quantitative Methods                               | 3  | Y                        | Y                       |   |
| NURS 8113   | Health Equity Research                             | 3  | Y                        | Y                       |   |
| PUBH 7150   | Biostatistical Methods I                           | 3  | N                        | Y                       |   |
|   |  |  |                          |                         |   |
| <b><i>Electives: 3 hours - Students are required to complete 3 hours of coursework in the Education Focus Area from this list of electives.</i></b> |  |  |                          |                         |   |
| <b>Online Course Options</b>  |  |  |                          |                         |   |
| Education Focus Area  | LCL 8003   | Curriculum Design and Evaluation         | 3                        | N                       | Y |
|   | EDPR 8541  | Statistical Methods & Apps in Education  | 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 |
| <b>On-Ground Course Options</b>   |  |  |                          |                         |   |
| 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><i>Dissertation: 12 hours</i></b>  |  |  |                          |                         |   |
| NURS 9000   | Doctoral Dissertation                              | 1-12 hours                               | Y                        | Y                       |   |

Note: DNP students can transfer 16 credits from DNP study satisfy 54 credits required for post DNP-PhD. DNP students take two research practicum – seminar II (combined I and II) and research practicum; 3 credits health equity research, and one elective course.

**Sample Study Plans for Post BSN, Post Master's, and Post DNP to PhD  
PhD Curriculum (Full Time)**

**PhD Curriculum Full-Time (Academic Year)**

**Post-BSN Sample Plan of Study (80 credits, 4 years)**

**Year 1**

| Spring                                     |    | Fall  |    |
|--|----|---|----|
| NURS 7001 Healthcare Policy                | 3  | NURS 7205 Evaluation Methods in Nursing Education | 3  |
| NURS 7002 Advanced Nursing Research        | 3  | NURS 7101/7102 Advanced Health Assessment /Lab    | 4  |
| NURS 7003 Advanced Role                    | 3  | NURS 7990 Scholarly Writing                       | 3  |
| NURS 7103/7104 Advanced Patho-Pharmacology | 4  | NURS 7207 Clinical Focused Practicum              | 3  |
| Total                                      | 13 | Total   | 13 |

**Year 2**

| Spring                                  |    | Fall                                  |   |
|---|----|---------------------------------------|---|
| NURS 8111 Philosophy of Science         | 3  | NURS 8213 Quantitative Methods        | 3 |
| NURS 8112 Middle Range Theories         | 3  | NURS 8113 Health Equity Research      | 3 |
| NURS 7209 Clinical Residency/Internship | 4  | NURS 8311 Doctoral Research Seminar I | 3 |
|   |    |                                       |   |
| Total                                   | 10 | Total                                 | 9 |

**Year 3**

| Spring                                 |   | Fall  |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| NURS 8211 Qualitative Methods          | 3 | **NURS 8314 Doctoral Research Practicum             | 2 |
| PUBH 7150 Biostatistical Methods I     | 3 | EDPR 8541 Statistical Methods and Apps in Education | 3 |
| NURS 8312 Doctoral Research Seminar II | 3 | Elective  | 3 |
| Total                                  | 9 | Total   | 8 |

**Year 4**

| Spring             |   | Fall                            |    |
|--------------------|---|---------------------------------|----|
| NURS 9000 Doctoral | 6 | NURS 9000 Doctoral Dissertation | *6 |
| Elective           | 3 | Elective                        | 3  |
| Total              | 9 | Total                           | 9  |

- Student may enroll in 3 credits to convert to part-time status
- \*Students may take 9 credits for the doctoral dissertation and complete BSN to PhD in 4 years.
- \*\* NURS 8314 – students take qualifying examination and then prepare for proposal hearing spring year 4.

**PhD Curriculum Full-Time (Calendar Year)**  
**Post BSN Sample Plan of Study (80 credits, 3.5–4 years)**

**Year 1**

| Spring                              |   | Summer  |   | Fall                                       |    |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|--|----|
| NURS 7001 Healthcare Policy         | 3 | NURS 7101 Advanced Health Assessment & Lab        | 4 | NURS 7103/7104 Advanced Patho-Pharmacology | 4  |
| NURS 7002 Advanced Nursing Research | 3 | NURS 7205 Evaluation Methods in Nursing Education | 3 | NURS 7990 Scholarly Writing                | 3  |
| NURS7 003 Advanced Role             | 3 |   |   | NURS 7207 Clinical Focused Practicum       | 3  |
| Total                               | 9 |   | 7 | Total                                      | 10 |

**Year 2**

| Spring                          |   | Summer                                  |   | Fall                                  |   |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| NURS 8111 Philosophy of Science | 3 | NURS 7209 Clinical Residency/internship | 4 | NURS 8113 Health Equity Research      | 3 |
| 8112 Middle Range Theories      | 3 | PUBH 7150 Biostatistical Methods I      | 3 | NURS 8213 Quantitative Methods        | 3 |
| NURS 8211 Qualitative Methods   | 3 |   |   | NURS 8311 Doctoral Research Seminar I | 3 |
| Total                           | 9 |   | 7 | Total                                 | 9 |

**Year 3**

| Spring  |   | Summer   |   | Fall                                  |   |
|---|---|----------|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| NURS 8312 Research Seminar II                     | 3 | Elective | 3 | NURS 8314 Doctoral Research Practicum | 2 |
| EDPR 8541 Statistical Methods & Apps in Education | 3 |          |   | Elective                              | 3 |
| Elective  | 3 |          |   | NURS 9000 Doctoral Dissertation       | 3 |
| Total   | 9 |          | 3 | Total                                 | 8 |

**Year 4**

| Spring                          |   | Summer                          |   | Fall  |  |
|---------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|---|-------|--|
| NURS 9000 Doctoral Dissertation | 6 | NURS 9000 Doctoral Dissertation | 3 |       |  |
| Total                           | 6 |                                 | 3 | Total |  |

\*Students may take 9 credits for the doctoral dissertation and complete BSN to PhD in 3.5 years. The

**PhD Curriculum Full-Time (Academic Year)  
Post-MSN Sample Plan of Study (60 credits, 3.5 years)**

**Year 1**

| Spring                           |   | Fall                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| NURS 8111 Philosophy of Science  | 3 | NURS 8213 Quantitative Methods        | 3 |
| NURS 8112 Middle Range           | 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**

| Spring   |   | Fall  |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| 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**

| Spring                          |   | Fall                            |   |
|---------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|---|
| NURS 9000 Doctoral Dissertation | 3 | NURS 9000 Doctoral Dissertation | 3 |
| Elective                        | 3 | Elective                        | 3 |
| Elective                        | 3 | Elective                        | 3 |
| Total                           | 9 | Total                           | 9 |

**Year 4**

| Spring                          |    |  |  |
|---------------------------------|----|--|--|
| 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

**PhD Curriculum Full time (Calendar Year)**  
**Post-MSN Sample Plan of Study (60 credits, 2.5-3 years)**

**Year 1**

| Spring                          |   | Summer                                    |   | Fall                                      |   |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| NURS 8111 Philosophy of Science | 3 | ICL 8003 Curriculum Design and Evaluation | 3 | NURS 8113 Health Equity Research          | 3 |
| NURS 8112 Middle Range          | 3 |   |   | NURS 8213 Quantitative Methods            | 3 |
|                                 |   |   |   | NURS 8313 Responsible Conduct of Research | 1 |
| Total                           | 6 |   | 3 | Total                                     | 7 |

**Year 2**

| Spring   |   | Summer  |   | Fall                                   |   |
|--|---|---|---|--|---|
| NURS 8211 Qualitative Methods                      | 3 | EDPR 8541 Statistical Methods & Apps in Education | 3 | PUBH 7150 Biostatistical Methods I     | 3 |
| PUBH 7160 Social and Behavioral Science Principles | 3 | Elective  | 3 | NURS 8312 Doctoral Research Seminar II | 3 |
| NURS 8311 Doctoral Research Seminar I              | 3 |   |   | Elective                               | 3 |
| Total  | 9 |   | 6 | Total                                  | 9 |

**Year 3**

| Spring                                |   | Summer                          |   | Fall                            |    |
|---------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|----|
| NURS 8314 Doctoral Research Practicum | 2 | NURS 9000 Doctoral Dissertation | 6 | NURS 9000 Doctoral Dissertation | *6 |
| NURS 8720 Grant Writing (Elective)    | 3 |                                 |   |                                 |    |
| Elective                              | 3 |                                 |   |                                 |    |
| Total                                 | 8 |                                 | 6 | Total                           | 6  |

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



**PhD Curriculum Full-Time (Academic Year)**  
**Post-DNP Sample Plan of Study (38 Credits, 2.5 years)**

**Year 1**

| <b>Spring</b>                    |   | <b>Fall</b>                    |   |
|----------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|---|
| NURS 8111 Philosophy of Science  | 3 | NURS 8213 Quantitative Methods | 3 |
| NURS 8112 Middle Range Theories  | 3 | NURS 8211 Qualitative Methods  | 3 |
| NURS 8113 Health Equity Research | 3 | NURS 8212 Research Seminar II  | 3 |
| Total                            | 9 | Total                          | 9 |

**Year 2**

| <b>Spring</b>                         |   | <b>Fall</b>                     |    |
|---------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|----|
| PUBH 7150 Biostatistical Methods I    | 3 | NURS 9000 Doctoral Dissertation | *9 |
| NURS 8314 Doctoral Research Practicum | 2 |                                 |    |
| Elective                              | 3 |                                 |    |
| Total                                 | 8 | Total                           | 6  |

**Year 3**

| <b>Spring</b> |    | <b>Fall</b> |   |
|---------------|----|-------------|---|
| Dissertation  | *3 |             | 3 |
| Total         |    |             | 3 |

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

**PhD Curriculum Full-Time (Calendar Year)**  
**Post-DNP Sample Plan of Study (38 Credits, 2 years)**

**Year 1**

| <b>Spring</b>  |          | <b>Summer</b>                      |          | <b>Fall</b>                            |          |
|--|----------|------------------------------------|----------|--|----------|
| NURS Philosophy of Science                                   | 3        | PUBH 7150 Biostatistical Methods I | 3        | NURS 8213 Quantitative Methods         | 3        |
| NURS 8112 Middle Range Theories in Nursing and Health Equity | 3        |                                    |          | NURS 8211 Qualitative Methods          | 3        |
| NURS 8113 Health Equity Research                             | 3        |                                    |          | NURS 8212 Doctoral Research Seminar II | 3        |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>9</b> |                                    | <b>3</b> | <b>Total</b>                           | <b>9</b> |

**Year 2**

| <b>Spring</b>                         |          | <b>Summer</b>                   |          | <b>Fall</b>                     |           |
|---------------------------------------|----------|---------------------------------|----------|---------------------------------|-----------|
| NURS 8314 Doctoral Research Practicum | 2        | NURS 9000 Doctoral Dissertation | 6        | NURS 9000 Doctoral Dissertation | 6         |
| Elective                              | 3        |                                 |          |                                 |           |
| <b>Total</b>                          | <b>5</b> |                                 | <b>6</b> | <b>Total</b>                    | <b>6</b>  |
|                                       |          |                                 |          |                                 | <b>38</b> |

**PhD Curriculum Part-Time (Academic Year)  
Post-DNP Sample Plan of Study (38 credits, 3 years)**

**Year 1**

| Spring                          |   | Fall                               |   |
|---------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|---|
| NURS 8111 Philosophy of Science | 3 | NURS 8113 Health Equity Research   | 3 |
| NURS 8112 Middle Range Theories | 3 | PUBH 7150 Biostatistical Methods I | 3 |
| Total                           | 6 | Total                              | 6 |

**Year 2**

| Spring                         |   | Fall                                   |   |
|--------------------------------|---|--|---|
| NURS 8211 Qualitative Methods  | 3 | NURS 8312 Doctoral Research Seminar II | 3 |
| NURS 8213 Quantitative Methods | 3 | Elective                               | 3 |
|                                | 6 |  | 6 |

**Year 3**

| Spring                                 |   | Fall                            |   |
|--|---|---------------------------------|---|
| *NURS 8314 Doctoral Research Practicum | 2 | NURS 9000 Doctoral Dissertation | 6 |
| NURS 9000 Doctoral Dissertation        | 6 |                                 |   |
|  |   |                                 |   |
| Total                                  | 8 | Total                           | 6 |

Note: DNP students have earned a terminal degree and thus the focus of their pursuing of PhD includes theory, research, dissertation, and cognate related to their research. To streamline DNP–PhD pathway, several changes are made, to highlight:

- Incorporate 1 credit responsible conduct of research to NURS 8312 (3 credits);
- DNP students only need one research seminar II and one research practicum (total 5 credits);
- Only 3 credits elective (the DNP student may select curriculum design or education research if want to be an educator, so this education course is deleted from required one);
- Doctoral Research Practicum – students prepare for qualifying examination and then proposal hearing.
- Between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year, the DNP student can choose which semester to be a part time.

**Total 38 credits** plus 16 transferred credits from DNP Program satisfy a total of 54 credits – The study plan has three samples: Full time academic and calendar year plan; and a part time plan.

## **RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS**

All students are expected to actively participate in mentored research activities with their faculty, faculty advisor, and/or faculty researchers while enrolled. For students on graduate assistantships, this work will be part of their contractual 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 be counted 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 PhD Program committee including Dean and Assistant Dean for Nursing Students 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 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 College funding, the student must maintain an overall grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4-point scale as a minimum of 3.0 is 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 Academic Standing*" which means that progress has been judged as satisfactory by the faculty. In making this assessment, the faculty expects that students are maintaining at least a B average, that you do not have a grade below a B in a core course, and that students are making satisfactory progress toward your degree on all measures on which they 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 PhD program. Faculty makes every effort to facilitate students' successful completion of the PhD Program. If remediation needed, faculty may work with students to design a plan for remediation, along with re-assessment based on determined time interval for progression. During this time, a student would normally be placed on probation. Faculty 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 PhD Qualifying examination and dissertation), or unethical or unprofessional behavior. In the case of failing several courses or egregious misbehavior that cannot be safely rehabilitated, a student will be dismissed from the program without a period of probation.

*Graduation Requirements:* All of the University of Memphis Graduate School requirements. Additionally, Post BSN-PhD students need to complete MSN core courses plus PhD courses including doctoral dissertation for a total of 80 credit hours; Post MSN-PhD students need to complete a minimum of 48 semester hours of graduate course work beyond the master's degree plus 12 hours of NURS 9000 (Doctoral Dissertation) for a total of 60 credit hours; and Post DNP-PhD students need to complete 38 credit hours plus 16 credits transferred from the doctor of nursing practice degree for a total of 54 graduate credit hours.

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

Students should negotiate their planned deadlines with the PhD Program Director and 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 2-4 years depending on variables of 1) following an academic year or calendar year plan, 2) entering with post BSN, post-Master, or post-DNP option, and/or 3) becoming a part-time status which can take longer to complete the PhD study.

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

**Overview:** Prior to enrolling for dissertation hours (NURS 9000), a student must successfully complete both a written and oral qualifying or comprehensive examination. The examination will assess mastery of knowledge areas covered in the doctoral program. The content of the examination may include broadly philosophy, theory, research, methodology, and health equity research central to the student's main research area.

**Eligibility Requirements:** Prior to initiating the examination process, a student must have completed required core coursework in the program. Additionally, he/she is required to be enrolled during the semester he/she proposes to take the PhD Qualifying examination.

**Timeline**

| <b>Spring Semester Qualifying Examination Schedule</b> |  |
|--|--|
| October  | Students submit request for taking the Qualifying exam in Spring semester.   |
| October-November                                       | The PhD Program Committee hosts a Q and A session to communicate about the process of PhD Qualifying Exam.   |
| November-December                                      | The PhD Committee finalize specific exam questions.  |
| January-March  | Students prepare for the PhD Qualifying exam.  |
| April-May  | <p>Students take the PhD Qualifying exam (two weeks).</p> <p>PhD Committee faculty will evaluate students written exams and prepare oral examination questions (two weeks).</p> <p>Each student will be scheduled an oral examination (one hour) by the PhD Program Committee.</p> <p>In early May, students will be communicated about the exam results “Pass” “Pass with distinction” or “Fail”. If the student fails the qualifying exam, he or she has a second chance to retake the exam.</p> |

| <b>Fall Semester Qualifying Exam Schedule</b> |   |
|---|---|
| Mid-March                                     | Student submits request for taking the Qualifying exam in the Fall  |
| March-April                                   | The PhD Program Committee will host a Q and A session to communicate about the process of PhD Qualifying Exam |
| April   | The PhD Committee finalize specific exam questions and discuss types of questions and nature of reading list. |
| May to July                                   | Student prepares for the PhD Qualifying exam  |

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| August-September | <p>Students take the PhD Qualifying exam (two weeks) plus oral exam.</p> <p>PhD Committee faculty will evaluate students written exams and prepare oral examination questions (two weeks).</p> <p>Each student will be scheduled an oral examination (one hour) by the PhD Program Committee.</p> <p>In early May, students will be communicated about the exam results “Pass” “Pass with distinction” or “Fail”. If the student fails the qualifying exam, he or she has a second chance to retake the exam.</p> |
|------------------|---|

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

### **Preparation for the Qualifying/Comprehensive Exam**

The PhD program will communicate with students about expectations, format, and timing of the written and oral components of the exam, and coverage will be discussed. Individual reading list typically contains 25-30 current reviews, seminar articles, and empirical studies.

### **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 session with questions/answers by the PhD Committee. The Committee will ask questions related to the written portion of the exam, general knowledge in the field of nursing, and/or an omitted area in the written exam. The oral exam will last approximately one hour.

### **Evaluation**

Evaluation criteria are broadly defined in relation to students’ 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, and integration of state of the art

knowledge. 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. Once the student passes both the written and oral exams, she/he is given the PhD Candidate status (Ph.C.).

### **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.

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).

## **DISSERTATION**

**Composition of Dissertation Committee** - The dissertation committee may consist of a minimum three members (nursing, content expert, and methodology expert) with at least one member from the college of nursing. 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 Committee and Chair** - Students during their semester of enrollment in the NURS 8314 Doctoral Research Practicum are consulted for the selection of his/her dissertation committee and chair. The selection is made based on compatibility of the student research topic and faculty research expertise. The Dissertation Committee chair must hold at full graduate faculty status, are Associate Professor or Professor, have active research/scholarship and experience in the PhD Program. Dissertation committee may be chaired by a seasoned researcher/professor from nursing or another discipline at the U of M (if so, a nursing faculty may serve as co-chair as part of the faculty mentoring). The PhD Program Committee works to ensure quality of dissertation committee chair and members to support students' dissertation research.

**Getting Started** - PhD students are highly recommended to think about their general research area from the beginning or in the first semester. The student may select articles on topics in his/her related field to expand knowledge and/or explore own area of research interest. The student may discuss evolving ideas with his/her faculty from the beginning of the semester and continue dialoguing via online discussion and/or meeting with faculty. The engaging process helps students explore their research interest and identify faculty whose research expertise is compatible to mentor and guide students. 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.

**Process** - The PhD student should consult with their dissertation chair and/or PhD Program Director prior to registering for courses while conducting his/her dissertation study. It is expected that students will develop a professional relationship with their dissertation committee members and seek advice/feedback on a regular basis. By initiating regular meetings, students ensure research success and enhance academic performance.

The PhD Program Committee is responsible to provide oversight for ensuring *collaborative, collegial, and consistent* research experience for all PhD students. Quality of faculty's own research, dissertation research guidance and mentoring, and progression advisement is *essential* for PhD student's retention, progress and success.

The student is responsible to communicate with his/her dissertation committee chair and members about dissertation research. Examples include:

- 1) Expectations for proposal hearing
- 2) Human subject protection
- 3) Dissertation plan – Researchable and feasible
- 4) Expected dissertation turnaround time
- 5) Recommendations for other members of your dissertation committee

- 6) Frequency of meetings
- 7) Development of a plan and tentative time frame through defense
- 8) Authorship on research papers related to the dissertation
- 9) Opportunity to seek PhD student related federal grants

The dissertation is a major piece of scholarly work and the first guided original research by a PhD student. 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.

The designed courses of NURS 8311, NURS 8312 – Research Seminar I and II, and NURS 8314 Doctoral Research Practicum provide opportunities for students to work on first three chapters of the PhD dissertation. After the student successfully defends his/her proposal, the student needs to dedicate time for conducting research, collecting and analyzing data, writing research results and implications and submitting to the Dissertation committee for review and decision for the dissertation defense. Communication keys to ensure timely writing and feedback between the student and chair/members of the dissertation committee. The student shall allow faculty at least 15 working days (three weeks) from submission to providing feedback.

### **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 in consultation with the Assistant Dean for Students.

### **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. Prior to the Dissertation Phase, the student should discuss, review the information with, and submit the form to the PhD Program Director.

If the student is during the dissertation phase, the student should discuss with his/her committee chair and then submit to the PhD Program Director.

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

Faculty Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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