



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

# Nursing PhD Graduate Program Handbook

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# Nursing PhD

Together, the [Graduate Student Handbook](#) and your graduate program handbook should serve as your main guide throughout your graduate career. The Graduate Student Handbook includes university information, policies, requirements and guidance for all graduate students. Your program handbook describes the details about graduate study and requirements in your specific program. While both of these handbooks are wonderful resources, know that you are always welcome to talk with faculty and staff in your program and in the Graduate College.

The central activities and missions of a university rest upon the fundamental assumption that all members of the university community conduct themselves in accordance with a strict adherence to academic and scholarly integrity. As a graduate student and member of the university community, you are expected to display the highest standards of academic and personal integrity.

Here are some resources to help you better understand your responsibilities:

- [Academic Honesty](#)
- [Academic Integrity Training](#) - Open to all graduate students at no cost
- [Plagiarism](#)

## Introduction

The Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing (PhD) is designed to prepare nurse scientists to assume positions as nursing faculty members, leaders in the application of innovative technologies to nursing education and clinical care, executive leaders in healthcare systems, and scientists who contribute to the body of nursing knowledge through their research.

## Objectives

The objectives of the doctoral program in nursing are to prepare nurse scholars who:

- Conduct research to generate a body of knowledge and test theories that advance nursing science.
- Develop a program of scholarship that integrates research, teaching, leadership and service to the profession.
- Contribute to interdisciplinary solutions that advance health care in a global society.

The minimum number of credits for award of the PhD in Nursing must equal or exceed 72 credit hours. Students will be required to complete a candidacy examination and dissertation.

Students are required to attend semi-annual intensives where they will have an opportunity to meet with their faculty advisors and network with fellow students, among other activities.

The College of Nursing uses a student information management system, LEAP\*RN (Project Concert). This database houses information regarding plans of study, clinical placements, clinical hours, logs, and evaluation data to assist in maintaining standards required for CCNE accreditation, facilitate student progression, and enhance clinical tracking. Students will need to access LEAP\*RN for clinical course requirements, course evaluations, and portfolios. Upon graduation, students will continue to have no-cost access to their information. All students will be responsible for a one-time subscription of \$150 per degree program payable at <https://secure.projectconcert.com/ucf> and due prior to registering for first semester courses. If students register

for courses prior to paying the subscription, a “hold” service indicator will be placed to prevent future enrollment and other progression functions.

## **Timeline**

### **Degree Plan of Study**

The faculty advisor will collaborate with each student prior to the start of their first term to review their initial plan of study to meet degree requirements. Students will be sent an initial plan of study with their admission packet. Any changes to the initial plan of study must be submitted to the College of Nursing, Office of Graduate Affairs for approval by the PhD Admissions, Progression, and Graduation (APG) Committee. Plans of study are used to plan for resources, therefore students who change their plan of study late in a semester may not be admitted to new courses in the following semester.

If students cannot follow the plan of study, students must meet with their respective advisor to revise the plan. The Director of Academic Advising must be notified by the student following the meeting with their advisor so the plan of study can be updated in LEAP\*RN. This must be done prior to registration to the next semester. Students who enroll in a course not in their plan of study may be required to drop the course.

### **Progression**

All academic admission, progression and graduation decisions are made by the PhD Admission, Progression, and Graduation Committee (APG) of the College of Nursing, Office of Graduate Affairs and recommended to the Chair, Dept. of Nursing Systems.

A grade point average of 3.0 is required for continued study in the PhD program. Grades of below B or U are not acceptable in the PhD program. Students who receive a grade of below B or U in any course are subject to dismissal from the program. Students will be given the right to petition to remain in the program, and a final decision on dismissal will be made by majority vote of the PhD APG Committee. If the student is allowed to continue in the program, any courses that have a grade of below B or U must be repeated with an earned grade of “B”, S or better. In addition, if a student’s graduate status GPA falls below 2.0, they are automatically dismissed from the program. Please refer to the Graduate Catalog for further information regarding the graduate status GPA.

The College of Nursing uses the plus/minus grading scale as follows:

A 96-100  
A- 92-95  
B+ 87-91  
B 83-86  
C+ 79-82  
C 75-78  
D 70-74  
F 69 and below

## Course Schedule

Please click on the following link to review the full-time plan of study

- [https://nursing.ucf.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Grad-POS\\_PhD\\_BSN-PhD\\_FT\\_Summer.pdf](https://nursing.ucf.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Grad-POS_PhD_BSN-PhD_FT_Summer.pdf)
- [https://nursing.ucf.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Grad-POS\\_PhD\\_FT\\_Summer.pdf](https://nursing.ucf.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Grad-POS_PhD_FT_Summer.pdf)

Please click on the following link to review the part-time plan of study

- [https://nursing.ucf.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Grad-POS\\_PhD\\_PT\\_Summer.pdf](https://nursing.ucf.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Grad-POS_PhD_PT_Summer.pdf)

## Supporting Courses

The supporting course work is designed to permit students to gain additional expertise and knowledge in the area chosen for the dissertation. These courses may vary from student to student depending upon individual needs or objectives. Course selection should be influenced by the following criteria:

- Increase in understanding of the phenomenon of interest
- Increase in understanding of specific methodologies or analytical techniques relevant to the student's dissertation.
- Exposure to experiences relevant to the phenomenon of interest or methodological elements relevant to the student's dissertation.

The UCF College of Nursing strongly encourages all PhD students to actively seek out interdisciplinary supporting courses. All supporting courses must be approved by the student's faculty adviser or chair of the dissertation committee.

## Research Preparation

The required course NGR 7919 Doctoral Research is a formal way for students to gain skill in conducting research by working with individual faculty members on the faculty member's research project. This course is a research experience with the student assisting the faculty member with various aspects of the research project. Registration for this course requires a detailed outline of activities and outcomes. Available opportunities with faculty members will be posted each semester; alternatively, the student may conduct a dissertation pilot study or other small research study under the supervision and guidance of the NGR 7919 faculty member.

## Candidacy Examination

The purpose of the Candidacy Examination is to evaluate the doctoral student's ability to analyze and synthesize knowledge of his/her selected specialty focus area, which includes theory, state of the science, and appropriate research methodology.

The Candidacy Examination will be conducted no earlier than after mid-term of the last semester of course work. Students must plan ahead in order to initiate and complete the Candidacy Examination process in a timely manner. The candidacy examination process must be completed within one year of completion of course work for the student to be considered in good standing.

The Dissertation Chair is responsible for determining whether or not the student has met the course requirements for taking the examination and has mastered the knowledge of her/his specialty focus area.

The Dissertation Chair, approved graduate faculty, graduate faculty scholars, and the approved external member constitute the Candidacy Examination Committee. If the examination committee is available during the Summer semester, the Candidacy Examination may be taken at that time.

The student must submit the Candidacy Examination Intent form to the College of Nursing, Office of Graduate Student Services. The form is available in [the PhD Communication Webcourse](#). The completed form will be filed in the student's folder. If the student is not ready to take the Candidacy Examination during the final semester of course work, and/or if the Candidacy Examination is undertaken during a particular semester, the student must register for NGR 7919 Doctoral Research. The student must enroll in Doctoral Research (NGR 7919) until the Candidacy Exam has been passed. Once the exam has been passed, the student must enroll in Dissertation (NGR 7980) in the following semester.

## Admission to Candidacy and Examinations

The process for candidacy will start with the appointment of the full dissertation advisory committee including the external member. The Candidacy Examination has both written and oral components. When these are completed successfully, the student becomes a doctoral candidate and is eligible to enroll in dissertation credits. When candidacy status is obtained, the student must enroll in at least three credits of dissertation each semester until successful oral defense of the dissertation is made and all graduation requirements are completed. The university requires a minimum of 15 dissertation credits. Post-candidacy status is subject to the rules and regulations of the UCF Graduate Catalog.

For those who wish to enroll in dissertation hours in that semester, evidence identified below must be completed and received by the College of Nursing, Department of Nursing Systems two weeks prior to the first day of the semester.

- Submittal of an approved program of study (should be finalized by the student's third semester).
- Completion of all course work, except for dissertation hours. <https://nursing.ucf.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Grad-DoctoralCandidacyExam.pdf>
- The dissertation advisory committee is formed, consisting of approved graduate faculty, graduate faculty scholars, and the approved external member.
- Successful completion of the candidacy examination.

Students admitted prior to 2018 may choose between the two different candidacy exam formats. Please consult with your chair regarding which format is best for you:

[https://nursing.ucf.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Grad-PhD\\_CandidacyExamProcess\\_2017andEarlier.pdf](https://nursing.ucf.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Grad-PhD_CandidacyExamProcess_2017andEarlier.pdf)

[https://nursing.ucf.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Grad-PhD\\_CandidacyExamProcess\\_2018andBeyond.pdf](https://nursing.ucf.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Grad-PhD_CandidacyExamProcess_2018andBeyond.pdf)

Students admitted in 2018 and beyond must follow this candidacy exam process:

[https://nursing.ucf.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Grad-PhD\\_CandidacyExamProcess\\_2018andBeyond.pdf](https://nursing.ucf.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Grad-PhD_CandidacyExamProcess_2018andBeyond.pdf)

## Outcomes

The written and oral components of the Candidacy Examination are viewed as one examination with a combined outcome, either: **Meets** or **Does Not Meet Expectations**. The committee evaluates the student's examination and determines the outcome based upon the majority vote. The outcome of the Candidacy Examination and additional feedback will be conveyed verbally to the student within 1 hour after completing the oral examination. The Dissertation Chair is responsible for submitting the Candidacy Outcome Form to the College of Nursing, CON Office of Graduate Student Services. The Dissertation Chair will submit an electronic copy of the written examination and will notify the Chair of the PhD APG Committee for reporting in the next month's meeting. The signed documents and the written component of the examination are filed in the student's official College of Nursing file.

If the outcome of the Candidacy Examination **Meets Expectations**, the student will:

- Check with the CON Office of Graduate Student Services to ensure candidacy/initial committee paperwork has been filed with the UCF College of Graduate Studies.
- Register for dissertation credits (NGR 7980) in the subsequent semester
- Initiate steps for conducting the Dissertation Research.

Note: Students can register for dissertation hours in the term following candidacy but cannot begin research until the dissertation proposal is approved and the research is approved by the UCF IRB (if human participants are involved). Failure to follow these two requirements causes students to be subject to the UCF "Golden Rule" and potential expulsion from the nursing doctoral program. In addition, students in the College of Nursing who are admitted to candidacy are not permitted to use the title PhD (c).

If the outcome of the Candidacy Examination **Does Not Meet Expectations**:

- Students who do not pass must wait 3 months before reattempting but must complete successfully within 6 months following their first attempt. Candidacy Examination Committee will decide if the student must answer two or more specific questions from the original exam, or new questions. When the end of the 6-month period falls during the Summer semester, the examination may be retaken during that semester if the Candidacy Examination Committee is available. Otherwise, the repeat examination must be conducted during the subsequent Fall semester.
- The Candidacy Examination Committee must specify in writing:
  - Specific requirements in order to retake the examination, such as additional course work, directed readings, or other relevant activities.
    - If the examining committee requires additional course work that extends beyond the 6-month retake rule, this fact must be documented and a time frame for the retake clearly specified.
    - The component(s) to be repeated - written, oral, or both
    - The written and/or oral components to be retaken will follow the same procedures delineated as for the initial Candidacy Examination.
- The student and Candidacy Examination Committee need to plan ahead for the repeat examination date(s) to insure everyone's availability.
- The student must submit documentation to the Chair of the Candidacy Examination Committee that she/he has fulfilled the specified requirements before a repeat examination is scheduled.

If the outcome of the *repeat* Candidacy Examination is **Meets Expectations**, the student will proceed as outlined above.

If the outcome of the *repeat* Candidacy Examination is **Does Not Meet Expectations**, the student will be dismissed from the nursing doctoral program.

## Dissertation Requirements

### Dissertation Advisory Committee Composition

One of the goals of doctoral education is to establish a strong foundation for a research career through the development of a dissertation. PhD students must file a Dissertation Advisory Committee Form to the College of Nursing, Department of Nursing Systems after the successful completion of the Candidacy Examination. The Committee will guide the student in the development of the student's original research for the doctoral dissertation.

The Committee will consist of a minimum of four members, and all must be granted [graduate faculty status](#). At least three members must be qualified regular faculty members from the College of Nursing, one of whom serves as the chair of the committee. One member must be from outside the College of Nursing and may be from outside the university. Only one adjunct or visiting faculty member may serve as a member of a Dissertation Advisory Committee. An adjunct, visiting faculty member, or outside scholar may not serve as the chair, but may serve as a co-chair. One of the co-chairs must satisfy the College of Graduate Studies qualifications for serving as a chair of a Dissertation Advisory Committee. The other co-chair must satisfy the minimum requirements for serving as a member of a Dissertation Advisory Committee. A member from outside the university may serve as co-chair without being appointed as an adjunct or visiting faculty member provided that all other membership requirements are met. Qualifications of additional members must be equivalent to that expected of UCF faculty members. UCF faculty members must form the majority of any given committee.

## **Inclusion of Outside or UCF Faculty Who lack Graduate Status on Thesis, Project or Dissertation Committees**

Students forming or changing membership of their committee for thesis, project or dissertation work who wish to have non-UCF experts or UCF faculty who lack graduate status included as a member of the committee, must submit a memo articulating why this person is needed and a copy of the person's CV to their advisor for approval. Once the advisor has reviewed the CV and approved the memo, the student is responsible for submitting these two documents to the appropriate Curriculum and APG Committee. The appropriate Curriculum and APG Committee then votes to approve/disprove the addition of this person to the student's thesis, project or dissertation committee. If a vote of approval is made, the paperwork is then forwarded via the Chair, Dept. of Nursing Systems to the Office of Graduate Studies for final approval. Final approval from the College of Graduate Studies is necessary to add this person to the student's thesis, project or dissertation committee.

The College of Nursing Chair, Dept. of Nursing Systems and Dean must approve committee membership. All members must be in fields related to the dissertation topic. UCF College of Graduate Studies reserves the right to review appointments to a Dissertation Advisory Committee, place a representative on any Dissertation Advisory Committee, or appoint a co-chair. A student may request a change in membership of the Dissertation Advisory Committee. All members vote on acceptance or rejection of the dissertation proposal, oral defense of dissertation, and the final dissertation. All elements must be approved by a majority of the committee.

## **Guidelines for Selecting a Candidacy/Dissertation Chair**

An important aspect of the dissertation experience is selecting a dissertation chair and committee. Ensuring a good fit, both temperamentally and intellectually, is critically important to a productive relationship. The following items are important to consider when interviewing and asking faculty members to serve as the dissertation chair or on the dissertation committee.

### **The Dissertation Chair**

The dissertation chair has a major role in guiding the doctoral student through decisions, such as writing the dissertation proposal, obtaining funding, and assisting the candidate in completing the dissertation research. The student should interview potential faculty members and decide who has the best fit with their research area and personal work style. Consider:

- What is the faculty member's research expertise?
  - What is the substantive area of the research expertise?
  - What are the current and previous projects?
  - What methodologies has the faculty member used?

- What is experience in human subjects' research and getting proposals approved by Institutional Review Boards?
- What is the reputation of the chair within the field of study?
  - Medline and/or CINAHL search for related faculty publications.
  - CV—Publishing and presentation experience, past chair or membership on thesis and dissertation committees, topics of interest, funded research, unfunded research.
  - How do other faculty members perceive this chair?
  - Does the chair have a reputation for being ethical and for being supportive of students?
- What is their "research philosophy"?
- What is their funding track record?
  - What is the faculty member's funded research track record?
  - What is the faculty member's funded track record in other areas, such as training grants and projects?
  - What is their perspective on assisting students to obtain funding?
- How does the faculty member view the role of the dissertation chair?
  - Will they support the student by providing direction to the rest of the committee?
  - What will be the chair's involvement in choosing a dissertation topic? Research questions? Methodology: including sample, instrumentation, and design?
- How do they envision the working relationship with the student during the advising period and conduct of the dissertation?
- What is the match between the faculty member's and doctoral student's expectations of the chair and the student?
- How does the faculty member deal with conflicts?
- How compatible are your work habits?
- How long will it take them to return written materials with comments?
- Are they willing to serve as an editor?
- How accessible is the chair for discussions?
- How will the adviser provide the majority of guidance and discussion: in-person meetings, phone, or electronic communication?
- Is this mechanism compatible with the student's needs?
- How much time does the chair spend in travel for meetings, etc.?
- Will the chair be accessible while traveling?
- How much mentoring are they willing to provide versus how much does the student perceive is needed?
- How many dissertations has this faculty member chaired? Has this faculty member been a dissertation committee member? In what fields (e.g., nursing or other disciplines)?
  - How long did it take this adviser's students to complete the dissertation and graduate?
- How many theses or other research projects has this faculty member chaired or led?
  - What was the outcome of these projects? (e.g., publications, presentations, etc.)
- What is their perspective on publishing and helping students get published?

### **Dissertation Committee Members**

Dissertation committee members must work well with the student, chair, and other committee members. They are responsible for providing input and offering feedback related to the dissertation according to their area of expertise. These members are chosen in collaboration with the dissertation chair. Consider:

- How interested are they in your topic?
- Do they have an area of expertise that is relevant to the student's work? Topical expertise? Methodology?
- What is their timeline for reading and returning materials?
- Do they critically read materials and provide constructive feedback?
- How accessible are they? How will communication occur?

- Do they have the ability to make decisions and stick to them? Do they have enough flexibility to support the student's unique perspective?
- Do they see the dissertation as a contract with obligations to be fulfilled by both the student and the committee members?
- Do other faculty members respect this individual?
- What is the person's previous experience as a thesis/dissertation chairperson or committee member in the past?
- What is the person's previous experience in other research projects/teams?
- How compatible is the committee member with the dissertation chair?

Upon selection of the Dissertation Advisory Committee members, the student submits the Dissertation Advisory Committee Appointment and Approval form to the College of Nursing, Department of Nursing Systems for approval.

Traditional and Non-Traditional Dissertation format guidelines are available in the PhD Orientation Webcourse: <https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1095992>.

## Dissertation Proposal Process

The student should be fully knowledgeable about, and in compliance with current requirement from the College of Graduate Studies regarding the dissertation:

1. The student is expected to complete the dissertation proposal defense within 1 year of passing their candidacy examination.
2. The student is expected to complete their final dissertation defense within 2 years of passing the dissertation proposal defense.
3. The student must register for at least 3 credits of NGR 7980 Dissertation Research continuously while developing the dissertation proposal, conducting or writing the results of the Dissertation. This entails every semester, including summers, without skipping a semester. The credits taken during a given semester should reflect the expenditure of time (student's and Chair's) on dissertation-related work.
4. The Dissertation Advisory Committee is the source of consultation for the student during all phases of the research process (conceptualization, proposal approval, implementation of the study, collection and analysis of data, interpretation of findings, and completion of the written dissertation) and its oral defense.
5. Within the Dissertation Advisory Committee, the student's primary source of contact for writing the Dissertation Proposal is the Dissertation Chair.
6. In the process of developing the proposal, the student/candidate is to work with each member of the Dissertation Advisory Committee, within the member's area of expertise, to integrate conceptual and methodological issues and ramifications from their individual perspectives.
7. Concurrent with proposal development, the student/candidate needs to engage in negotiations with clinical agency(ies) if required for access of participants in the conduct of the research.
8. The written drafts (including its revisions) of the Dissertation Proposal are to be reviewed with the Dissertation Chair. A written draft of the proposal will be sent to the rest of the Dissertation Advisory Committee only with the consent of the Dissertation Chair.
9. The Dissertation Proposal will be distributed to all members of the Dissertation Advisory Committee by the student in accordance with their preferences (e.g., electronic, hard copy).
10. The Dissertation Advisory Committee should have a minimum of 2 weeks (as negotiated with the Dissertation Chair) to return comments to the student/candidate for integration into the proposal for each draft. It may be necessary to go through multiple revision cycles before the proposal is ready for defense. Students need to plan for the time that revisions will take.

11. The student again meets with the Dissertation Chair before the final draft of the proposal is distributed to the Dissertation Advisory Committee.
12. If the committee concurs that the proposal is ready to defend, the date and time (1-2 hours) of the proposal defense are set.
13. College of Nursing, Department of Nursing Systems must be notified of intended proposal defense date, time and location at least two weeks before proposal defense.

## **Dissertation Proposal Format (Traditional and Non-traditional)**

College of Graduate Studies recommends using the UCF Electronic Thesis and Dissertation as the proposal is being developed, although this is not required.

1. Use a title page that precedes the Specific Aims
2. Sections listed above should not exceed 30 double-spaced pages with a 1" margin. There is no requirement that all 30 double-spaced pages allotted for these items be used.
3. References may follow APA or a numbered format. Note that most [PHS 398](#) proposals are submitted in numbered format since APA format takes up extensive space in the text of the document.
4. Formatting guidelines for Electronic Theses and Dissertations from the College of Graduate Studies may differ from APA or PHS 398 and take precedence.

## **Dissertation Proposal Defense (All Formats)**

1. The student gives a 15-20-minute scientific presentation using appropriate technology of the Dissertation Proposal to the Dissertation Advisory Committee.
2. The Committee asks questions about the proposal and discusses its intent and specific procedures with the student.
3. The Dissertation Advisory Committee makes suggestions for revision, refinement, clarification, or other areas that need additional attention.
4. The Dissertation Advisory Committee votes on whether or not the Dissertation Proposal is approved for implementation. A majority vote of the committee is required to approve the proposal.
5. If approved, the Dissertation Proposal Approval Form is signed by all members of the Dissertation Advisory Committee and filed with the College of Nursing, Department of Nursing Systems. If not approved, the student will redraft the proposal under the direction of the Dissertation Chair and schedule another dissertation proposal defense hearing.
6. The approval of the proposal serves as a written agreement between the student and the committee regarding the expectations, limitations, and scope of the research project. Any necessary adjustments to the study plan must be approved by the committee in writing.

## **Dissertation Implementation**

### **Institutional Review Board (IRB) at UCF**

- If the research includes the involvement of human participants, following proposal approval, the student submits the IRB proposal packet to the IRB. The research cannot be implemented, nor can any of the data be collected, until a letter of approval and an approved stamped informed consent form are received from the IRB. This is true even when specific consent is not required.
- Procedures for submitting the research to the IRB can be found at [www.research.ucf.edu](http://www.research.ucf.edu) > Compliance. The required information can be found in the UCF-IRB Principal Investigator's Manual.
- Research conducted as a student is routed through the Chair, Dept. of Nursing Systems for approval. The system requires that the submitter specify the next review.

- CITI training must be up to date. Students should check to be sure their CITI certificate will remain current during the projected research. The certificate is included as an appendix in the dissertation.
- Any advertising or flyers to be used in the recruitment of participants must be approved by the IRB.
- The student must notify the IRB of any adverse events or protocol changes that may happen during the conduct of the research.
- IRB renewal applications must be submitted annually until the research is completed.

### **Institutional Review Board at other agencies as appropriate**

- If data collection involves participants who are associated with a formal organization, it may be necessary to submit an IRB proposal to the designated body for that agency.
- Be aware that the involvement of additional review boards takes time and may involve unanticipated requirements and events.

### **Meetings and Consultation**

- The candidate should meet individually with the Chair and the Dissertation Advisory Committee members at intervals during the conduct of the research.
- The Chair and the Committee, from their respective areas of expertise, should assist the student in surmounting obstacles and problem-solving difficulties that may arise during the conduct of the investigation.
- The Chair and the Committee should be appraised periodically of the candidate's progress in conducting the research.
- Modifications to the proposal must be approved by the Dissertation Advisory Committee.

## **Guidelines and Policy/Procedures for the Dissertation**

### **University Dissertation Requirements**

The College of Graduate Studies [Electronic Thesis and Dissertation](#) page contains information on the university's requirements for dissertation formatting, format review, defenses, final submission, and more.

All university deadlines are listed in the [academic calendar](#). The college may have other earlier deadlines; students must check with college staff for additional deadlines.

The following requirements must be met by dissertation students in their final term:

- Submit a properly formatted file for initial format review by the format review deadline
- Submit the Thesis and Dissertation Release Option form well before the defense
- Defend by the defense deadline
- Submit signed approval form by final submission deadline
- Submit final dissertation document by final submission deadline

Students must format their dissertation according to the standards outlined at [Formatting the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation](#). University formatting requirements take precedence over other format guidelines such as APA. Formatting questions or issues can be submitted to the Format Help page in the [Thesis and Dissertation Services](#) site. Format reviews and final submission must be completed in the [Thesis and Dissertation Services](#) site. The Dissertation Approval Form is also available in the Thesis and Dissertation Services site.

The College of Graduate Studies offers several thesis and dissertation [Workshops](#) each term. Students are highly encouraged to attend these workshops early in the dissertation process to fully understand the above policies and procedures.

The College of Graduate Studies thesis and dissertation office is best reached by email at [editor@ucf.edu](mailto:editor@ucf.edu).

## Approval

- When the chair approves, the Dissertation Advisory Committee has a minimum of 2 weeks to review drafts (as negotiated with the Dissertation Chair) and to return comments to the chair and the candidate for integration into the written dissertation. Multiple draft cycles may be necessary depending upon the extent of revisions required.
- Students must submit a copy of their dissertation draft to iThenticate.com pending a preformatting review of their dissertation.

Format Review by the College of Graduate Studies precedes defense deadlines each semester. Format review can be completed before final draft of dissertation is complete.

## Oral Dissertation Defense Preparation

1. File the online Intent to Graduate Form in the semester before anticipated graduation by logging into myUCF and navigating to the Student Center – Intent to Graduate: Apply. Please refer to the Academic Calendar for dates to apply for graduation.
2. Meet the deadlines posted by Graduate Studies for early format review of the dissertation, oral defense, and electronic submission. Format Review, Dissertation Approval Form, and Submission can all be completed through the College of Graduate Studies student Electronic Thesis and Dissertation website. For semester deadlines, see the [academic calendar](#).
3. When the dissertation has been completed and is determined to be ready for defense by the entire committee, a Certification Form must be completed and signed by the Dissertation Advisory Committee Members.
4. The Certification Form, abstract of the dissertation, and notice of the defense date must be sent to the College of Nursing Office of Graduate Affairs at least 2 weeks prior to the date of the oral dissertation defense which is a public event.
5. The Doctoral Candidate prepares a 20-minute presentation of the dissertation research that will begin the oral dissertation defense using state-of-the-art presentation technology.

## Oral Dissertation Defense Criteria

- Articulates a synthesis of a body of knowledge about theory and methods of inquiry in relation to a completed study
- Contributes to knowledge generation relevant to nursing and health care within a global context.
- Relates findings of dissertation to disciplinary knowledge in nursing and other disciplines from the basis of sound conceptual and methodological thinking.

## Oral Dissertation Defense Conduct

- It is ideal that all Dissertation Advisory Committee members are present for the defense. If necessary candidates or members may participate through appropriate media. The defense is still a public event and must be scheduled in a location where it can be viewed by interested parties.
- If the student unexpectedly is unable to be present for the Oral Dissertation Defense on the specified date because of illness or other emergency, the Dissertation Chair should be notified as soon as possible. The Chair in turn will notify the other members of the Dissertation Advisory Committee and the Graduate Coordinator. The Chair must contact the Thesis Editor directly for an extension to reschedule the defense, which is given only when well substantiated.
- The Dissertation Advisory Committee meets in private to decide:
  - Whether the initial presentation may be interrupted by questions or whether it should be completed before the questioning begins;
  - Whether questioning will proceed chronologically through the written dissertation, or by rounds with each examiner asking one question per round;
  - The maximum time allowed to an individual examiner on each round of questioning

- o The total length of time of questioning following the 20-minute presentation of the dissertation research by the doctoral candidate. Unless there are serious questions about the candidate's performance, the presentation and the questioning typically last less than 2 hours.
- The student gives a 15-20 minute, scientific presentation of the Dissertation to the Dissertation Advisory Committee.
- All oral dissertation defense examinations are open. After the candidate's presentation of the dissertation research, there will be an opportunity for the audience and candidate to have a general question and answer session. The audience is then excused from the room.
- Only members of the Dissertation Advisory Committee may pose examination questions to the candidate as the oral defense continues. When the committee is satisfied that all questions have been raised, the candidate is excused.
- The candidate must withdraw while the Dissertation Advisory Committee deliberates on the dissertation defense and examining questions and arrives at its decisions.
- The candidate is then excused from the room while the Dissertation Advisory Committee deliberates on the oral defense and examining questions and arrives at its decisions. In this private session, all members of the Dissertation Advisory Committee:
  - o Comment on his/her evaluation of the oral defense;
  - o Vote as to whether the candidate has passed or failed the oral defense. A majority vote is required for either a pass or fail outcome.
- If the candidate receives the required affirmative votes, there still may be minor changes and editing that need to be made to the written dissertation. The Dissertation Advisory Committee may delegate this final completion to the doctoral candidate and the Chair or may request to review the final draft.
- If the candidate fails to receive the required affirmative votes, the Dissertation Advisory Committee should come to a conclusion at that time as to necessary remedial action.
  - o Re-examination must be within one year from the date of the first oral defense.
  - o The doctoral candidate may do the oral defense of the dissertation only twice.
- The Dissertation Advisory Committee must sign the Graduate Studies form for approval/pass of the dissertation defense, which then is submitted to the College of Nursing Office of Graduate Affairs. This form can be found on the student Electronic Thesis and Dissertation website.
- The Dissertation Advisory Committee must individually complete the Dissertation Examination Rubrics.

### **After the Oral Dissertation Defense**

- The final version of the dissertation must be submitted electronically through UCF Graduate Studies Electronic Thesis and Dissertation website in accordance with its specifications for format (.pdf with bookmarks) and its timeline. Submission of the dissertation in hard copy is not required.
- Doctoral Candidates in the College of Nursing must provide each member of the Doctoral Advisory Committee with an electronic copy of the final version of the doctoral dissertation.

For copyright issues, see [Copyright Information](#).

## **Annual Review**

Students will complete their Portfolio in LEAP\*RN.

## **Graduate Research**

Research is integral to doctoral study and to the development of scholarship in the discipline of nursing. Advisers and other faculty members will apprise students of societies and organizations that promote research. The College of Nursing provides a guide to research resources. The Office of Graduate Affairs maintains a file of resources for funding for research for students and faculty. The College of Nursing assigns a

faculty advisor to supports doctoral student research and participate in the faculty member's research to gain research skills.

## Institutional Review Board

Before any research is conducted that involves human or animal subjects, students will secure IRB approval for the study. For more information, please see <https://www.research.ucf.edu/> > Compliance.

## UCF's Patent and Invention Policy

In most cases, UCF owns the intellectual property developed using university resources. The graduate student as inventor will according to this policy share in the proceeds of the invention. Please see the current UCF Graduate Catalog for details: <https://www.ucf.edu/catalog/?catoid=4&poid=1362> > Policies > General Graduate Policies.

## Written Format

An approved style manual must be used in conjunction with this manual; please check with your adviser/department to see which style is appropriate for use in your thesis/dissertation. Also note: While the style manual appropriate for your discipline will dictate internal formatting for reference citations, tables, figures, formulas and equations, *UCF's Thesis and Dissertation Manual* takes precedence over both style manuals and/or p or college requirements.

Faculty members are required to use *iThenticate* to review papers and projects for plagiarism. After submission of the paper, the chair will share the report with the committee to verify integrity of the work.

## Financial Aid/Scholarships

Financial assistance for graduate students is limited. Scholarship information is posted monthly outside the UCF Student Financial Assistance Office. Scholarships and research grants are available from many professional organizations such as the Florida Nurses Foundation, Florida League for Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau, and specialty organizations.

- Review the requirements to receive doctoral fellowships, assistantships, and tuition support in the current UCF Graduate Catalog and the College of Graduate Studies [website](#). These include full time status as a student and work requirements which could be as a Research Assistant or a Teaching Assistant. Students with an assistantship have tuition, but not fees, waived.
- Review the requirements and award details for doctoral and/or graduate fellowship programs. Most university fellowships do not require students to complete a separate fellowship application. The university and graduate programs award fellowships are based on your admission application data and accompanying documents. Some fellowships, however, do require a fellowship-specific application.
- Graduate fellowships (or scholarships) are awarded to outstanding graduate students based on academic merit. They are payments to students that defer tuition and fees up to the amount of the fellowship and do not require the student to work.
- Search for funding outside of UCF. Use the free search services available through the Internet (see the Other Funding Resources section of the [Graduate Funding Website](#)).

## Graduate Assistantship Positions

A limited number of graduate assistantships are available. Graduate assistant (GA), graduate teaching assistant (GTA) or graduate research assistant (GRA) positions are available each Fall and Spring for full-time doctoral and master's students (enrolled in at least 9 credits each semester). GAs are assigned to assist faculty and staff with course and College-related activities, and GTAs may be assigned to teach a course, or assist a faculty member with teaching a course with large enrollment.

All GTAs are required to complete the UCF GTA training requirement, as described in the [Graduate Teaching](#) section of the Graduate Students website. GTAs who are assigned as instructors of record must have completed 18 credits of master's level nursing course work. GTAs who are assigned as graders must complete the grader training requirement provided by the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning. GRAs will be assigned to faculty members who are engaged in funded research or who are preparing a research proposal for funding.

GTAs/GRAs are paid a stipend and receive full tuition remission, plus advanced nurse traineeship funds if available. These positions are for fall and spring semesters, and require a separate application that may be obtained from the Doctoral Program Assistant.

## Graduate Teaching/Research Assistant Responsibilities

Graduate Teaching /Research Assistants (GTAs/GRAs) have an important role in the College of Nursing. This position description was developed to help professors and GTAs/GRAs to better understand their roles and responsibilities. The following are some activities that GTAs/GRAs may be expected to carry out in working with assigned professor members. Not all GTAs/GRAs can perform the entire activities list – this is a guide. Please note realistic time expectations. No GTA/GRA is to be assigned to do any personal or non-UCF related activity. GTAs will need to complete the GTA training required by UCF Graduate Studies before doing certain functions.

### GTA Responsibilities

- Assist professor with course management
  - Assist professor update syllabi and course reference materials
  - Assist professors with lecture presentations
  - Proctor and collect exams and deliver/retrieve exams to/from Test Center
  - Grade course assignments according to established criteria set by the professor
  - Communicate with students as required by the professor
- Assist in online course instruction (GTA may require instruction for this)
  - Assist professor update syllabi and course reference materials
  - Search Web for pertinent URLs related to the course
  - Grade online course requirements according to established criteria set by the professor
  - Communicate with students as required by the professor
- Assist professor with on-campus lab experiences for clinical and health assessment courses
  - Set up on-campus lab experiences according to plan provided by professor
  - Review/Supervise students' skills during lab sessions
  - Work with students individually if requested by professor and if time permits
  - Evaluate students during basic skills testing
  - Assist the professor in grading projects associated with on-campus lab
  - Assist the professor with open lab activities
  - Assist the professor in sessions for dosage calculation practice and review

## **GRA/Research and Scholarly Work Activities**

1. Update references for the professor's research and other scholarly projects
  - Conduct literature searches as directed by the professor
  - Obtain journal articles and references from library
  - Develop PowerPoint and other materials for the professor
2. Assist the professor with research activities
  - Assist with research intervention activities
  - Assist with data collection
  - Conduct data entry, cleaning, and management
  - Conduct statistical analyses as requested by the professor
  - Help manage correspondence associated with research and scholarly activities

## **GTA: General Information**

- All GTAs must have completed the UCF Graduate Studies GTA Workshop.
- Assignments cover 10-20 hours/week. GTA/GRAs are expected to be on campus for at least 5-10 hours each week. For web courses, time on campus is negotiable with professor(s).
- GTAs/GRAs may be assigned to work with more than one professor for the semester.
- GTAs are assigned to professors based on course needs and numbers of students.
- GRAs are assigned to professors based on research agenda and potential for funding.
- GTA/GRA appointments occur on a semester basis by the graduate program coordinator in consultation with CON Director and Undergraduate Program Coordinators.
- GTAs/GRAs must report on a weekly basis to their assigned professor and must schedule mutually agreed upon times that they are available for the entire semester. Any changes in the agreed upon times must be approved by the professors.
- GTAs/GRAs report directly to the professor(s) to whom they are assigned for the semester.
- GTAs/GRAs must manage their time well, particularly if they are working with more than one professor. Should assignments take longer than the allotted or expected time, GTAs/GRAs must communicate the information ASAP to the assigned professor so that proper adjustments in assignments can be made.
- If GTA/GRA is overwhelmed, please discuss work with professor and if not resolved, please meet with graduate program coordinator.
- No GTA/GRA is to be assigned to do any personal or non-UCF related activity.
- GTAs/GRAs must be evaluated mid-semester and end of each semester by the assigned professor(s). The evaluation must be submitted to the graduate program office. GTAs/GRAs with multiple instructor assignments must be evaluated by each professor.
- Professors who do not complete the evaluations in a timely manner may not be assigned a GTA/GRA in the following semester.
- GTA/GRA schedules are to be submitted to the graduate program coordinator by the GTA/GRA by the end of the second week of the semester.
- GTAs/GRAs who are not responsible, whose work is below expectation, and/or who are not punctual or have not completed their required hours of work may be terminated during the semester – thus losing their assistantship for the semester – or will not receive any additional assistantships.

## **Graduate Student Associations**

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) is UCF's graduate organization committed to enrich graduate students' personal, educational and professional experience. To learn more or get involved, please visit [facebook.com/groups/UCFgsa/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/UCFgsa/). For individual department or graduate program organizations, please see program advisor.

## Organization of Doctoral Nurse Student (ODSN)

Students are encouraged to participate in activities of the ODSN. It is composed of doctoral students in the College of Nursing from both PhD and DNP tracks. Information about the organization stage of the ODSN will be provided by the student representatives. A representative is a nonvoting member of the PhD Curriculum Committee. For more information about the ODSN, please contact Dr. Veronica Decker at [veronica.decker@ucf.edu](mailto:veronica.decker@ucf.edu).

## Scholarly Affiliations for Doctoral Students

[Sigma Theta Tau International \(STTI\)](#): Sigma Theta Tau International organization devoted to the scholarship and leadership of nursing. UCF College of Nursing is home to the Theta Epsilon Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International. Doctoral students who are not members of Sigma Theta Tau may discuss this with their advisers and apply for membership. STTI- Theta Epsilon events are sent to doctoral students via the graduate nursing listserv. Nonmembers are invited to events.

American Academy of Nursing (AAN): [nursingworld.org/](http://nursingworld.org/)

American Association of Colleges of Nursing Graduate Nursing Student Academy is an organization that offers programs, supports and networking with Graduate Nursing students around the country. [aacnnursing.org/](http://aacnnursing.org/)

Southern Nursing Research Society (SNRS): presents annual research conferences. This is an excellent venue to present evolving research for students: [snrs.org/](http://snrs.org/)

## Professional Development

### University Funding for PhD Student Presentations

Funds may be available from the College of Graduate Studies and Student Government Association to support student travel to present posters and/or presentations.

### Co-Authorship with Faculty

Students may collaborate with faculty members and/or fellow students on publications and research presentations. Degree of work on the project determines authorship designation. If faculty members substantially contribute to the paper or presentation, they should be co-authors. It is important to discuss authorship when beginning papers and projects.

### Listservs for Graduate Nursing Students

[gradnurse@listserv.cc.ucf.edu](mailto:gradnurse@listserv.cc.ucf.edu)

Electronic mail is a vital component of College of Nursing communication. It is the official means of communication with students. It is the official communication system of UCF. Every UCF student is issued an electronic Knightsmail account when admitted to the program. Students are responsible for attending the appropriate orientation to learn how to access their knightsmail at UCF. Students should check knightsmail frequently, preferably daily. Students must have anti-virus software and update the software on a regular basis.

The College of Nursing creates distribution lists (listservs) for each program at the beginning of each semester. These listservs are an essential part of dissemination of information at UCF. To subscribe to the Listserv please contact the program assistant at 407-823-6541. Students are responsible for assuring that they are on distribution

lists and receiving communication from the College by informing the program assistant of correct email information and all changes. If the student's email is not accessible, it is the student's responsibility to develop an additional method of receiving emails. "Not being on listserv" is not a valid excuse for inability to receive e-mail.

## **Instructional Strategies and Resources**

The Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning provides classes and programs designed to assist graduate students with the educational issues they face in the classroom as teaching assistant or as instructors. These resources include assistance in course design and syllabi development, learning theories, and the use of different technologies in the classroom or on the internet. Further information on these resources is available at [fctl.ucf.edu/](http://fctl.ucf.edu/).

## **Pathways to Success Workshops**

Coordinated by the College of Graduate Studies, the Pathways to Success program offers free development opportunities for graduate students including workshops in Academic Integrity, Graduate Grantsmanship, Graduate Teaching, Personal Development, Professional Development, and Research. For more information and how to register, please visit [graduate.ucf.edu/pathways-to-success/](http://graduate.ucf.edu/pathways-to-success/).

## **Graduate Research Forum**

The Graduate Research Forum will feature poster displays representing UCF's diverse colleges and disciplines.

The Forum is an opportunity for students to showcase their research and creative projects and to receive valuable feedback from faculty judges. Awards for best poster presentation in each category will be given and all participants will receive recognition.

The College of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Student Association invite all UCF students, community, and employers to attend the Graduate Research Forum. For more information visit [graduate.ucf.edu/graduate-research-forum/](http://graduate.ucf.edu/graduate-research-forum/).

## **Graduate Student Center**

The Graduate Student Center is located on main campus in Trevor Colbourn Hall. It has meetings and study rooms equipped with computers and telecommunication support. The computers have a wide range of research related software for student use. Workshops and lectures of student interest are offered there. The schedule is available from the website at [graduate.ucf.edu/graduate-student-center/](http://graduate.ucf.edu/graduate-student-center/).

## **Graduate Excellence Awards**

Each year, the College of Graduate Studies offers graduate students who strive for academic and professional excellence the opportunity to be recognized for their work. The award categories include the following:

**Award for Excellence by a Graduate Teaching Assistant** – This award is for students who provide teaching support and assistance under the direction of a lead teacher. This award focuses on the extent and quality of the assistance provided by the student to the lead instructor and the students in the class. (Not intended for students who are instructor of record)

**Award for Excellence in Graduate Student Teaching** – This award is for students who serve as instructors of record and have independent classroom responsibilities. The focus of this award is on the quality of the student's teaching and the academic contributions of those activities.

**Award for the Outstanding Dissertation** – It recognizes doctoral students for excellence in the dissertation. The focus of this award is on the quality and contribution of the student's dissertation. Excellence of the dissertation may be demonstrated by evidence such as, but not limited to: publications in refereed journals, awards and recognitions from professional organizations, and praise from faculty members and other colleagues in the field.

For the nomination process and eligibility criteria, see [graduate.ucf.edu/awards-and-recognition/](http://graduate.ucf.edu/awards-and-recognition/).

## Other

Students should take opportunities to present a poster or a topic of research at a conference. To obtain financial support to present at a conference (other than through your program) or to engage in comparable creative activity at a professional meeting, visit the Graduate Travel Fellowship section at [graduate.ucf.edu/funding/](http://graduate.ucf.edu/funding/).

For information about the Council of Southern Graduate Schools (CSGS) thesis and dissertation awards, see their website: [csgs.org/](http://csgs.org/) > Awards.

For grant-proposal writing resources: [uwc.cah.ucf.edu/students/](http://uwc.cah.ucf.edu/students/).

The [Florida Board of Nursing](http://Florida Board of Nursing) is the top resource for all professional information relating to the field of nursing including information on license and certification, continuing education and more.

Visit the [Career Network webpage](http://Career Network webpage) available through [aftercollege.com](http://aftercollege.com) for available jobs and internships in the nursing field.

[The Florida Nurses Association \(FNA\)](http://The Florida Nurses Association (FNA)) serves and supports all registered nurses through professional development, advocacy and the promotion of excellence at every level of professional nursing practice.

[National Association of Hispanic Nurses](http://National Association of Hispanic Nurses) promotes Hispanic nurses to improve the health of our community.

[National Black Nurses Association, Inc.](http://National Black Nurses Association, Inc.) provides a forum for collective action by African American nurses to investigate, define and determine what the health care needs of African Americans.

[American Assembly for Men in Nursing](http://American Assembly for Men in Nursing) provides a framework for nurses as a group to meet, discuss, and influence factors which affect men as nurses.

[Philippine Nurses Association of Central Florida](http://Philippine Nurses Association of Central Florida) promotes and upholds a positive image of Nursing and Professional Excellence through active participation in educational programs, community health service projects, and networking with other allied health care professionals while maintain social, cultural and humanitarian endeavors.

## Job Search

UCF's Career Services department offers a wide range of programs and services designed to assist graduate students. These services include evaluation and exploration of career goals, preparation for the job search and job search resources. To learn more, visit their website at [career.ucf.edu/](http://career.ucf.edu/).

For specific services or resources provided by the academic program, please contact the graduate program director or academic advisor.

Visit the [Career Network webpage](http://Career Network webpage) available through [aftercollege.com](http://aftercollege.com) for available jobs and internships in the nursing field.

[Health+Medical+Jobs website](#) is an excellent online resource for searching health jobs, medical jobs, hospital employment postings, healthcare career opportunities & nursing careers.

## Forms

- [College of Graduate Studies Forms and References](#)  
A complete listing of general forms and references for graduate students, with direct links, may be found here.
- [Doctoral Candidacy Form](#)  
This is a required form that has to be completed and signed by the student and their advisor or chair and submitted to the College of Nursing, Office of Graduate Affairs.
- [Dissertation Committee Appointment Form](#)  
This is a required form that has to be completed and signed by the student, their committee members, and chair and submitted to the College of Nursing, Office of Graduate Affairs.
- [Dissertation Defense Proposal Notification](#)  
This is a required form that has to be completed and signed by the student and their advisor or chair and submitted to the College of Nursing, Office of Graduate Affairs.
- [Dissertation Proposal Approval Form](#)  
The Committee Chair will submit this form upon completion of successful Dissertation Proposal defense.
- [Graduate Petition Form](#)  
When unusual situations arise, petitions for exceptions to policy may be requested by the student. Depending on the type of appeal, the student should contact his/her program adviser to begin the petition process.
- [Special Registration Form](#)  
Used for students making registration requests for Independent Study, Doctoral Research or Doctoral Dissertation.
- [Traveling Scholar Form](#)  
If a student would like to take advantage of special resources available on another campus but not available on the home campus; for example, special course offerings, research opportunities, unique laboratories and library collections, this form must be completed and approved.

## Useful Links

- [Nursing PhD](#)
- [College of Nursing](#)
- [College of Graduate Studies](#)
- [Academic Calendar](#)
- [Bookstore](#)
- [Campus Map](#)
- [College of Nursing Faculty](#)
- [Counseling Center](#)
- [Financial Assistance](#)
- [Golden Rule Student Handbook](#)
- [Graduate Catalog](#)
- [Graduate Student Association](#)
- [Graduate Student Center](#)
- [Housing and Residence Life](#)
- [Housing, off campus](#)
- [Knights Email](#)
- [Library](#)
- [NID Help](#)
- [Nursing Scholarship Opportunities](#)
- [Pathways to Success](#)

- [Recreation and Wellness Center](#)
- [Shuttles Parking Services](#)
- [Student Health Services](#)
- [Thesis and Dissertation \(ETD\)](#)
- [UCF Global](#)
- [University Writing Center](#)

## Grad Faculty

**Asterisk** = has previous committee experience, which qualifies the person to serve as vice chair

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