



UNIVERSITY OF  
NORTHERN COLORADO

# PhD in Nursing Education

## STUDENT HANDBOOK

### 2024-2025



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**Please note:**

The Official Handbook with the most recent updates is located here:

<https://www.unco.edu/nhs/nursing/resources/clinical-student/student-handbooks.aspx>

and it will be updated as changes occur.

***Students will be responsible for accessing and using  
the most current version.***

***(The Plan of Study for the Fall 2024 cohort  
will be as published in this handbook.)***

*(Revised 6/27/24)*

***(Please review the UNC Graduate School Student Handbook here)***

<https://www.unco.edu/graduate-school/student-resources/current-students/>

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# UNC School of Nursing (SON) Information



UNIVERSITY OF  
NORTHERN COLORADO

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School of Nursing

## SON Mission

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The Mission of the University of Northern Colorado School of Nursing, congruent with the University mission, To improve the health and well-being of society by preparing compassionate, courageous, and competent nurses who advance nursing through leadership, scholarship and practice.

*4/2023 revision adopted by NFSO*

## SON Vision

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The University of Northern Colorado School of Nursing will be known for excellence in the preparation of exceptional practitioners and nurse educators. Through leadership in practice and education, our faculty and students will transform the healthcare landscape to meet the needs of society and advance our discipline.

## SON Values

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- **Excellence:** being outstanding; fostered through intentional decision-making and development of high standards and processes for ensuring quality.
- **Professionalism:** consistent demonstration of and adherence to accountability, competence, responsibility, dependability and a commitment to life-long learning.
- **Caring:** an integral component of nursing practice requiring ongoing development of empathy, conscience, compassion, resilience, and confidence in interactions with patients, families, communities, other healthcare professionals, and ourselves.
- **Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion:** acknowledgement of human dignity and autonomy, privacy, equality, freedom, and inclusivity as central to cultivating deep understanding of people in the betterment of health and well-being of all members of society.
- **Student-Centered Teaching and Learning:** Evidence-based, innovative teaching and learning is critical to meeting the changing demands in healthcare, nursing practice, and nursing education.
- **Community Engagement:** collaboration with community-based partners to enrich learning, foster equitable decision-making processes, and deepen relationships and trust to meet the healthcare needs of the region.

## SON Anti-Racism Statement

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The School of Nursing shares the values of the University of Northern Colorado, the American The UNC School of Nursing has a strong history of educating nurses to provide compassionate care to others. “We acknowledge that institutional racism exists in American society, of which the SON is a part. We oppose racism and strive to promote an inclusive and equitable environment. We are committed to increased awareness and continued efforts to prevent racist acts.” Our overall mission is to improve the health of our society; including ALL members of our community. We value Inclusivity of diverse human identities and expressions in nursing education and nursing practice. We can achieve a just and equitable health care system for all by recognizing and combating racism in healthcare, becoming aware of implicit bias and its effects, and working to achieve greater diversity in nursing education and the nursing workforce.

We strive to take action in both professional and personal ways to eliminate systematic racism, promote diversity and reduce bias. We will:

- Examine our curriculum to eliminate racist assumptions or content and increase student dialogue and awareness of racism and bias affecting nursing care.
- Engage in approaches to removing racism or bias from admission, progression and retention for diverse students including students of color.
- Actively seek ways to increase the diversity of faculty and staff by examining application, hiring, promotion, tenure and support practices.
- Plan for anti-racism education and skills building for faculty, staff and students.
- Commit to working together in this common effort.

We are steadfast in our belief that every individual should work and learn in an environment that embraces diversity and Inclusivity. **There is no tolerance for racism within our school.**

## SON Purpose and Goals for Graduate Programs

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To prepare well-educated baccalaureate and graduate prepared nurses who understand the impact of professional nursing on a dynamic, diverse, and technologically advancing health care system.

### **Goals - Graduate Programs:**

- Students will engage in scholarly activity, research and creative projects conducive to advanced professional nursing roles and advanced nursing practice.
- Students are prepared for advanced professional nursing roles through a solid foundation of theory, research and advanced practice standards as well as specialty nursing coursework.
- Students develop professional values fostering the commitment to life-long learning, scholarship and service.
- Students will develop competencies essential to assume leadership positions in nursing education and practice.





# Campus and Student Resources



UNIVERSITY OF  
NORTHERN COLORADO

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School of Nursing

## Ursa

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URSA is UNC's on-line platform for students to: register, view transcripts, access textbook information, view financial aid, pay your bill, use Degree Works, see grades, etc. Students may access this service through the UNC website at: [www.ursa.unco.edu](http://www.ursa.unco.edu).

## Academic Program Support

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Your SON program advisor and the SON Graduate Program Management Specialist are critical contacts for you within the School of Nursing. These individuals are available to help you with problems you may encounter or be able to refer you to other sources of help for student problems and/or situations which you may encounter while attending UNC.

Faculty: <https://www.unco.edu/nhs/nursing/about-us/faculty/>

Staff: <https://www.unco.edu/nhs/nursing/about-us/staff/>

## UNC Dean Of Students

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The UNC Dean of Students website is: <https://www.unco.edu/dean-of-students/>

The Dean of Students office is available for you to share concerns and navigate difficult situations. Student Outreach and Support, Student Rights and Responsibilities, Student Legal Services, Bear Pantry, and Student Judiciary are located here to assist you.

1. Students Rights and Responsibilities - <http://www.unco.edu/dean-of-students/offices-resources/student-rights-responsibilities/>
2. Title IX/Non-Discrimination or Sexual Misconduct Policies - <http://www.unco.edu/sexual-misconduct/>

## UNC Graduate School

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The UNC Graduate School website is: <http://www.unco.edu/grad/>

*\*\*\*NOTE: Every effort is made to keep this handbook up to date, but information and forms should be verified with the Graduate School website to be sure that you have the most up-to-date information and/or version of a form.*

### UNC GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES

UNC Graduate School academic policies and deadlines should be reviewed by each graduate student. These policies are updated on a regular basis and can change from semester to semester. The School of Nursing and your program coordinators will do his/her best to keep students informed of any important changes in Graduate School policies, but ultimately it is the graduate student's responsibility to be aware of Graduate School policies as an active graduate student.

<http://www.unco.edu/graduate-school/student-resources/current-students/academic-policies-and-deadlines.aspx>

### OTHER GRADUATE SCHOOL ITEMS TO NOTE:

- **Current Students page:** <https://www.unco.edu/graduate-school/student-resources/current-students/>
  - Includes links to the Graduate School Handbook, policies, deadlines, campus resources, guidelines for theses and dissertations, forms, and more.

- **Deferral prior to start of program** - You must enroll in courses during the first year of admission. If you choose to defer prior to starting your first semester, please discuss with your program coordinator, then complete this deferral process through the individualized account you created for the UNC Graduate application.
- **Continuous Registration** - All Masters, Specialist, and Doctoral students are required to register continuously from the time they first enroll in their graduate degree program until the semester or term in which they graduate. Students must be enrolled for at least 1 credit hour each academic semester (fall and spring) to be in compliance with this policy. Students not in compliance with the continuous registration policy will automatically be assessed a \$150 continuous registration fee each semester of non-enrollment. Payment of the continuous registration fee does exempt the student from financial aid obligations or the health insurance requirement. Full policy: <http://unco.smartcatalogiq.com/en/current/Graduate-Catalog/General-Information/Registration/Continuous-Registration-for-Graduate-Students>
- **Graduate School Forms:** <http://www.unco.edu/graduate-school/student-resources/current-students/graduate-school-forms.aspx>
- **Transfer Credit** from another institution –
  - <http://unco.smartcatalogiq.com/current/Graduate-Catalog/General-Information/Policies-and-Procedures/Transfer-Credit.aspx>
  - Transfer credit form: <http://www.unco.edu/graduate-school/pdf/Transfer-of-Credit.pdf>
- **Graduate Student Petition for Exception** (*used for exceptions to time to completion and leave of absence from the program etc.*) <http://www.unco.edu/graduate-school/pdf/Graduate-Student-Petition-for-Exception.pdf>
- **Withdrawal from a course or the program** (*additionally, please communicate with your program advisor prior to taking these steps*) <http://unco.smartcatalogiq.com/en/current/Graduate-Catalog/General-Information/Registration>

## Financial Aid and Other Funding Opportunities

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Financial Aid for Graduate Students: <https://www.unco.edu/financial-aid/applying-for-aid/graduate-student.aspx>

### GA/TA/RA DESCRIPTION:

The recipient of the award will be required to work 8 -11 hours per week (.20 FTE for each semester). Responsibilities may include assisting in skills lab, online courses or in faculty research projects.

The Graduate Assistant/Teaching Assistant will receive an established University salary or stipend. The student may also have some or all of that semester's tuition paid by the Graduate School.

Requirements for becoming a GA/TA/RA can be found on the Graduate School website.

Availability is determined on a year-to-year basis and announcements are sent by email when application is available.

## **NURSE FACULTY LOAN PROGRAM (NFLP):**

Nurse Faculty Loan Program funds are awarded annually to Schools of Nursing by HRSA. Awards are not made until late summer and funding amount varies each year. Information about applying is sent by email to PhD students when we are notified of an award for that year.

Please contact Dr. Darcy Copeland for additional information regarding the NFLP, [Darcy.Copeland@unco.edu](mailto:Darcy.Copeland@unco.edu).

## **SCHOLARSHIPS:**

### **Sigma Theta Tau, Zeta Omicron Chapter:**

Zeta Omicron chapter of Sigma Theta Tau, the International Organization for Nursing Scholarship, invites qualified MS students to join the organization each year. The following awards are sponsored by the organization:

#### **Drennan Award**

The Drennan Award sponsored by Dr. Phyllis Drennan, former Dean of the School of Nursing, is awarded one or two outstanding graduate nursing student/s each year. Graduate nursing faculty nominate students for the award. The candidates will be evaluated by the selection committee on their commitment to nursing, professionalism, research activities, and professional growth achievements. The Drennan Award recipient(s) will receive a certificate of recognition, stipend and his/her name engraved on the Drennan Award Plaque displayed in the School of Nursing.

#### **Catalyst Scholarship/Grant Awards**

Money for small grants may be available on an annual basis. Interested students should check the Zeta Omicron Chapter website or contact a board member for details.

Updated 4/2020

## **Letters of Reference**

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The faculty of the School of Nursing are responsible for encouraging graduates to maintain a professional vita and a list of references. Individual references may be provided by faculty upon request.

# UNC Campus Resources

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## **WRITING CENTER**

Staff can assist in improving writing skills. Appointments can be made online or on campus and staff will provide assistance with writing. The Writing Center is provided by the English Department and can be accessed at <http://www.unco.edu/writing-center/>. Online tutoring is available.

## **MICHENER LIBRARY**

Maggie Shawcross is our reference librarian. She can help you search for materials or narrow down a topic. 970-351-1474 [maggie.shawcross@unco.edu](mailto:maggie.shawcross@unco.edu). Maggie is also a resource for questions on APA writing style.

## **RESEARCH CONSULTING LAB**

Assistance with research and statistical issues are provided through the Research Consulting Lab in the Department of Applied Statistics and Research Methods located within the College of Education. Information can be found at <https://www.unco.edu/cebs/research-consulting-lab/>

## **STATISTICAL CONSULTING MAST INSTITUTE**

Statistical consulting is available at no charge to graduate students through UNC's Mathematics and Science Teaching Institute on campus. <https://www.unco.edu/nhs/mathematics-science-teaching-institute/>.

## **HIRING A TYPIST, EDITOR, OR TRANSCRIPTIONIST**

The Graduate School maintains a list of people who can be hired by students for these services. More information can be found at <http://www.unco.edu/graduate-school/student-resources/current-students/hiring-a-typist-editor-or-transcriptionist.aspx>

## **UNC COUNSELING CENTER**

The UNC Counseling Center's goal is to support students throughout their academic journeys towards healthy and meaningful college experiences. Counseling services are **free** to UNC students. <https://www.unco.edu/counseling-center/>

## **PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES CLINIC**

UNC Psychological Services at UNC accepts students in addition to the Northern Colorado community as clients for counseling and assessment services. Fees are based on a sliding fee scale. Interested individuals can contact them at (970) 351-1645 or <https://www.unco.edu/cebs/psychological-services-clinic/>.



# **SON Governance and Student Organizations**



UNIVERSITY OF  
**NORTHERN COLORADO**

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School of Nursing

## **Nursing Faculty Student Organization (NFSO)**

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The governance structure is guided by the School of Nursing by-laws, adopted by faculty. The by-laws have been revised throughout the years; the last revision was completed in 2021.

This is a committee of all SON faculty plus student representatives from all levels. It meets several times per semester for communication of information and for decision making regarding Nursing program policies. In addition, there are subcommittees which also meet every semester for Graduate Affairs (policies and issues for graduate programs) and Graduate Curriculum (curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation). Student representatives have full voice and vote in all these meetings with the exception of declared executive sessions.

Student representatives receive the meeting agendas and minutes via email. NFSO and subcommittee meetings are open for any interested student to attend. They are often scheduled on Friday mornings or afternoons (check with a faculty member or the office staff for dates).

Graduate nursing students annually select one or more representatives to attend meetings of the NFSO, the Graduate Leadership Team (GLT), and the Graduate Curriculum Committee (GCO). Be sure you know who your representative is. All students are encouraged to contact their representatives in person, in writing, by email or by phone to share questions and feedback about programs and issues.

### **STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN THE GOVERNANCE OF THE SCHOOL OF NURSING**

Students are elected by their peers to represent them at meetings of the Nursing Faculty-Student Organization and its subcommittees. Faculty value student input and hope that students take appropriate advantage of the opportunities to participate.

## **UNC Graduate Student Association (GSA)**

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<https://www.unco.edu/graduate-student-association/>

This is a student organization that provides graduate students with information on matters related to graduate students including financial support to attend and/or present at conferences and to support research projects.

## **Sigma Theta Tau (Zeta Omicron)**

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<https://www.unco.edu/nhs/nursing/sigma-theta-tau/>

The mission of the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International is to support the learning, knowledge, and professional development of nurses committed to making a difference in health worldwide.



# **PhD Program Description, Admission, Outcomes, etc.**



UNIVERSITY OF  
NORTHERN COLORADO

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School of Nursing

# Description of the PhD Nursing Education Program

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## *Promoting excellence for teachers as scholars, in research, leadership and education*

The primary mission of the UNC PhD in nursing education is to establish leaders in nursing knowledge development and education. The program prepares the graduate to face future challenges in the discipline through education and advancement of nursing science. Education at the doctoral level builds upon the foundational content acquired at the baccalaureate and master's levels, emphasizing the relationships between philosophy, theory, research, education, policy, and practice. The program draws upon the educational mission of the university at large utilizing resources from disciplines across the university community. The program is committed to increasing the number of doctorally prepared nurses who are qualified to conduct research and assume faculty positions in educational institutions.

## PhD Program Outcomes

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1. Generate new knowledge to advance nursing science. (Research)
2. Advance the professional discipline of nursing. (Leadership)
3. Promote and disseminate innovative and evidence-based approaches in education for students from diverse backgrounds and settings. (Education)

*(See next page for specifics by year)*

## PhD Admissions Policy

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### **POLICY TITLE:**

## **PhD Admission Requirements and Process**

**Last Revision/Review Date:** 4/26/2024 NFSO  
**Previous Review Dates:** 11/16/04; 5/08 DWL; 10/2012 LGT; 11/14/14 GLT; 10/21/15 GLT; 4/29/2022 NFSO; 10/7/2022 NFSO;  
12/1/2023 NFSO  
**Original Policy Date:** 11/16/04  
**Sponsoring Committee(s):** Graduate Leadership Team

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### **DESCRIPTION:**

Requirements for admission into the PhD in Nursing Education program include the following:

1. A bachelor's degree or a master's degree (direct – entry/prelicensure program) from an ACEN, CNEA or CCNE accredited institution with a major in nursing.
2. A master's degree in nursing from an ACEN, CNEA or CCNE accredited institution is preferred. Applicants with a master's or doctorate in a healthcare related field will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
3. Current, unencumbered licensure as a registered nurse (licensure outside of the United States is acceptable).
4. Meet Graduate School Requirements for admission.
5. A minimum grade point average of 3.0 at the master's level.
6. Two letters of reference from former faculty or colleagues with a doctoral degree.
7. A statement of career goals.
8. One to two years of teaching experience recommended, but not required, prior to program enrollment.
9. Sample of written scholarly work, project, or publication in which the applicant was the sole or primary contributor.
10. A personal interview may be required.
11. A current CV or resume.

**PROCEDURE:**

1. A PhD admission team will be invited by GLT each academic year.
2. Application to the PhD program will occur each spring semester, by a date designated by GLT early in fall semester.
3. Applications will be collected and stored on a designated SON SharePoint site for access by the PhD admission team.
4. Members of the PhD admission team will review/screen applicants and score on a rubric based on the above criteria individually.
5. After individual review, the PhD admission team will meet face-to-face to discuss and rank applicants.
6. The PhD admission team will determine who to offer program admission and an alternate list.
7. The program coordinator will work with the program management specialist for graduate programs to notify all applicants of their acceptance, placement on an alternate list, or declination.

## YEAR ONE (1)

First Fall	First Spring	First Summer
NURS 703 - Philosophical Underpinnings of Nursing Science (3)	NURS 711 - Advanced Theory and Knowledge Development in Nursing (3)	NURS 724 - Design, Methods and Analysis in Health Care Research, Part II (3)
NURS 790 – Doctoral Research Colloquium (3)	NURS 723 - Design, Methods and Analysis in Health Care Research, Part I (3)	PSY 681 - Cognition and Instruction I (3)

### EXPECTED/RECOMMENDED OUTCOMES AT END OF YEAR 1

**Personal Goal Setting:**

- Develop personal goals for each year of the PhD program and beyond
- Identify potential dissertation topic and theoretical framework to guide dissertation (Note: this can change!)

**Program Outcome 1: Research/Scholarship benchmarks:**

- Reflect on the relationship between theory and research
- Demonstrate awareness of opportunities for scholarly presentations, networking, by noting appropriate conferences, attendance if feasible, for example, Nurse Educator of the Rockies conference or similar
- Beginning preparation for comps
  - Develop system for filing course materials/materials for comprehensive exam review (e.g., leadership, research, and education) and dissertation focus

**Program Outcome 2: Leadership benchmarks:**

- Guidelines and handbooks:
  - Develop familiarity with Graduate School website, deadlines, location of forms, and dissertation manual
  - Review PhD handbook, including initial knowledge of expectations for success, comprehensive exam procedures, and dissertation options

**Program Outcome 3: Scholarship of teaching benchmarks:**

- Writing, searching and formatting:
  - Use RefWorks, or other system at their university, for citations; identify APA strengths and weaknesses
  - Conduct focused keyword searches in at least two UNC databases, seeking consultation from UNC librarian and PhD faculty, as needed
  - Identify writing supports within and outside UNC

**If alternative dissertation format planned:**

Identify one article by end of year one that might be developed from course projects. Consult with PhD Program Coordinator and faculty if this is of interest to you.

## YEAR TWO (2)

Second Fall	Second Spring	Second Summer
NURS 741 - Evidence-Based Teaching (3)	NURS 760 - Advanced Nursing Curriculum Design and Program Evaluation (3)	NURS 702 - Advanced Concepts of Vulnerable Underserved Populations (3)
SRM 700 - Advanced Research Methods (3)	SRM 680 - Introduction to Qualitative Research (3)	NURS 780 – The Professorial Role in Nursing Education (3)

### EXPECTED/RECOMMENDED OUTCOMES AT END OF YEAR 2

#### Personal Goal Setting:

- Assess and review Year 1 personal goals and revise as needed
- ⊖ Continue refining dissertation topic and specific research questions
- ⊖ Preparation for comprehensive exam; adding to comp and dissertation files, self-study.

#### Program Outcome 1: Research/Scholarship benchmarks

- Refine potential dissertation topic
- Discuss dissertation topic and methods ideas with PhD faculty and PhD Program Director
- Consider potential committee members from UNC as a whole and from the School of Nursing
- Submit abstract for poster or podium presentation for professional conference (notify PhD program coordinator of acceptances!)

#### Program Outcome 2: Leadership benchmarks

- Continue to review guidelines and handbooks
- Review Graduate School deadlines/procedures for final year of classes
- Familiarize self with elective possibilities, talk over with PhD Program Coordinator or Research Advisor

#### Program Outcome 3: Scholarship of teaching benchmarks

- Preparation for comprehensive exam; adding to comp and dissertation files, self-study.
- Apply growing body of knowledge regarding the scholarship of teaching to educational practice through application in work setting and scholarship activities
- Writing skills
  - Continue to develop writing and APA skills (for example, gaining skills in creating persuasive, clearly written documents such as proposals, presentations (PowerPoint and other), grant submission, abstract, etc.), seeking consultation from PhD faculty if additional resources are needed

#### If alternative dissertation format planned:

- Complete draft of Article 1
- Identify potential Article 2 from Year 2 classes; draft initial thoughts

## YEAR THREE (3)

Third Fall	Third Spring	Third Summer
NURS 707 - Leadership in Health Policy (3)	NURS 730 – The Scholarship of Teaching and Practice in Nursing Education (2)	NURS 777 – Advanced Qualitative Research Methods in Nursing (3)
NURS 710 – Measurement of Nursing Student Outcomes (3)	**ELECTIVE (3)	NURS 797 - Doctoral Proposal Research (2 (w/ Research Advisor)
NURS 797 - Doctoral Proposal Research (1 (w/ Cohort)	NURS 797 - Doctoral Proposal Research (1 (w/ Cohort)	

### EXPECTED/RECOMMENDED OUTCOMES AT END OF YEAR 3

#### Personal Goal Setting:

- Re-assess personal goals for Year 2 and revise as needed
- Draft ideas for a potential program of research related to topics of interest
- ⊖ Complete written comprehensive exam

#### Program Outcome 1: Research/Scholarship benchmarks

- Preparation for Comps
  - Finalize Research Advisor and Dissertation Committee
  - Schedule written comprehensive exam in Spring with Research Advisor and Program Coordinator (noting comps review panel meeting in that semester)
  - Following success with written comprehensive, schedule oral comprehensive exam with committee and Graduate School
- Finalize dissertation topic and method
  - Develop timeline for Year 4
  - Proposal:
    - Complete/update (if needed) CITI certification for IRB approval and dissertation work
    - Complete draft of proposal—Chap 1, 2 and 3 (or alternative format)
    - Plan site(s) approvals, IRBs or MOU's if needed
    - Schedule proposal defense with committee and Graduate School
  - Submit abstract for podium presentation for professional conference (notify PhD program coordinator of acceptances!)
  - Explore funding mechanisms for dissertation research

#### If alternative dissertation

- Complete draft of Article 2

#### Program Outcome 2: Leadership benchmarks

- Continue adherence to guidelines and handbooks
- Review Graduate School deadlines/procedures for final year of classes/dissertation progress

#### Program Outcome 3: Scholarship of teaching benchmarks

- Continue to add to dissertation files
- Continue to apply growing body of knowledge regarding the scholarship of teaching to educational practice through activities in work setting, presentation and scholarship
- Writing skills
  - Continue to develop writing and APA skills, seeking consultation from PhD faculty and Research Advisor if additional resources are needed
  - Plan on a submission for publication and/or a grant proposal

## YEAR FOUR (4)

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Fourth Fall	Fourth Spring	Fourth Summer
NURS 799 - Doctoral Dissertation	NURS 799 - Doctoral Dissertation	NURS 799 - Doctoral Dissertation

### EXPECTED/RECOMMENDED OUTCOMES AT END OF YEAR 4....AND BEYOND

#### Program Outcome 1: Research/Scholarship benchmarks

- Schedule proposal defense with committee members
- Draft timeline for completion of dissertation research including Graduate School deadlines
  - Conduct research
  - Schedule dissertation defense
- Schedule final defense with committee members and Graduate School

#### Program Outcome 2: Leadership benchmarks

- With Research Advisor, comply with requirements for dissertation credits
- Assure adherence to policies and procedures for graduation
- Graduate and Celebrate!

#### If alternative dissertation

- Submit article(s)

#### Program Outcome 3: Scholarship of teaching benchmarks

- Draft publications
- Continue to apply growing body of knowledge regarding the scholarship of teaching to educational practice
- Consider nurse educator career planning
- Submit abstracts for presentation at professional conferences
- Notify Research Advisor/Grad Management Specialist of publication/presentation

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\* The distribution of the required 12 credit hours of NURS 799 are scheduled in consultation with your Research Advisor. An additional 3-credit hours may be taken above the required 12 credits if needed to complete the dissertation.

**You must register for at least 1 credit or pay the continuous enrollment fee the semester in which you graduate.**

\*\*Three (3) credits of electives are required; suggested scheduling is presented. Elective options may include but are not limited to: NEXus Courses; UNC courses such as NURS 679, PSY 500, PSY 644, SRM 660, SRM 687, TIP 641, TIP 643, ELPS 601, ELPS 604, ELPS 605, ELPS 608, ELPS 665

\*\*\**Doctoral students have up to 8 years in total to complete their program.*





# **Expected Student Performance and Academic and Progression Related Policies**



UNIVERSITY OF  
NORTHERN COLORADO

School of Nursing

## Program Progression

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Students are expected to progress according to the Program of Study provided by their advisor. Any exceptions must be discussed and approved by the advisor.

For Doctoral students, requirements must be successfully completed within eight (8) years of first registration following admission to the program. However, if a student has approval to count work taken before first enrollment after admission, the student must complete the degree within eight calendar years beginning with the earliest work counted in the program.

Please note that program time limits are adjusted to reflect approval of transfer credit or unclassified hours.

*See Progression in Graduate Programs Policy in the next section for details.*

Please see the below link for further detailed information.

<http://unco.smartcatalogiq.com/en/current/Graduate-Catalog/General-Information/Policies-and-Procedures/Grading>

## Nursing Education Exchange (NEXus) Partnership

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NEXus is a consortium of institutions that offer online doctoral programs in Nursing that provide opportunities for and encourage students to take courses from other member institutions to further enrich their educational experiences. All students pay the current NEXus Common Price which is determined each academic year. As of 2023-2024, rates are \$865/credit which is inclusive of tuition and related fees.

NEXus courses may be taken as electives in the PhD program with the approval of your advisor. To view the courses offered in a particular semester, visit the website at [www.winexus.org](http://www.winexus.org).

Consult with Dr. Darcy Copeland ([darcy.copeland@unco.edu](mailto:darcy.copeland@unco.edu)), Coordinator, PhD program, for approval and final course selection. To see the specific procedure for requesting a seat with NEXus: <https://extended.unco.edu/current/graduate/nursing-ed-phd-ol/nexus.aspx>

Courses taken through NEXus are not considered transfer credit. However, a form indicating that the NEXUS course is designated as an official elective must be completed at the time of enrollment in the NEXUS course to add it to your official plan of study; once completed, an official transcript must be sent to UNC. A request for the transcript must be submitted by the student to the offering institution.

## Course Syllabi

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Each nursing syllabus is the student-teacher contract for that specific course. The course objectives are your guide for achieving the expectations of the course. The faculty will carefully explain the requirements of each course during the first week of the semester. If you have questions or need clarification, please make an appointment with the course faculty member early in the semester.

Evaluation practices (grading) may vary from course to course or semester to semester. Please be sure you understand the evaluation policy.

Standard UNC Syllabus Statements can be found at: [https://www.unco.edu/center-enhancement-teaching-learning/teaching-resources/syllabus\\_statements.aspx](https://www.unco.edu/center-enhancement-teaching-learning/teaching-resources/syllabus_statements.aspx)

## Course and Faculty Evaluations

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Near the end of each semester students will receive an email to complete course and faculty evaluations in Canvas. Students' timely completion of the evaluations each semester is an extremely important part of our accreditation process and assists in our program review including faculty and curriculum. This is a great opportunity to share both positive and constructive feedback that can be utilized to shape the nursing student experience for you as well as future cohorts. Students may have multiple faculty members assigned to a course, but only an evaluation for an instructor they interacted with is requested. All evaluations are anonymous and confidential.

## Tuition Rates

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Tuition and fee rates are subject to approval by the UNC Board of Trustees each summer and are subject to change. They are posted by Extended Campus on each program's page and Extended Campus' general cost page. Tuition rates are effective during the subsequent Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters.

<https://www.unco.edu/costs/extended-campus.aspx>

## Students' Dishonest Acts

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Students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty and are encouraged to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct (<https://www.unco.edu/dean-of-students/pdf/Student-Code-of-Conduct.pdf>). Cheating, plagiarism, illegitimate possession and disposition of examinations, alteration, forgery, or falsification of official records or documents and similar acts or the attempt to engage in such acts are grounds for disciplinary action. This action can include any of the following, in addition to any University disciplinary action:

- A failing grade for an assignment.
- A failing grade for a class.
- Required remediation.
- Dismissal from the program.

The following information is provided to clarify the act of plagiarism as this is considered to be a dishonest act and is UNC's approved definition of plagiarism found in the Graduate Catalog:

*Plagiarism is the act of appropriating the written, artistic, or musical composition of another, or portions thereof; or the ideas, language, or symbols of same and passing them off as the product of one's own mind. Plagiarism includes not only the exact duplication of another's work but also the lifting or a substantial or essential portion thereof.*

*Regarding written work in particular, direct quotations, statements which are a result of paraphrasing or summarizing the work of another, and other information which is not considered common knowledge must be cited or acknowledged, often by listing author(s) and year of the cited source. Quotation marks or a proper form of indentation shall be used to indicate all direct quotes.*

*As long as a student adequately acknowledges their sources and as long as there is no reason to believe that the student has attempted to pose as the originator, the student will not be charged with plagiarism even though the form of the acknowledgement may be unacceptable. However, students should be aware that most professors require certain forms of acknowledgement, and some may evaluate a project on the basis of form."*

(<http://unco.smartcatalogiq.com/en/current/Graduate-Catalog/General-Information/Policies-and-Procedures/Plagiarism>).

TurnItIn is used in Canvas courses for submission of written work including written comprehensive exams.

For additional information, refer to the [Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Seventh Edition \(2020\) \(apa.org\)](#).

## Academic and Progression Related Policies

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*(See the following pages for Academic and Progression Related Policies)*

**POLICY TITLE:**

**Nursing Licensure Policy for Post-licensure Students**

**Last Revision/Review Date:** 1/26/18 NFSO  
**Previous Review Dates:** 11/13 ULT; 1/19/18 ULT  
**Original Policy Date:** 11/22/2013  
**Sponsoring Committee(s):** School Leadership Team

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**DESCRIPTION:**

Post Licensure students must have an unencumbered valid nursing license when admitted and maintain the license throughout the program.

**PROCEDURE:**

1. Any change in the status of the student's license must be reported to the School of Nursing immediately, by the student.
2. A license that has been suspended or revoked will prevent the students from progressing in the program.
3. Once a suspended or revoked license has been reinstated the student may apply for readmission.
4. Failure to report a change in license status will result in dismissal from the School of Nursing.

**POLICY TITLE:****SON Grading Policy****Last Revision/Review Date:** 2/18/2022 - NFSO**Previous Review Dates:****Original Policy Date:** 2/18/2022**Sponsoring Committee(s):** School Leadership team

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**DESCRIPTION:**

The SON will employ the following grading policy and procedure to ensure consistency in course grading, standardize grading schema across programs, and assure students are meeting professional standards and program outcomes.

**PROCEDURE:**

1. The School of Nursing grading policy for all programs will not use +/- as per the university grading policy outlined in the respective catalog.
2. Each course syllabus will outline the grading policy under the section titled "Method of Evaluation".
3. The method of evaluation statement will also include information on requirements for passing the course. For the undergraduate programs, the statement will read: *"A grade of "C" or higher ("S" for clinical courses) is required to pass this course"*. For graduate programs the statement will read: *"A "B" or higher ("S" for clinical courses) is required to pass this course"*.
4. A statement will be included for all SON course syllabi regarding completion of course assignments/requirements. The statement will read *"Students must complete all course assignments/requirements as outlined in the syllabus"*.
5. The grading policy will be communicated to students at program orientation, in the student handbooks, and each course syllabus.

**POLICY TITLE:**

**Student Concerns**

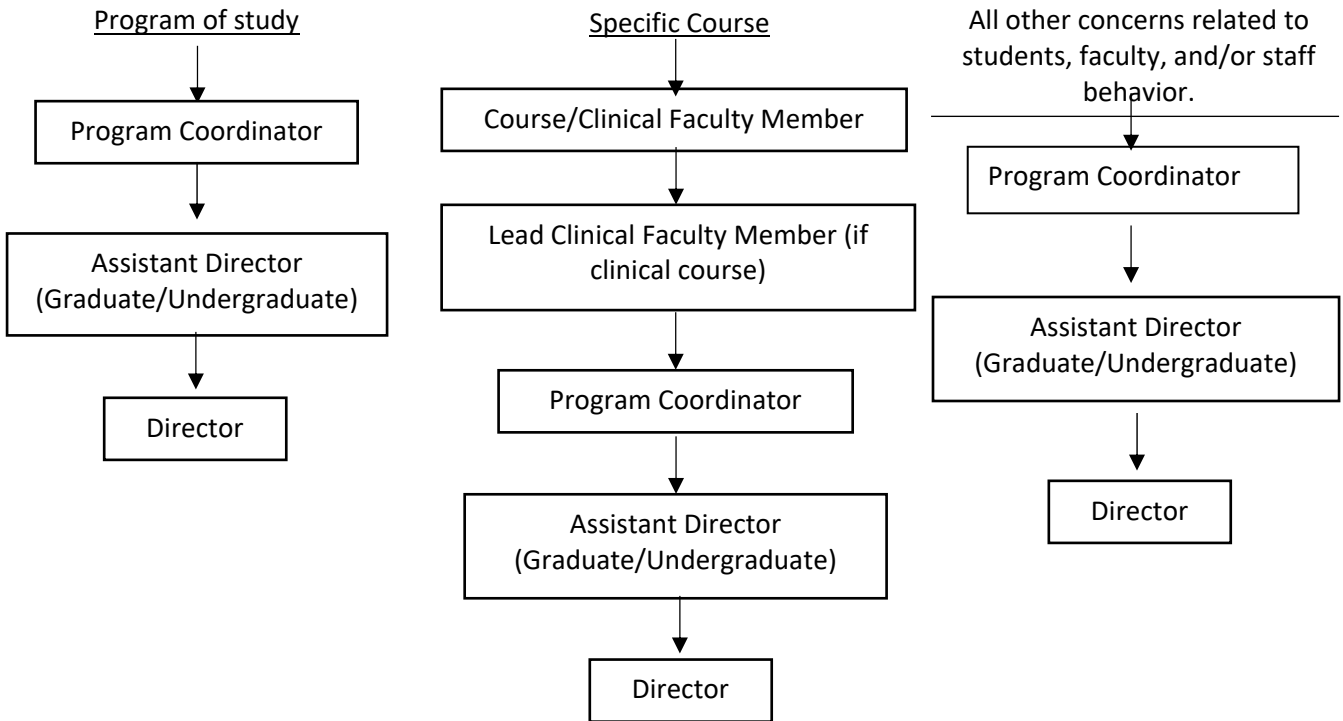
**Last Revision/Review Date:** 12/3/21  
**Previous Review Dates:** 4/00 SB; 5/08 DWL; 12/16 FH; 11/19 FH  
**Original Policy Date:** 4/1/00  
**Sponsoring Committee(s):** School Leadership Team

**DESCRIPTION:**

The SON encourages students to voice their concerns about their nursing educational program and/or academic procedures.

**PROCEDURE:**

1. Depending on the nature of the concern, a student is encouraged to reach out to the specific faculty member identified in the chart below to report the concern and receive guidance about how to address the issue (including steps to initiate a formal complaint or grievance).
2. If the concern is directed toward the faculty member identified as their point of contact, the student is then directed to the next person in the chart, and so on.



3. The student with concerns regarding an academic decision or other formal grievance are directed to appropriate Assistant Director to provide the student information on the SON Academic Appeals Policy, or UNC Board Policy Manual, and assist the student with next steps

**POLICY TITLE:****Students' Dishonest Acts****Last Revision/Review Date:** 4/2/21 NFSO**Previous Review Dates:** 5/91 SCB w/ University Counsel; 10/31/93 VK; 4/98 LC; 11/27/01 DP; 12/09 ULT/GLT/NFSO, 11/30/18 GLT/NFSO; 12/2020 GLT/NFSO; 1/2021 ULT**Original Policy Date:** 2/21/86**Sponsoring Committee(s):** School Leadership Team**DESCRIPTION:**

Dishonesty violates the professional code of ethics. Students are expected to conduct themselves according to Standards of Professional Behavior and Practice. Examples of dishonesty include but are not limited to the following:

1. Taking an exam or writing a paper for another student.
2. Copying a few sentences for a paper without appropriate referencing to credit the source; See University definitions of Plagiarism.
3. Copying or sharing information from answer sheets and/or care plans without doing the work independently.
4. Sharing information regarding a course exam with anyone (even classmates). The exams should not be printed, copy/pasted, screen captured, etc.
5. Leading one to believe you have completed a required assignment or activity when indeed you have not
6. Fabricating data.
7. Stealing school, agency, or client property.

Students will be held accountable for their dishonesty.

**PROCEDURE:**Student Responsibilities:

1. Students shall recognize or value that academic honesty is highly correlated with professional nursing ethics. Students are responsible and accountable for their behavior.
2. Students will comply with testing administration procedures and other course expectations.
3. Students will physically focus directly on their own work during examinations.

Faculty Responsibilities:

1. Faculty will provide student handbooks that direct students to university policies.
2. Faculty will use measures to minimize the opportunity for cheating/dishonest acts. Such measures may include seating arrangements during testing, assuring all test booklets are accounted for and proctoring an examination actively.
3. Faculty will include the Academic Integrity statement in all course syllabi.

Reporting of Dishonest Acts:

1. Students should report their observations or knowledge of dishonest acts to the faculty involved. Such reports are confidential.
2. Faculty who suspects, observe, or have knowledge of a student's dishonest acts shall follow guidelines below, depending on the circumstances:
  - a. Refrain from accusing the student of cheating in front of other students.
  - b. Meet with the student at the earliest opportunity to discuss facts available to the faculty regarding the dishonest act. Ask for the student's perceptions of the incident.
  - c. If the faculty believes a dishonest act has definitely occurred, the faculty shall notify the respective Assistant Director or Program Coordinator and the student in writing. The student shall also be informed regarding School of Nursing Grievance Procedures by the faculty involved.



- d. A faculty member who is concerned that a student may have committed academic misconduct must submit a report to the Dean of Students describing the alleged academic misconduct.

Sanctions:

1. The course instructor may assign a grade of zero for the assignment or exam and/or may result in failure of the course.
2. The student may receive from the Assistant Director a letter regarding their disciplinary probation in the School of Nursing.
3. In the event of a second incident of dishonesty of any kind, the student may be terminated from the nursing program.
4. In the event of proof of destruction or stealing of property, the faculty may notify campus police and appropriate law enforcement agencies.

Due Process Procedures:

1. Student will meet directly with faculty involved with the behavior at issue to discuss recommended outcomes and /or sanctions.
2. Upon report of an incident of dishonesty:

**Undergraduate student:** The Program Coordinator will be made aware of the exact issues/charges being made. The Program Coordinator may recommend sanctions or that the student's program of study be terminated.

**Graduate Student:** The Graduate Leadership Team (GLT) may recommend sanctions or that the student's program of study be terminated.

3. If termination is recommended, this decision is subject to a formal hearing before the University Hearing Office/Panel. See the UNC Student Handbook.

**POLICY TITLE:**

**Academic Appeals**

**Last Revision/Review Date:** 10/18/19 ULT/NFSO  
**Previous Review Dates:** 9/92, 2/20/98 JR; 12/01; 2/07; 12/6/10 NFSO; 11/12 GLT; 10/21/15 GLT / 2-2016 NFSO; 10/18/19 ULT/NFSO  
**Original Policy Date:** 11/12/2014  
**Sponsoring Committee(s):** School Leadership Team

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**DESCRIPTION:**

The purpose of the procedures outlined below is to provide the student with guidance for appealing an academic decision that they consider arbitrary, capricious, or contrary to university policy, which are the reasons acceptable to the University for appealing. Before utilizing these procedures, or between any of the appeals steps outlined below, the student is encouraged to seek advice from their academic advisor. It is further recommended that attempts at mediation between student and instructor be pursued.

Procedures for implementation of this policy are based on UNC Board Policy, specifically Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure (Policies 2-1-201 - 2-1-204). The student must follow the Steps for Appeal as set forth in 2-1-204 of UNC Board Policy.

**PROCEDURE:**

1. The student is encouraged to set up an informal conference with the instructor involved for the purpose of trying to resolve a grievance before the initiation of the formal academic appeals process.
2. If no resolution is reached in Step 1, the student may then move forward with a formal appeal. The student is recommended to meet with the Assistant Director of their respective program to discuss the situation and be advised on the formal appeal process set forth in University Board Policy (Policies 2-1-201 - 2-1-204).
3. The formal appeal must be initiated in writing to the faculty member within 21 working days after the end of the semester or session in which the action occurred.
4. If the problem remains unresolved, the student may request a conference and submit a written appeal to the SON Director within 7 working days from the response from the faculty member. The Director will confer with the faculty member whose action is being appealed. The formal appeal process, as set forth in Board Policy, will then be followed for the remaining steps of the process.

**POLICY TITLE:**

## **Progression in Graduate Programs**

**Last Revision/Review Date:** 10/13/23 NFSO  
**Previous Review Dates:** 1/13/17 KH; 2/3/17 NFSO; 10/18/19 GLT  
**Original Policy Date:** 3/9/15  
**Sponsoring Committee(s):** Graduate Leadership Team

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**DESCRIPTION:**

Successful completion of the graduate nursing programs requires a minimum grade of 'B' in each course, satisfactory grade in each clinical course, and completion of applicable graduate school requirements (e.g. comprehensive exams, proposal and final dissertation/DNP scholarly project defenses). The student will not be able to complete any additional course work in the clinical portion of their program of study until the clinical course in question has been successfully completed. The student may not graduate without all of these requirements met satisfactorily.

**PROCEDURE:**

**Unsatisfactory course work and retake procedures:**

One didactic or clinical course may be repeated if the grade is lower than a 'B' or Unsatisfactory. The graduate comprehensive exams (written/oral) allow for one retake. The repeated course will be recorded on the student's transcript and both letter grades will count towards the cumulative grade point average. If the student does not receive a 'B' or higher in a didactic course or Satisfactory grade in a clinical course on the repeat attempt, progression in the graduate program is not adequate and program termination will be recommended by GLT to the Graduate School.

A second grade below a "B" or "Unsatisfactory" in any additional course will be cause for program termination recommendation.

If the student receives lower than a 'B' or Unsatisfactory in two courses in the same semester, then program termination will be recommended by GLT.

To appeal a grade, the student shall follow the academic appeals policy and procedure.

**Completion of dissertation and DNP Scholarly project credits:**

**PhD students:** Students must satisfactorily complete both Written AND Oral Comprehensive exams before enrolling in N799 Dissertation Credits. Students must also have completed 4 N797 credits. In the semester where the oral examination is planned, depending on readiness for dissertation proposal, one credit of N799 may be taken, based on consultation with the Research Advisor (RA). Students will work collaboratively with the RA regarding enrollment/spacing of N799 credits. Students may also enroll in 1 credits of N799 in the semester they are completing the written exam if all 4 N797 credits have been completed.

**DNP students:** Students must take N727 (DNP Scholarly Project Proposal) prior to registering for N798 (DNP Practicum) credit hours. Students must meet with the DNP Program Coordinator to discuss/request registration for ALL N798 credit hours. This discussion will include the specific number of credit hours of N798 that the student will be cleared for registration. Course overrides will be required to register for all N798 hours. DNP Students may request an exception and register for N727 and N798 hours in the same semester. Students will contact the DNP Coordinator with requests for exceptions to take N727 and N798 concurrently. The Written Comprehensive Exam may be completed during N727 enrollment. The Oral Comprehensive Exam (Final DNP Scholarly Project Defense) will ONLY be completed while actively registered for N798. The student will submit a timeline for completion of N798 credits.

**POLICY TITLE:**

**Incomplete Grade Policy (Graduate Students)**

**Last Revision/Review Date:** 12/1/17 NFSO  
**Previous Review Dates:**  
**Original Policy Date:** 11/15/17 GLT  
**Sponsoring Committee(s):** Graduate Leadership Team

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**DESCRIPTION:**

At the discretion of the instructor, a temporary grade of Incomplete "I" may be given if the student demonstrates an inability to complete the requirements of the course due to circumstances beyond the student's control that were not reasonably foreseeable.

**PROCEDURE:**

1. The student must request the I (incomplete) grade with justification of circumstances beyond their control.
2. A student must be passing the course at the time that an Incomplete is requested unless the instructor determines that there are extenuating circumstances to assign an Incomplete even if not passing the course.
3. The incomplete may be assigned up through the last week of the term, which includes finals week.
4. A contract must be completed, which is attached to this policy, to indicate outstanding assignments, a plan and a deadline for all course requirements to be completed. The instructor must submit to the department chair or school director, a written notice of the specific coursework to be completed before the final grade is determined as well as reasons for the Incomplete grade; a copy is kept in the school/department and one is provided to the student.
5. With a grade of "I", credits are not used to compute grade point average (GPA) and are not counted towards graduation.
6. When completing an Incomplete grade, the student does NOT register for the course a second time.
7. When the contract is successfully completed, the instructor of record must change the grade from I to the grade earned in the course, according to the grade change policy, submitting the grade change request form to the Office of the Registrar.
8. If the course requirements are not completed and the grade change form not received in the Office of the Registrar after a maximum of one year, the grade will be recorded on the academic record as a failing or unsatisfactory grade. Once the incomplete grade has rolled to failing/unsatisfactory, a further grade change will not be permitted.
9. Degrees will not be conferred upon students with outstanding "I" grades.

**POLICY TITLE:**

**Progress Review of Doctoral Students**

**Last Revision/Review Date:** 3/24/17 NFSO  
**Previous Review Dates:** 12/4/15 NFSO; 3/3/17 GLT  
**Original Policy Date:** 3/9/15  
**Sponsoring Committee(s):** Graduate Leadership Team

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**DESCRIPTION:**

Conforming with the Graduate School's policy to do an annual progress review for all doctoral students, the annual progress review's goal is to provide the doctoral student encouragement to continue in the program, provide remediation recommendations, or recommend termination. See UNC graduate catalog at <https://unco.smartcatalogiq.com/2016-2017/Graduate-Catalog/Program-Requirements/Doctoral-Degree-Requirements> - Review (2016-2017 catalog).

**PROCEDURE:**

**Student Role:** Each doctoral student will complete a self-evaluation each fall. The self-evaluation link, generated by the student services coordinator, will be sent to the doctoral students by their program coordinator 2 weeks before the end of the semester. Student failure to complete this review by the end of the semester may result in delay in program progression.

**Faculty Role:** The faculty for each doctoral course will complete an evaluation for each student through an evaluation link generated by the student services coordinator at the end of each semester when grades are submitted. The link will be forwarded to the faculty by the assistant director of graduate programs 2 weeks before the end of the semester.

**Program Coordinator Role:** The doctoral program coordinator will collate the results for each student to bring to the annual review meeting scheduled for the first Graduate Leadership Team (GLT) meeting each spring.

**Graduate Leadership Team (GLT) Role:** The GLT committee will review the faculty responses which include student grades and the student self-evaluations, and previous progress review summaries at a spring meeting before the graduate school due date. GLT's goal is to develop and provide a summary of the student's strengths and area(s) for improvement. Emphasis should be placed on acknowledging accomplishments and professional growth where appropriate. The program coordinator will send out the progress review summary letter to each doctoral student and place in their student file. If there are concerns about the student's progress/academic performance, the program coordinator will schedule a live conversation with the student about the issues at hand prior to the letter being sent.

**POLICY TITLE:**

## **Transfer Credit for Graduate Students**

**Last Revision/Review Date:** 10/13/23 NFSO

**Previous Review Dates:** 1/98 JR; 5/08 DWL; 12/08 GLT; 10/12 GLT; 10/26/14 GLT; 10/21/15 GLT; 1/23/17 GLT; 2/3/17 NFSO; GLT Review 4/2022

**Original Policy Date:** 11/16/2012

**Sponsoring Committee(s):** Graduate Leadership Team

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**DESCRIPTION:**

Transfer credit must be approved at the program level prior to submission to the Graduate School per Graduate School Procedure.

**PROCEDURE:**

In addition to University and Graduate School policies, the School of Nursing has the following policy:

1. Students wishing to transfer prior earned credits must identify those courses they wish to transfer into a program. Evaluation of courses for transfer will only occur after the student has been admitted into one of the SON graduate programs.
2. Credit for any transfer courses must first be approved by the program coordinator in consultation with faculty course experts.
3. Transfer courses without a nursing prefix (NURS), must be reviewed and approved by that respective department prior to transfer for equivalency. The SON Program Coordinator is responsible for initiating this process.
4. Per the UNC Graduate School policy, the minimum number of hours necessary for the Graduate School to confer a degree from UNC are as follows: Students must complete at least 50% of their graduate program credits at UNC, not including research, capstone, seminar, internship/externship/practicum, thesis, DNP scholarly project (N798), dissertation proposal (797), dissertation (799) and any credits graded with S/U (P/F).
5. It is the student's responsibility to follow the policies and procedures of the Graduate School to complete the transfer of credit to their UNC transcript. Please see the current Graduate Catalog for the full Transfer Policy and Graduate School website for current forms.

# Doctoral Committee and PhD Comprehensive Exams



UNIVERSITY OF  
NORTHERN COLORADO

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School of Nursing

## Doctoral Examinations

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There are two milestone examinations for all graduate students in the Doctoral Program of the School of Nursing. The School-administered Written Comprehensive Examination may be taken after successful completion of at least 36 hours of doctoral coursework and other requirements as outlined in the SON PhD Comprehensive Exams policy. Once the student successfully passes the written exam, they are eligible to complete the School-administered Oral Comprehensive Examination.

To schedule doctoral examinations, students must have a Doctoral Committee approved by the Graduate School.

## Doctoral Research Committee Specifications

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1. PhD students need a minimum of four committee members. Minimum requirements for the PhD committee include:
  - 1 research advisor from the student's doctoral program
  - 1 committee member from the student's program
  - 1 committee member either from the program or a related discipline
  - 1 faculty representative external to the program/discipline
2. The Research Advisor of the committee must hold Doctoral Research Endorsement Graduate Faculty appointment.
3. The UNC Faculty Representative must have at least a Graduate Faculty (GF) appointment in order to serve on the Research Committee (Dissertation Committee).
4. Committee members from a related discipline who are faculty members at UNC must have at least a Graduate Faculty (GF) appointment.
5. Committee members from outside of the University of Northern Colorado must be granted Graduate Faculty Equivalence from the Graduate School.
6. To officially establish the committee, the Request for Appointment of a Doctoral Committee (see below) must be completed and forwarded to the Graduate School. Note, if the committee composition changes, the student must submit a Request to Change a Doctoral Committee. The form should be sent to the Coordinator of the PhD program for signature and forwarded to the Graduate School.
7. There are policies guiding committee membership and process of appointment. Be sure to always refer to the Catalog for clarification as well as the policies on the Graduate School web site.
8. The Doctoral Research Committee must be approved by the Graduate School 2 weeks prior to scheduling Comprehensive Exams.

**Forms Needed for Committees and Exams:** <http://www.unco.edu/grad/forms/index.html>

- Appointment of Doctoral Committee
- Change to a Doctoral Committee
- Form to appoint outside Committee member
- Request for Oral Exam Form



POLICY TITLE:

## PhD Comprehensive Exams Policy

Last Revision/Review Date: 4/29/2022 NFSO  
Previous Review Dates: 1/11/16 VW/GLT; 4/12/18 GLT; 2/2019 GLT: 4/17/19 GLT; 11/15/19 GLT/GCO  
Original Policy Date: 5/1/2015  
Sponsoring Committee(s): Graduate Leadership Team

DESCRIPTION:

There are two milestone examinations for all graduate students in the Doctoral Program of the School of Nursing. The first examination may be taken after successful completion of at least 36 hours of doctoral coursework is the School-administered Comprehensive Written Examination. Once the student successfully passes the written exam, they are eligible for the second School-administered Oral Comprehensive Examination. Policy and procedure for the examinations are detailed in the graduate school catalog at <http://unco.smartcatalogiq.com/en/current/Graduate-Catalog/Program-Requirements/Doctoral-Degree-Requirements>. The format of each examination is outlined below.

### **Comprehensive Written Examinations**

The Comprehensive Written Examination is a broad-based, written examination covering the program content provided by required coursework. The purpose of the examination is for the student to demonstrate a comprehensive critical analysis and scholarly synthesis of content in the areas of: nursing theory/philosophy, nursing research methods, nursing pedagogy and leadership/policy. Passing the examination indicates that the student has acquired a suitable foundation for undertaking high level research in the discipline. These exams test for competency in the required courses.

**Procedures.** The written comprehensive examination is designed, administered and evaluated by the graduate faculty members of the School of Nursing. The Written Examination may not be taken until the **student** has provided evidence to the PhD Program Coordinator that they have:

- been granted regular admission to the degree program;
- filed an approved plan of study with the graduate school;
- completed at least 36 semester hours of work applicable toward the PhD degree and successfully completed all the required coursework (except electives and dissertation hours);
- passed all coursework with a grade of “B” or better in the doctoral program;
- has constituted a doctoral committee approved by the graduate school;
- obtained approval from the Dissertation Research Advisor to take the exam.
- submitted SON Request for Written Comprehensive Examination (In Handbook)

The student, in collaboration with the Research Advisor, is responsible for scheduling the date of the written examination and will submit the Request to Schedule the Written Comprehensive Examination to the PhD Program Coordinator. The doctoral student shall not have prior access to the written examination questions. The PhD Program Coordinator has the responsibility of compiling the questions for the written examination and posting the questions for the student, enabling the use of Turnitin, LLC., on Canvas.

Each semester there will be a scheduled review panel of three faculty members to review all written examinations within that semester. If the student wishes to take the examination over a holiday or interim session, a date mutually agreed upon by the student and Research Advisor will be determined, and the student will be informed of the timeline for providing feedback. The PhD Program Coordinator will receive the feedback from the Review Panel, will complete the documentation and then forward the materials to the Research Advisor and student.

The student will have one week (7 days) to respond to the assigned questions in no more than 20 pages total, excluding references. The student will then post the exam to the Canvas course (Nursing PhD Comprehensive Examinations) through the feature that is set up for each student in order to assess for plagiarism and appropriate citation. All responses to the exam questions must be typed using current APA format for text, citations and references. Papers will be evaluated for professional level writing skills including organization, clarity of thought, grammar, spelling, punctuation and APA formatting (the use of a running head is not necessary and be sure no identifiers are on the paper).

A review panel of three graduate nursing faculty members will be designated by the PhD Program Coordinator each semester to evaluate written comprehensive examination submissions that have been completed during the semester prior to the review panel meeting. The review panel will be blinded to the name of the student. Written feedback will be provided by the panel to the PhD Program Coordinator for recording and then sent to the Research Advisor who will summarize for the student. Written feedback will be provided to the student within one (1) week of the panel's decision. Written feedback to the student, using the evaluation rubric, will include suggestions for areas of focus for the oral examination, or areas in which the student's response could be strengthened. The PhD Coordinator will communicate the results to the student and the Research Advisor as having achieved "pass" or "fail" on the written exam. If the student fails the written comprehensive exam, they will be required to retake the written comprehensive exam. The number and focus of questions for the retake will be determined by the review panel based on the student's performance on the written comprehensive exam. Recommendations and suggested remediation will be provided to the student by the panel and Research Advisor.

***Please note that a retake of the entire examination (both questions) may not be scheduled during the same semester that the original examination was completed. Failure of the examination retake will result in the termination of the student's degree program. The remediation plan will be kept in the student file. The exam must be retaken within 1 year.***

Once the examination has been evaluated, the PhD Coordinator will send the results, and the original comprehensive examination document, to the Research Advisor (RA). The RA will return the signed results of the comprehensive exam form to the Graduate Program Management Specialist, who will forward the results to the Graduate School, copying the PhD Program Coordinator, indicating the outcome of the examination.

After passing the written comprehensive examination, each doctoral student must pass an oral comprehensive examination. *Permission for the oral comprehensive examination will not be released and the oral examination will not be authorized until the written examination report is filed with the Graduate School indicating that the student passed the written examination. The results of the written comprehensive examination and scheduling of the oral comprehensive exam must be communicated to the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to the date of the actual oral comprehensive examination.*

### **Comprehensive Oral Examinations**

The comprehensive oral examination requires full Dissertation Committee participation. The student is not required to be physically present on campus for this examination. Faculty may participate through a telephone or a virtual audiovisual conference as long as there is a host committee member present on campus. The student may be permitted to participate through a face to face technology medium as agreed upon by the Dissertation Research Advisor, the PhD Program Coordinator and the student.

The Oral Comprehensive Exam in the School of Nursing is an assessment of: the student's understanding of knowledge considered by the graduate nursing faculty to be necessary for doctoral level scholarship; the student's ability to communicate ideas in a clear, coherent, and organized manner; and student's readiness to begin the doctoral dissertation.

The purpose of the examination is to:

- A. Evaluate the student's knowledge and understanding of subject matter covered in the written examination (e.g. emphasis may be placed on topics in which the written comprehensive readers panel requested more information or clarification of student's responses to the written examination question(s).;
- B. Evaluate the student's knowledge and understanding of their research concept of interest;

- C. Provide feedback on student's presentation of a preliminary plan of research and;
- D. Evaluate the student's ability to respond, in a scholarly and professional manner, to a variety of verbal questions.

**Procedures.** The student shall not have prior access to specific oral examination questions. However, upon the student's request, general information about the type of questions to be asked may be given to the student by members of the Dissertation committee.

**The Doctoral Student** is responsible for:

- 1) contacting the dissertation committee and coordinating the date and time of the comprehensive oral examination in concert with the Dissertation Research Advisor;
- 2) completing the *Request to Schedule Doctoral Examination* form found on the Graduate School web site and send to the Dissertation Research Advisor (3 weeks ahead is recommended).  
<http://www.unco.edu/grad/forms/pdfs/ScheduleDocExam.pdf>
- 3) submitting to the committee two weeks prior to the scheduled exam:
  - a. a substantive presentation that will include
    - i. introduction of the phenomenon of interest for the student's research
    - ii. explanation of why this is an important area of study for nursing;
    - iii. a brief literature review;
    - iv. potential research questions;
    - v. recommendations of reader's panel
    - vi. a bibliography

The **Dissertation Research Advisor** will serve as chairperson of the oral comprehensive examination committee and will:

- 1) arrange a room for the oral examination, and
- 2) send copies of the written comprehensive exam and feedback to all committee members and
- 3) inform the PhD Program Coordinator for notification of Graduate School by forwarding a completed *Request to Schedule Doctoral Examination* form **two weeks (14 calendar days) before the exam date (3 weeks is recommended)**.

The Graduate School will approve and publicize the examination date, time and place in **UNC TODAY** or in any other appropriate university publication. All members of the UNC faculty are invited to attend and may ask questions of the student after the committee members finish their questioning. Other graduate students may also attend with permission from the chairperson of the committee.

The student's performance on the oral examination will be evaluated by the Dissertation Committee as:

**Pass:** If the student passes the examination, the program advisor must obtain the signatures of at least three-fourths of the committee members on the ***Report of the Oral Comprehensive Examination*** form and return the form to the Graduate School.

**Pass with Conditions:** If the student is evaluated as ***will pass if meets stated conditions***, the report stating the conditions must be signed and returned to the Graduate School. The student must subsequently meet the stated conditions. No student will be admitted to candidacy until at least three-fourths of the committee affirms that the conditions have been met. Conditions must be met within 1 year.

**Fail:** If the student's performance was unsatisfactory, the report must be signed and returned to the Graduate School. The student may retake the oral examination during a subsequent semester. At this point, the membership of the student's committee may not be altered without approval by the Graduate School. Failure to pass the oral retest or failure to meet conditions specified after an oral retest will terminate the student's degree program. If the student failed the examination with no retake permitted, the report must be signed and returned to the Graduate School. The Graduate School will terminate the degree program, and the student will not be permitted to do further work or take further examinations in that degree program.

**THE EVALUATION RUBRICS FOR BOTH THE WRITTEN AND ORAL EXAMINATION ARE ATTACHED.**

## Written Comprehensive Evaluation Tool PhD in Nursing Education

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluated by: \_\_\_\_\_

Question #: \_\_\_\_\_

PASS      FAIL

Criteria	Not acceptable; important aspects are neglected or unfinished	Acceptable; meets all requirements
Demonstrates critical analysis of the topic		
Engages in comprehensive, focused discussion of the topic thoroughly integrating appropriate and relevant concepts		
Integrates literature from a variety of sources that are relevant and germane to the topic being examined		
Demonstrates an in-depth knowledge of current issues relevant to questions		
Reviews the pertinent literature on the topic of the presented question(s)		
Avoids over-generalizing or otherwise arriving at conclusions that exceed findings		
Qualifies statements that are speculative or that apply to narrow circumstances		
Answered all aspects of the question		
<b>Rhetorical Aspects</b>		
Achieves general cohesion of ideas		
Creates a logical text structure		
<b>Technical Aspects</b>		
Uses correct spelling and punctuation		
Employs proper grammar and usage		
Adheres to APA formatting, citation, and reference style		

**Comments:**

**Please indicate topics/questions/issues the student should address at the oral comprehensive exam:**

## ORAL Comprehensive Evaluation Tool PhD in Nursing Education

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluated by: \_\_\_\_\_

PASS                  FAIL

CRITERIA	Not acceptable; important aspects are neglected or unfinished	Acceptable; meets all requirements
Provides a PowerPoint overview of the written comprehensive exam with reference list.		
Clearly articulates and responds to the recommendations of the reader's panel.		
Presentation of requested topics reflects accurate, adequate, and in-depth knowledge while citing examples from coursework and/or literature.		
<b>RHETORICAL ASPECTS</b>		
Achieves general cohesion of ideas.		
Uses the language of the discipline in a competent and informed manner.		
Communicates ideas in a clear, coherent and organized manner.		
<b>TECHNICAL ASPECTS</b>		
Uses correct spelling and punctuation.		
Employs proper grammar and usage.		
Creates a presentation using modalities that demonstrate competence in professional dissemination of information.		
Adheres to APA formatting, citation and reference style.		
<b>OVERALL PERFORMANCE ON ORAL COMPREHENSIVE EXAM</b> <i>Understands knowledge considered necessary for doctoral level scholarship in the following domains:</i>		
Theory		
Research		
Leadership		
Education		
Readiness to begin doctoral dissertation		

**Comments:**

## Written Comprehensive Exam: Preparation Hints

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The Written Comprehensive exam is an opportunity to demonstrate your ability to synthesize a wide range of information from the discipline and your informed thoughts and opinions about important issues in nursing and nursing education.

For the exam you will be preparing a response to two complex questions over a 7-day time period. The questions will be posted when your examination starts as determined by you and your Research Advisor (dissertation committee chair). Each question will reflect an integration of the School of Nursing program outcomes.

To answer the two questions, you are encouraged to use information from the variety of courses you have taken through your program at UNC. The primary strategy related to studying or remediating content knowledge is the organization and review of course materials and additional readings. There are several ways to do this – a filing system and annotated bibliographies are suggested. Students need a broad review of course material to be able to demonstrate their synthesis and application of knowledge in written comps. If you don't have time during the semesters of coursework to make connections between various aspects of the content, it will be important to make time for that before you attempt the written comps.

A number of students have requested sample questions, which are available to you on the PhD Canvas site, *PhD Nsg Students\_Supp*, in the "Module" entitled *PhD Comprehensive examinations*. The assessment form that faculty readers use is included in this handbook, and you can use that for peer review. Of note also, you will see that some of the past questions were clearly specific content focused whereas, for the last several years the questions are more integrative.

One final suggestion is to proactively use an elective to prepare for comps. For example, some students have indicated that taking an additional research methods course was helpful for the integration and synthesis of research content, and of course could be very helpful to support your dissertation study design and implementation.

Some students have reported that test anxiety was a concern, and if so, it is a good idea to develop some strategies for managing that before you take written comps. You must be organized and able to think well for long stretches of that 7-day period, and too much anxiety impairs thought processes.

When grading the exam, the graduate faculty will be looking at your ability to **synthesize** information you have covered throughout your program and your ability to write clearly and concisely. Each question will be evaluated on content, critical thinking skill, overall writing style, and synthesis. Sometimes, students have had difficulty with depth and clarity in answering the questions posed. Make sure that your ideas and statements are connected throughout your paper and that you do not have any loose ends.

Finally, you are required to write the exam using proper APA format, citations, and references. It would be very helpful to review these specifics prior to the exam if needed. Some students find it helpful to have an MS Word document, or use a citation program, with references ready (in proper APA format), so you can easily select and add the applicable ones to your comprehensive exam reference pages after the writing is completed.

We wish you all the best and hope that our efforts to provide you information about the comprehensive and past questions for preparation does not overwhelm you, but instead...facilitates your success.

**Request to Schedule the  
WRITTEN Comprehensive Examination - PhD Program**

**\*\*Student, request this form from your Research Advisor\*\***

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

TO:

Program Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Research Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

FROM:

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

Last 4 of Bear No: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Bear Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I have reviewed the School of Nursing policy regarding the Written Comprehensive Exam

\_\_\_\_\_ I have filed the paperwork/form with the Graduate School and Research Advisor appointing my doctoral committee. The following individuals have agreed to serve on my doctoral committee:

Name and Email of Committee Members

**Dates for examination (7-day period):**

Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_  PST,  MST,  CST,  EST

End Date: \_\_\_\_\_ End Time: \_\_\_\_\_  PST,  MST,  CST,  EST

**Comments or special arrangements requested by student:**

Research Advisor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

PhD Program Coordinator Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_





# **PhD Dissertation Documents and Policies**

(Proposal, Defense, and Submission)



UNIVERSITY OF  
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# Research Proposal and Dissertation

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A dissertation proposal and final dissertation should be developed pertaining to a significant topic in the student's major and is required of all PhD students. The dissertation proposal must be presented to the student's committee and the Graduate School for approval prior to engaging in data collection. IRB approval is also required prior to beginning data collection. Students in the School of Nursing PhD program have the option of writing a traditional dissertation or using the Nursing discipline specific alternative format. This decision should be made in consultation with the student's dissertation chair.

When the chair and the student feel the proposal is ready for defense, the student schedules a time and day with the full committee to defend the proposal. The student should send an electronic copy (or hard copy if faculty prefers) of the proposal at least 2 weeks prior to the defense. The chair will assist with scheduling of a room. Per the Graduate School policy, *"Attendance at Doctoral Examinations Doctoral students' oral comprehensive, proposal and final dissertation/capstone defense examinations require the attendance of the student and all committee members, including the faculty representative, external and honorary members. Attendance, for the purpose of this policy, is defined as either a physical/in-person presence on campus or an electronic presence (e.g. telephone/conference call, video conferencing [Teams®, Zoom®] or other online meeting platform."*

The student must bring to the proposal defense the **Proposal Title Page for Doctoral Dissertation Proposal** using the current form found on the Graduate School web site (see link #2 below). The committee members, upon successful completion of the defense, will sign this title page. The student must send the following forward to the Graduate School: a final copy (in Word or PDF format) including any required revisions; the signed title page for Doctoral Dissertation Proposal, the Verification of Research Subject Compliance form along with the IRB or IACUC approval if applicable.

Approval of the dissertation proposal establishes the expectations for the final dissertation and assures agreement among the committee with the student's methods and research strategy prior to proceeding. The proposal defense allows the committee to introduce required changes or additions to a student's proposed project while changes are still possible. Once the committee approves the proposal and IRB approval is given, no changes may be made to the methods and procedures of the study without another review.

When the Research Advisor and the student feel the dissertation is ready for defense, the student completes the Request to Schedule a Doctoral Examination form. This request must be sent to the Graduate School at least 2 weeks prior to the defense. The dissertation defense must be held at least one semester after the proposal defense. The student schedules the defense with the full committee who must all be present either in person or by distance technology. The Research Advisor will assist in scheduling the room. The student should be aware of the Graduate School calendar regarding deadline dates for defense and filing of completed dissertation.

Upon successful completion of the dissertation defense, the committee signs the **Signature Page for the Doctoral Dissertation**. A sample copy is located in the Dissertation Manual but be sure it is the most current version of the form from the grad school website. The form will not be signed until the committee accepts all changes. Submission of the final copy to the Graduate School is the student's responsibility.

Please visit the following links for deadlines, forms, formatting, and other resources/information:

1. Dissertation Checklist: <http://www.unco.edu/graduate-school/student-resources/current-students/thesis-capstone-dissertation-checklist.aspx>
2. Dissertation Resources: <http://www.unco.edu/graduate-school/student-resources/current-students/thesis-capstone-dissertation-resources.aspx>
3. Dissertation Proposal Process and Title Signature page: <http://www.unco.edu/graduate-school/pdf/thesis-capstone-dissertation/Dissertation-Proposal-Process-and-Title-Signature-page.pdf>

## Preparation for the Dissertation and Expectations of the Research Advisor

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Preparation for the dissertation can begin upon admission to the PhD program. While the student will not formally begin the dissertation process until well into the coursework, the foundation can be laid early on.

It is suggested that students begin early in the program developing a “phenomenon of interest” which can be fleshed out at many different junctures along the journey. The phenomenon will drive the research question, which will drive the methodology. Coursework (specifically electives) and projects can and should be focused and directed toward this path.

It is also a good idea to begin early on to “get to know” the faculty and their own personal research agendas as there may be congruency or a relationship of ideas lending to a potential good “fit”. The Research Advisor chosen will be integral on the journey to the comprehensive exams and beyond –it is important that a “fit” be found. Be aware that some faculty are not on contract in the summer and will not be available for your comprehensive examination, defense proposal, and dissertation defense during these months. Discussing availability during the summer months with your chosen committee is recommended if you plan to complete these steps in the summer.

It is an expectation that the Research Advisor and committee members will advise and support the research process of the student. The graduate faculty in the School of Nursing at UNC believes that conducting research and subsequently publishing that work is essential to the students’ professional development and career advancement. Because the role of Research Advisor is often very time intensive, from both an advising and a mentoring perspective, it is expected that faculty will share in the publication of results from the dissertation work. Related to this, note the Graduate School does support an “alternative form” for the dissertation consisting of two publishable papers, traditional chapters 1, 3 and 5 at minimum. (See *Dissertation Manual and Discipline specific outline; discuss with RA.*)

Authorship planning should include ongoing collaborative discussions between the student, Research Advisor, and contributing committee members. The student is usually listed as principal author on any multiple-authored manuscripts that are based primarily on the student’s dissertation. Depending on the scope of a particular project, it is possible that several manuscripts will be planned, each of which could involve different authors or different authorship orders. In this event, it is especially important to discuss authorship at the beginning of the project to better determine and reflect the expected roles, responsibilities and contributions of all contributors. It is expected that negotiating authorship will be both professional and respectful.

## CHECKLIST FOR RESEARCH ADVISOR

[www.unco.edu/graduate-school/student-resources/current-students/thesis-capstone-dissertation-resources.aspx](http://www.unco.edu/graduate-school/student-resources/current-students/thesis-capstone-dissertation-resources.aspx)

[www.unco.edu/graduate-school/pdf/Request-to-Appoint-a-Doctoral-Committee.pdf](http://www.unco.edu/graduate-school/pdf/Request-to-Appoint-a-Doctoral-Committee.pdf)

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Bear #: \_\_\_\_\_

	Completed
<b>DISSERTATION COMMITTEE APPROVED BY GRAD SCHOOL (GS)</b>	
Research Advisor (RA) must have DRE	
Co-Chair or Member (Co-Chair must have DR)	
Faculty Representative – must be grad faculty	
Committee Member (1 may be outside of UNC if approved by GS)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Student / RA submits to Graduate Program Specialist the “Request to Appoint a Doctoral Committee” form, who then submits to GS ( <i>copy RA and Student</i> ) <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral committee approved by GS; student and RA sent confirmation letter. <input type="checkbox"/> RA send copy of letter to Graduate Program Specialist	
<b>REQUIREMENTS FOR WRITTEN COMPREHENSIVE EXAM</b>	
Completed minimum 36 hours work toward degree	
Maintained 3.0 GPA	
Approval by RA to take exam	
<input type="checkbox"/> Student completes Request for Written Comps and submits to PhD Coordinator for signature. <input type="checkbox"/> RA sends signed request to Graduate Program Specialist to be posted in Canvas with 7-day window for completion.	
Upon completion the written exam submission is checked through TurnItIn (plagiarism checker).	
Written exam is deidentified and graded by unknown graduate faculty making up the review panel for that semester and submitted to PhD Coordinator.	
<input type="checkbox"/> PhD Coordinator emails student, RA, and Graduate Program Specialist the results using Written Comp Exam Results form and providing copies the evaluation forms.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Graduate Program Specialist sends <u>only</u> results form to the GS ( <i>copy RA/Student</i> ).	
<i>If student is unsuccessful, retake must occur the following term. See Comprehensive Exam policy for failure of one question.</i>	
<b>REQUIREMENTS FOR ORAL COMPREHENSIVE EXAM</b>	
Must be conducted a <u>minimum</u> of 2 weeks <u>after</u> written comps completed.	
Request to Schedule Oral Comp Exam must be submitted <b>at least two (2) weeks prior</b> to requested exam date.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Oral comp exam scheduled by student with committee. <input type="checkbox"/> RA completes Request to Schedule Oral Comp form and sends to Graduate Program Specialist, who then sends to Graduate School ( <i>copy RA and student</i> ).	
<input type="checkbox"/> RA sends written comp document to all Committee members in sufficient time for review.	
RA receives blank “Results of the Oral Comprehensive Examination” form from GS.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Completion of Oral Comprehensive Rubric (evaluation) by all committee members. RA submits evaluations and “Results” form to Graduate Program Specialist, who then sends <u>only</u> results form to the GS ( <i>copy RA and Student</i> ).	

<b>DISSERTATION PROPOSAL DEFENSE</b> <i>(Is not scheduled with the Graduate School)</i>	
Chapter 1,2,3 completed and approved by RA	
Student must be registered for or have completed appropriate credits for NURS 797. Students must register for at least one credit (of anything) during the semester of proposal.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Student must send proposal to all Committee Members 2 weeks prior to defense <input type="checkbox"/> Defense scheduled by student with committee. <i>This does not need to be done with the GS.</i>	
<i>(RA and student will determine traditional or alternative dissertation document)</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Student to bring to the proposal defense the “Proposal Title Page for Doctoral Dissertation Proposal” using the current form found on the GS web site: <a href="https://www.unco.edu/graduate-school/student-resources/current-students/thesis-capstone-dissertation-resources.aspx">https://www.unco.edu/graduate-school/student-resources/current-students/thesis-capstone-dissertation-resources.aspx</a>	
<b>Following Successful proposal –</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Student to get IRB or IACUC approval <i>(if applicable)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Student send to GS from Bear Mail <i>(copy RA and Graduate Program Specialist):</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital copy of proposal (Word or PDF format)</li> <li>• Signed Proposal Title Page for Doctoral Dissertation <i>(This signifies approval and passing of the proposal to the GS)</i></li> <li>• Verification of Research Subject Compliance form <i>(This must be turned in <u>even if your research does not</u> require IRB or IACUC approval)</i></li> <li>• IRB or IACUC approval if applicable</li> </ul> <input type="checkbox"/> RA and student will determine timeline for completion of NURS 799 credits.	
Candidacy Approval Letter will be emailed to student's Bear Mail and to the RA. Upon being admitted to candidacy, the Graduate School will complete and email a Grad Check to the student through student's Bear Mail. <input type="checkbox"/> RA sends copy of Candidacy Approval letter to <i>Graduate Program Specialist.</i>	
If successful, student may apply for graduation. <i>(Graduation Deadlines: <a href="http://www.unco.edu/graduate-school/student-resources/preparing-for-graduation/graduation-deadlines.aspx">www.unco.edu/graduate-school/student-resources/preparing-for-graduation/graduation-deadlines.aspx</a>).</i>	
<b>DISSERTATION DEFENSE (FINAL)</b>	
Dissertation Defense <u>cannot</u> be scheduled during the same semester as the proposal defense.	
Request to Schedule Dissertation Defense must be submitted at least two (2) weeks prior to requested exam date.	
The student must register for one credit of NURS 799	
<input type="checkbox"/> Defense scheduled by student with committee. <input type="checkbox"/> RA completes Request to Schedule a Doctoral Exam form and sends to Graduate Program Specialist, who then sends to the GS <i>(copy RA and student).</i>	
GS sends blank “Results of Dissertation Defense form” to RA	
Student defends dissertation. <input type="checkbox"/> RA submits signed results form to Graduate Program Specialist, who then sends results form to the GS <i>(copy RA and Student).</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Committee signs Dissertation Signature page when all changes have been made to the dissertation document.	
Recommend student run manuscript through <a href="http://www.reciteworks.com">www.reciteworks.com</a> for APA format, spelling, etc.	

Student emails final copy of dissertation to GS for review from their Bear Mail:

- Review Submission form (<https://www.unco.edu/graduate-school/pdf/thesis-capstone-dissertation/Processing-Form.pdf>)
- Digital copy of proposal (Word or PDF format)
- Dissertation signature page with electronic/digital signatures
- Verification of Research Subject Compliance form
- IRB or IACUC approval if applicable

*\*For exam/defense attendance policy, please review the 2<sup>nd</sup> page of this document.*

(<https://www.unco.edu/graduate-school/pdf/Request-Schedule-Doctoral-Exam.pdf>)

***\*\*Digital Signatures are acceptable on the Request to Schedule form. Hand-written/original signatures are still required on the Results of Written Comp, Results of Oral Comps, Results of the Dissertation Defense, and signature pages for the proposal and final dissertation.***

**POLICY TITLE:****Doctoral Scholarly Project and Dissertation Grading Policy****Last Revision/Review Date:** 10/13/23 NFSO**Previous Review Dates:** 12/2/2022 NFSO**Original Policy Date:****Sponsoring Committee(s):** Graduate Leadership Team – Academic Policy**DESCRIPTION:**

Doctoral students enroll in scholarly project (NURS 798) and dissertation (NURS 799) credits to support the final culminating work for the doctoral professional and research degrees. The following policy is written to ensure internal consistency and clarity in the enrollment and grading process for these course credits.

**PROCEDURE:**

1. Students shall work with their research/scholarly project advisor at the beginning of the semester to develop a plan for the expected work and determine the appropriate number of credits to register, in accordance with the respective syllabus. Three credits of enrollment is equivalent to 8-9 hours of work each week for a 16-week semester.
2. As the semester progresses, if a student is unable to complete the agreed upon course expectations, due to unforeseen circumstances (i.e. personal/medical issues, work related changes), the student will be encouraged to withdraw from the enrolled credits. The faculty research/scholarly project advisor will advise the student to meet with the program coordinator to determine whether the student should apply for an official leave of absence. Depending on the situation, a tuition appeal should also be encouraged so students do not incur additional costs due to the unforeseen circumstances precipitating a withdrawal.
3. A student is allowed to 'withdraw' from project/dissertation credits for a maximum of 2 semesters, which may or may not be consecutive. If a student withdraws from their project/dissertation credits to the maximal allowance, the student would be connected with the program coordinator to discuss program completion options, including application for an official leave of absence.
4. If the student has submitted work which is deemed by the faculty advisor to be unsatisfactory, the student would receive a grade of "U" at the end of the semester. A grade of "U" does not terminate the student's program. However, a grade of "U" would increase the overall number of credits required to complete the program.
5. If the student submits the agreed upon work for the semester and is continuing to make progress toward their project/dissertation, the faculty member would give a grade of "S" for the semester.
6. N799 and N798 courses credits are ineligible for an "I" grade.
7. Students must satisfactorily complete a minimum of 12 scholarly project/dissertation credits. Up to three additional credits may be taken if additional time is needed to complete the project/dissertation.





# Graduation Information



UNIVERSITY OF  
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School of Nursing

## Graduation Information

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Students who are completing a **degree program** are responsible for determining that the **Application for Graduation** has been filed with the Graduate School in accordance with published guidelines and deadlines. In addition, there is a form on the Graduate School web site for information about mailing the diploma. This must be completed and submitted by the student.

Please visit: <http://www.unco.edu/graduate-school/student-resources/preparing-for-graduation/>

### **Graduation Deadlines:**

<http://www.unco.edu/graduate-school/student-resources/preparing-for-graduation/graduation-deadlines.aspx>

### **Graduation Application:**

[https://unco.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_6SG6Bm3mpFbqstv](https://unco.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6SG6Bm3mpFbqstv)

# Academic Record and Signature pages



UNIVERSITY OF  
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School of Nursing

## Academic Record

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All student files are located in the nursing offices. On the occasion you need to have access to your file, check with the SON office staff for the procedure to utilize your file. The School of Nursing also requires students to sign documents that may be needed in the general course of business throughout your program. For example, students often request a reference for part-time employment and/or data about their academic progress for loans, scholarships, insurance, etc. A signed release of information must be in your student file before we can comply with any request.

**Documents requiring student signature** are listed below and full copies are provided on the following pages for your review. You will be instructed by the SON on how to specifically complete them for your program.

- *Authorization for Release of Completed Scholastic Assignments*
- *Authorization to Release Information (FERPA)*
- *Authorization of Use of Name, Image, Likeness, and/or Voice Recordings*
- *Plagiarism Contract (University Honor Code)*
- *Student Handbook Agreement*

DOCUMENT	NOTE
Authorization for Release of Completed Scholastic Assignments	
Authorization to Release Information (FERPA)	
Authorization of Use of Name, Image, Likeness, and/or Voice Recordings	
Plagiarism Contract (University Honor Code)	
Student Handbook Agreement	



UNIVERSITY OF  
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## Authorization for Release of Completed Scholastic Assignments

I hereby give permission for my completed scholastic assignments to be used as examples by the University of Northern Colorado School of Nursing for the following purposes:

- For accreditation review
- For inclusion as a sample in future courses
- For curriculum committee review
- For agency feedback

I understand that my permission for such use by the School of Nursing is irrevocable.

---

Signature of student

Date

---

Printed name of student

*Rev 5/3/2016 MHenry, approved DSatriano UNC Legal Counsel*

Rev 5/3/2016 MHenry, approved DSatriano UNC Legal Counsel



School of Nursing

**Authorization to Release Educational Records  
(FERPA)**

Pursuant to provisions of the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, (Public Law 93-380), I hereby authorize the University of Northern Colorado, School of Nursing to release the following information concerning my educational records:

- General Summary of Performance
- Grades
- GPA

THIS INFORMATION MAY BE RELEASED FOR THE FOLLOWING PURPOSE(S):  
(CIRCLE ALL FOR WHICH AUTHORIZATION IS GIVEN):

1. Reference for prospective employers
2. Reference for Graduate School (or other program)
3. Scholarships, Internships/Externships, or other types of financial assistance programs
4. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Signature of student

Date

---

Printed name of student

*Revised 5/3/16; MHenry approved by DSatriano UNC Counsel*



UNIVERSITY OF  
**NORTHERN COLORADO**

**School of Nursing**

**Authorization of Use of Name, Image, Likeness  
and/or Voice Recordings**

In consideration of my enrollment in the University of Northern Colorado School of Nursing, I hereby authorize the Board of Trustees of the University of Northern Colorado (“UNC”) permission to use my name (or any fictional name), photographs, video and/or audio recordings of me, negatives, prints, motion pictures, video and/or audio recordings, or any other reproduction, in any media that contain my image, likeness or voice (including but not limited to video and/or audio recordings of simulation experiences in academic course work) for educational and/or promotional purposes in any UNC written, video and/or audio materials of any type or manner including but not limited to books, magazines, flyers, manuals, handbooks, catalogues, in hard copy, any electronic or digital format and/or on the World Wide Web, or in any other manner, and for any other lawful purpose, in the sole discretion of UNC. I grant this permission effective on the date written below and in perpetuity. I understand that I cannot, at any time, revoke the permission that I have given to UNC by signing this AUTHORIZATION OF USE OF NAME, IMAGE, LIKENESS AND/OR VOICE RECORDINGS.

I declare that I have read and understand the contents of this AUTHORIZATION OF USE OF NAME, IMAGE, LIKENESS AND/OR VOICE RECORDINGS, and I am signing it as my free and voluntary act, irrevocably binding myself and my heirs, successors and assigns.

---

Signature of student

Date

---

Printed name of student

---

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian

Date

*(Parent or legal guardian must sign if participant is under 18 years of age and the signature of parent or legal guardian binds the Student, Parent and/or Legal Guardian to the Authorization of Use of Name, Image, Likeness and/or Voice Recordings)*

8/17/16 MHenry, approved DSatriano UNC Legal Counsel



UNIVERSITY OF  
NORTHERN COLORADO

School of Nursing

## Plagiarism Contract

I certify that I have read, understand, and agree to the terms set forth in the School of Nursing Students' Dishonest Acts policy and the Graduate Catalog. I will certify that I will not plagiarize any of the documents created by myself or as a group for this program. I will also agree to follow the University Honor Code.

### University Honor Code

*All members of the University of Northern Colorado community are entrusted with the responsibility to uphold and promote five fundamental values: **Honesty, Trust, Respect, Fairness, and Responsibility**. These core elements foster an atmosphere, inside and outside of the classroom, which serves as a foundation and guides the UNC community's academic, professional, and personal growth. Endorsement of these core elements by students, faculty, staff, administration, and trustees strengthens the integrity and value of our academic climate.*

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Signature of student

Date

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Printed name of student





UNIVERSITY OF  
NORTHERN COLORADO

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School of Nursing

## Graduate Nursing Student Handbook Agreement

I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the policies and guideline outlined in this School of Nursing Graduate Nursing Student Handbook. I have asked questions to clarify anything I do not understand.

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Signature of student

Date

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Printed name of student