Ph.D. Handbook

Welcome to USC College of Nursing (CON). We are here to help you be successful in your graduate nursing education endeavors. The College of Nursing Ph.D. Graduate Student Handbook provides students with current information about curricula, policies, and other important information concerning the graduate programs in the College. The Ph.D. Graduate Student Handbook is updated annually with periodic updates available on the College of Nursing website and Virtual Communities. It is important that students become familiar with the current Ph.D. Graduate Student Handbook. All graduate students are required to read and understand the content and are responsible for adhering to the Policies and Procedures stipulated in the Handbook. Students are required to sign a statement annually attesting to the fact that they have read the current Handbook. The College of Nursing reserves the right to make changes to this handbook as necessary. Notifications of changes or additions to the Ph.D. Graduate Student Handbook made throughout the year are posted in a timely fashion on the Virtual Community in Blackboard (Bb). Students are responsible for checking the program Bb on a regular basis for all program-related updates and handbook updates.

Supplemental Regulations

There are several resources available to assist you in meeting your academic and personal goals. Registration at the University of South Carolina assumes the students' acceptance of all published regulations. The academic bulletins are the official documents of record concerning undergraduate and graduate academic programs and regulations. These bulletins are for information purposes only and do not constitute any contractual agreement between a student and the University of South Carolina. The University reserves the right to make changes in curricula, degree requirements, course offerings, or academic regulations at any time when, in the judgment of the faculty, the president, or the Board of Trustees, such changes are in the best interest of the students and the University.

All graduate students are also responsible for the regulations listed below:

University of South Carolina Nondiscrimination Statement

The University of South Carolina does not discriminate in educational or employment opportunities on the basis of race, sex, gender, age, color, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, genetics, veteran status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions. Questions or concerns regarding the University’s equal opportunity
programs should be directed to the Equal Opportunity Programs, 1600 Hampton Street, Suite 805, Columbia, SC 29208 or 803-777-3854 (Voice) or 803-777-5608 (TTY).

**DISCLAIMER**

The policies and procedures described in this manual are continually revised and updated. The College of Nursing and the University of South Carolina must reserve the right to make changes affecting policies, fees, curriculum, or any other matters announced in this publication. If you have questions regarding the contents of this handbook, please contact the Office of Academic Affairs.

**Academic Calendar**

- The College of Nursing follows the [University Academic Calendar](#) in the Fall and Spring terms.
- The College of Nursing Summer Calendar differs from the traditional University calendar.

**Resources**

- [Academic Resources](#)
- [Campus Life](#)
- [Campus Safety](#)
- [Career Resources](#)
- [Child Care](#)
- [Dining Services](#)
- [Diversity](#)
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College of Nursing’s Mission & Policies

College of Nursing Mission and Values
The University of South Carolina College of Nursing provides nationally recognized educational programs and advances science, practice, and policy to optimize health for all.

- View the complete College of Nursing Mission, Vision and Values Statement

Accreditation
The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools accredit the University.

Important College of Nursing Policies
All students at the University of South Carolina College of Nursing are required to adhere to the following school-wide policies:

Academic Integrity

Carolinian Creed
We oppose intolerance by promoting integrity within our campus community. Our common values are formed upon the foundation of our creed, which emphasizes openness and civility. Carolinian Creed

Code of Conduct
Our Code of Conduct outlines students' responsibilities to themselves and the Carolina community.

Honor Code
Our Honor Code describes the university's expectations for students' academic integrity. Students found guilty of academic dishonesty may receive a zero for their course grade and/or be removed from further study in the CON.

Ethics for Nursing
Nursing is a profession, and as such, nursing students are expected to behave ethically. Ethical behavior applies to colleagues, peers, supervisors, subordinates, and clients. Click link for complete Code of Ethics for Nurses developed by the American Nurses Association (ANA).
Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statement

1. The nurse practices with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and unique attributes of every person.

2. The nurse’s primary commitment is to the patient, whether an individual, family, group, community, or population.

3. The nurse promotes, advocates for, and protects the rights, health, and safety of the patient.

4. The nurse has authority, accountability, and responsibility for nursing practice; makes decisions; and takes action consistent with the obligation to promote health and to provide optimal care.

5. The nurse owes the same duties to self as to others, including the responsibility to promote health and safety, preserve wholeness of character and integrity, maintain competence, and continue personal and professional growth.

6. The nurse, through individual and collective effort, establishes, maintains, and improves the ethical environment of the work setting and conditions of employment that are conducive to safe, quality health care.

7. The nurse, in all roles and settings, advances the profession through research and scholarly inquiry, professional standards development, and the generation of both nursing and health policy.

8. The nurse collaborates with other health professionals and the public to protect human rights, promote health diplomacy, and reduce health disparities.

9. The profession of nursing, collectively through its professional organizations, must articulate nursing values, maintain the integrity of the profession, and integrate principles of social justice into nursing and health policy.

Source: American Nurses Association, August 2015

Civility and Professional Conduct

As students’ progress through the curriculum, they are preparing for transition into professional life. Some behaviors expected in the classroom/clinical setting parallel many behaviors expected in the workplace.

Classroom Expectations
a. Notifies professor when unable to submit assignment on time prior to the deadline
b. Completes reading all assignments
c. Engages in class discussion
d. Maintains appropriate demeanor during in class and online activity
e. Refrains from the use of online discussion forum for posting of non-academic material (i.e. advertisements for jobs, products or services)

Core Performance Standards

The USC College of Nursing requires all applicants and continuing students in all nursing programs to meet certain standards based on the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) Council on Collegiate Education for Nursing (CCEN) Core Performance Standards. These standards describe requirements in the six dimensions of ability/performance. These are critical thinking and related mental abilities, communication and interpersonal abilities, physical abilities, hearing, vision, and smell.

Core Performance Standards

The USC College of Nursing requires all applicants and continuing students in all nursing programs to meet the following standards based on the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) Council on Collegiate Education for Nursing (CCEN) Core Performance Standards.

Standard 1. Critical Thinking and Related Mental Abilities: Must have critical thinking ability sufficient for clinical judgment. Examples of necessary functional abilities associated with this standard include (not an all-inclusive list): Has the ability to interpret, investigate, communicate, and comprehend complex situations; identify cause and effect relative to clinical situations under varying degrees of stress; must be able to read and comprehend detailed charts, reports, journal articles, books, etc.; and capable of performing all arithmetic functions (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, ratios, and simple algebraic equations).

Standard 2. Communication and Interpersonal Abilities: Must be able to read, write, speak, and comprehend English with sufficient skill to communicate effectively verbally and non-verbally. Must have interpersonal abilities sufficient to interact with individuals, families, and groups from a variety of social, emotional, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds. Examples of necessary functional abilities associated with this standard include (not all inclusive): Has the ability to establish rapport with clients and their families, peers, agency personnel, and faculty; explain treatment procedures, initiate health teaching; and document and interpret nursing actions and client responses.

Standard 3. Physical Activities: Must have physical abilities sufficient to move from room to room and maneuver in small spaces with gross and fine motor abilities sufficient to provide safe and effective nursing care. Examples of necessary functional abilities associated with this standard include (not all inclusive): Able to move around a client’s room, work spaces, treatment areas and administer CPR; calibrate and use equipment; position and transfer clients; capable of pushing up to 200 pounds independently; capable
of reaching 18 inches above head without the use of mechanical devices to elevate themselves; capable of sitting, standing, walking for extended periods of time; experience no limitations when bending, stooping, sitting, standing, walking (i.e. uses no mechanical devices to assist themselves which would impede the safety of a client), ability to move to and respond to an emergency situation in a timely manner, and able to document in a clear, legible manner.

**Standard 4. Hearing:** Auditory ability sufficient to monitor and assess health needs. Examples of necessary functional abilities associated with this standard include (not all inclusive): Able to hear auscultatory sounds, monitor alarms and emergency signals; able to tolerate loud noises for extended periods of time. Assistive devices must correct hearing to this degree and must be worn at all times during practicums.

**Standard 5. Visual:** Must have the visual ability sufficient for observation, assessment, and intervention necessary for nursing care. Examples of necessary functional abilities associated with this standard include (not all inclusive): Observe client response, accurately read equipment, gauges, and monitors, vision correctable to 20/40, normal depth perception, and ability to distinguish colors and ability to tolerate offensive visual situations.

**Standard 6. Smell:** Smelling ability sufficient to monitor and assess health needs. Examples of necessary functional abilities associated with this standard include (not all inclusive): Having ability to differentiate between various types of smells, and ability to tolerate offensive odors.

*Standards may be changed at any time.*

**Copyright Policy**

The Nursing Programs seek to aid enrolled students by offering electronic presentations and recordings of lectures to improve student engagement and to better meet individual learning needs. With the growing use of technology, students and faculty have the responsibility to understand and observe copyright law including educational fair use guidelines, obtaining written permission, and to follow the corresponding campus University policy.

As supplemental tools, all material found in lectures is owned by the University of South Carolina College of Nursing or its faculty and is protected by United States Copyright laws.

Lecture material is only available to students enrolled in the course where the content is available, and use is not permitted outside the scope of the course. Recorded lectures will only be posted to Blackboard. Material found in the lectures may not be photocopied, screenshot, duplicated or distributed by any student without the express, written
permission from the faculty member who created the material. Video, audio, or photographic recordings of course material are strictly prohibited. Recordings, course material, quizzes, tests and lecture notes may not be reproduced verbatim nor uploaded to publicly accessible web environments. Recordings and course material may not be exchanged nor distributed to a third party for compensation. Recordings and course material may not be used for any purpose other than personal study and may not violate any policies herein. An individual may individually print copies of lecture material solely for personal use under the scope of the course.

Duplication or dissemination of lecture materials without authorized use may violate federal or state law and USC University policies.

Failure to adhere to these policies is a violation of the College of Nursing Professionalism Policy and may result in disciplinary action under University guidelines.

Doctoral Program of Study

The Graduate School Doctoral Program of Study (DPOS) is a binding agreement between The Graduate School and the student that must be on file and approved prior to graduation. Students must follow courses in the order and as outlined on the program of study. Modification to the Doctoral Program of Study may be made only in consultation with the appropriate Program Directors. Any changes must be submitted prior to beginning any change to The Graduate School on the Program of Study Adjustment Form (GS-43 (POSA)), which is submitted by the Student Graduate Advisor http://gradschool.sc.edu/forms/.

Student Social Media Policy

As professional nurses, students are responsible for protecting the privacy and confidentiality of patients and research participants. The following guidelines are intended to minimize the risks of using social media:

a. First and foremost, nurses must recognize that they have an ethical and legal obligation to maintain patient privacy and confidentiality at all times.

b. Nurses are strictly prohibited from transmitting by way of any electronic media any patient-related image. In addition, students/nurses are restricted from transmitting any information that may be reasonably anticipated to violate patient rights to confidentiality or privacy, or otherwise degrade or embarrass the patient.
c. Do not share post or otherwise disseminate any information, including images, about a patient or information gained in the nurse-patient relationship with anyone unless there is a patient care related need to disclose the information or other legal obligation to do so.

d. Do not identify patients by name or post or publish information that may lead to the identification of a patient. Limiting access to postings through privacy settings is not sufficient to ensure privacy.

e. Do not refer to patients in a disparaging manner, even if the patient is not identified.

f. Do not take photos or videos of patients on personal devices, including cell phones. Follow employer policies for taking photographs or video of patients for treatment or other legitimate purposes using employer-provided devices.

g. Maintain professional boundaries in the use of electronic media. Like in-person relationships, the nurse has the obligation to establish, communicate and enforce professional boundaries with patients in the online environment. Use caution when having online social contact with patients or former patients. Online contact with patients or former patients blurs the distinction between a professional and personal relationship. The fact that a patient may initiate contact with the nurse does not permit the nurse to engage in a personal relationship with the patient.

h. Consult employer policies or an appropriate leader within the organization for guidance regarding work related postings.

i. Promptly report any identified breach of confidentiality or privacy.

j. Be aware of and comply with employer policies regarding use of employer-owned computers, cameras and other electronic devices and use of personal devices in the workplace.

k. Do not make disparaging remarks about employers or co-workers. Do not make threatening, harassing, profane, obscene, sexually explicit, racially derogatory, homophobic or other offensive comments.

l. Do not post content or otherwise speak on behalf of the employer unless authorized to do so and follow all applicable policies of the employer.

*All guidelines apply to students. Students should also not make disparaging remarks related to their clinical site, faculty or school. The College of Nursing has adopted the NCSBN position statement:
Degree Requirements

Graduate Nursing Program Requirements

Individual program policies may supersede this policy due to national accreditation regulations. Check with your Program Director to determine any additional requirements.

Overview

The Ph.D. in Nursing Science program is designed to prepare professional nurses for research careers in a variety of academic and health care settings. The goal of the curriculum is to prepare beginning researchers in a defined area of nursing science. This goal is accomplished through the development of individualized programs of study and research experiences. Admission to the program requires a bachelor’s or master’s degree in Nursing.

Admissions Requirements

The admission process aims to identify individuals who have a high probability of successfully completing the degree program. All factors are considered in the admissions process and decision. Specific requirements include the following:

1. One of the following options:
   a. B.S.N. entry-a Bachelor of Science in nursing degree from a program that is nationally accredited;
   b. M.S.N. entry-a Bachelor of Science in nursing degree and a master’s in nursing degree from nationally accredited programs;
   c. non-M.S.N. master’s entry-a Bachelor of Science in nursing degree from a nationally accredited program and a master’s degree in another discipline
   d. D.N.P. entry- a Doctor of Nursing practice degree from a nationally accredited program.

2. GRE General Test Scores (verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, and analytic writing) completed within the past 5 years (exempted for D.N.P. entry);

3. transcripts of all previous college studies;

4. registered nurse licensure in South Carolina or eligibility for S.C. licensure or possession of an unencumbered license in the location in which the research will occur;

5. completed application to The Graduate School with the College of Nursing supplement;

6. potential for scholarship in nursing science as evidenced by the following:
   a. two or three examples of scholarly work, e.g., research reports, published articles, thesis, course papers, and written innovations;
   b. written statement of career goals;
c. three letters of reference from individuals that address research and scholarship potential;
d. interview with two nursing graduate faculty members;
e. resume or cv.

Program Prerequisites and Co-requisites

Students in the BSN entry option must complete an additional 18 credit hours of master’s level related nursing courses prior to enrolling in the PhD core courses. These courses may be selected from one of the existing nursing majors or emphasis areas or may consist of an individualized program of study. BSN and non-MSN prepared entry level students who do not have beginning level graduate courses in nursing theory, nursing research, and statistics equivalent to those required in the USC College of Nursing MSN degree program will need to complete these courses prior to beginning the PhD core courses. These required courses will be determined by the PhD Program Director, in consultation with appropriate course faculty and communicated to students at the time of admission. These courses may relate to the student's research area of interest. All students must have a recent (within 5 years) graduate statistics course or relevant experience.

Curriculum

The Ph.D. in Nursing Science curriculum consists of core courses in which students develop the requisite knowledge and skills for the conceptual and methodological development, implementation, interpretation, and critique of nursing research. Upon completion of the required core courses, students take the Qualifying/Candidacy Examination (refer to section entitled Qualifying/Candidacy Examination). Additional program components build on core courses and allow for the development of individualized programs of study, including the preparation and defense of the doctoral dissertation. All Ph.D. requirements, including the dissertation defense, must be completed within ten years of initial enrollment. Curriculum varies depending on the student’s preparation at entry Post-BSN, Post MSN, Post-masters (non-MSN), Post-DNP. All students will take the following Ph.D. core courses: NURS 800, NURS 801, NURS 803, NURS 804, NURS 810, NURS 811, NURS 813, NURS 870, NURS 898 and NURS 899 (12 hours). A detailed description of the courses required for each preparation entry is found in the USC Graduate Studies Bulletin website: http://bulletin.sc.edu/preview_entity.php?catoid=76&ent oid=1492&returnto=2192

Degree Requirements

A summary of degree requirements is listed below. Each of the requirements is described in detail under the next section, Ph.D. Program Academic Policies.

a. Complete doctoral residency by enrolling in 18 graduate credit hours for three consecutive major semesters. Enrollment in a summer term is not required to maintain continuity, but credits earned during summer terms (including May
session) will count toward the 18 hours required for residency. The residency requirement may be met only after admission to the Ph.D. program;
b. Complete an approved program of study totaling not less than 39 credits for post-DNP entry, 57 credit hours for master’s degree entry options and not less than 75 credit hours for a BSN entry option;
c. Complete the language requirement, through either a reading knowledge of a foreign language or competency in statistics/research methods specific to the student’s proposed course of study;
d. Complete at least 3 credits of mentored research under a College of Nursing faculty member (NURS 898 Research Internship);
e. Complete the admission-to-candidacy examination at least one full academic year prior to the date on which the degree is to be granted;
f. File an approved Doctoral Program of Study (DPOS) with The Graduate School prior to enrolling in NURS 899 Dissertation Preparation credit hours;
g. Complete all course requirements on the DPOS;
h. Complete a comprehensive examination (i.e., oral and written dissertation proposal defense), taken after admission to candidacy and completion of all course requirements except those courses in which the student is currently enrolled;
i. Complete written and oral defense of a doctoral dissertation. A candidate must present a dissertation and abstract approved by the student's Doctoral Committee, the Ph.D. Program Director, and The Graduate School no later than five years after successful completion of the comprehensive examination/dissertation proposal defense;
j. Complete all degree requirements within 10 years of initial enrollment.

Advisement and Mentoring

Upon admission to the Ph.D. program, students receive initial academic advising with the director of the Ph.D. program. Upon entry into the program, students will be assigned a mentor. Both the mentor and the Ph.D. program director may be involved in academic advising during the student’s first year of course work. No later than the beginning of the second year following entry into the Ph.D. program, the student will select a major advisor from among College of Nursing Graduate Faculty. Once a major advisor is selected, the major advisor will provide academic support during degree progression through the core courses and candidacy process. Once a student has been admitted to candidacy, the primary advising role moves to the student’s Doctoral Committee Chair.

Upon successful completion of the candidacy exams, students are admitted to candidacy and required to establish a Doctoral Committee.

Ph.D. Program Length

All course work applied toward the Ph.D. must be completed within ten calendar years of the date at which the degree is granted. For post-DNP entry students, the anticipated length of the Ph.D. in Nursing Science program is 3 years of full-time enrollment or 4 to
5 years part-time enrollment. For students who enter with an MSN degree, the anticipated length of the Ph.D. in Nursing Science program is 3 to 4 years of full-time enrollment or 5 to 6 years of part-time enrollment. Students entering with a BSN should complete the program in 4 to 5 years of full-time enrollment or 6 years of part-time enrollment.

A Ph.D. candidate must present a dissertation and abstract approved by the student's Doctoral Committee, the Ph.D. Program Director, and the Dean of The Graduate School no later than five years after the comprehensive examination (i.e., Dissertation Proposal) has been successfully completed.

Upon enrollment, students are expected to make satisfactory and timely progress towards the degree. An Annual Advising Meeting will be held to review and finalize the Individual Development Plan (IDP) Form (Appendix A) and update the student's bio sketch (Appendix B). The advising meeting will take place in the Spring of each academic year. The student is responsible for drafting the Individual Development Plan (IDP) Form, updating the bio sketch, scheduling the advising meeting and submitting the final form for signatures.

Following three years of non-enrollment, admission to the Ph.D. in Nursing Science program becomes invalid and students must reapply and meet current admission requirements for readmission. Upon readmission, students are subject to regulations of the Graduate Studies Bulletin in effect at the time of reenrollment.

Ph.D. Progress to Degree Guide

An overview of the Dissertation process is available on The Graduate School website on the Thesis and Dissertation webpage. The Doctoral Progress to Degree Guide outlines important considerations and deadlines for Ph.D. students http://gradschool.sc.edu/students/thesisdiss.asp?page=acad&sub=etd Additionally, a program checklist of important program requirements and processes are available in the Ph.D. virtual community.

Appointment of the Qualifying/Candidacy Examination Committee

Qualifying/Candidacy Committee membership is only documented within the College of Nursing, not The Graduate School. The Qualifying/Candidacy Examination Committee administers the written and oral portions of the Qualifying/Candidacy Exam. Three CON Graduate Faculty members comprise the Qualifying/Candidacy Examination Committee. Students may indicate their choice for two members, and the remaining member is indicated by the Ph.D. Program Director.

Qualifying/Candidacy Examination Procedures

For Ph.D. students in the College of Nursing, the Qualifying/Candidacy Examination is called the Candidacy Exam. The Candidacy Exam includes a written component and an
oral defense. Admission to doctoral candidacy requires satisfactory performance on the Ph.D. Candidacy Examination administered through the Ph.D. Program. Prior to scheduling the candidacy exam, the student must complete the Doctoral Program of Study (DPOS) in consultation with the Major Advisor. For more information see appendices below.

- (Appendix C): Ph.D. Overview of the Ph.D. Candidacy Exam: Purpose and Evaluation Criteria
- (Appendix D): Ph.D. Candidacy Examination Procedures
- (Appendix E): Criteria for Grading Ph.D. Candidacy Examination

The scope of the Qualifying/Candidacy Exam allows faculty to determine the candidate's potential for ongoing intellectual development, capacity for critical analysis and synthesis of ideas, and a knowledge of the major theoretical concepts and current thinking in nursing science. Doctoral students take the examination for admission to candidacy immediately following completion of the last core course, NURS 803 Scientific Knowledge in Nursing. Students will have two attempts only for the Qualifying/Candidacy exam.

Upon successful completion of the Qualifying/Candidacy Examination, a Doctoral Qualifying Exam Verification Form and the Doctoral Program of Study (DPOS), must be signed by the student’s Major Advisor and the CON Graduate Assistant Dean. Both forms are available at http://gradschool.sc.edu/forms/. Following appropriate signatures, both forms are sent to the Graduate School by the Ph.D. program office.

Note: The DPOS protects the student from modifications in the event of curriculum or faculty changes and must be submitted to the Graduate School prior to enrollment in NURS 899 Dissertation Preparation. To make an adjustment in the DPOS, the student must have the approval of the Program Advisory Committee, the Ph.D. Program Director, and the Dean of The Graduate School. A Program of Study Adjustment form is required to document changes to the original Program of Study. Please consult the Office of Student Affairs or Graduate School website at http://gradschool.sc.edu for more information.

Admission to Candidacy by the Graduate School

The Graduate School considers doctoral students to be candidates for their respective degrees when they have 1) been fully admitted to the doctoral degree program; 2) passed a Qualifying/Candidacy Examination; and 3) filed an approved Doctoral Program of Study form with The Graduate School. The Dean of The Graduate School admits the student to doctoral candidacy after completion of all three conditions. The Graduate School will notify the student and Ph.D. Program Director upon admission to candidacy. Completion of all three components of the admission to candidacy procedures should be at least one full academic year before the degree is granted.

Appointment of Doctoral Committee
The Ph.D. candidate must establish a Doctoral Committee responsible for providing guidance through the final phases of doctoral work. The Graduate School regulations governing doctoral programs are outlined on their website in the Doctoral Progress to Degree section, [http://gradschool.sc.edu/students/progress-doc.asp](http://gradschool.sc.edu/students/progress-doc.asp).

The Doctoral Committee directs the student in the preparation of the dissertation, examines the student on the dissertation, and informs the Dean of The Graduate School as to whether the student passed or failed. The dissertation cannot be submitted to The Graduate School until it has been approved and signed by members of the Doctoral Committee. The Doctoral Committee must consist of at least four members, one of whom is from outside the College of Nursing.

The Doctoral Committee Appointment Request Form is available online at [http://gradschool.sc.edu/forms/](http://gradschool.sc.edu/forms/). The form includes a description of The Graduate School’s policy on committees and faculty membership eligibility requirements. Questions regarding faculty who are eligible to serve should be directed to the Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies. All committees must receive approval before functioning as committees. Where alteration of committee membership is necessary, the change must be initiated by the student on a new Doctoral Committee Appointment Request form.

NOTE: If the proposed outside member of any Doctoral Committee is not a member of the USC Graduate Faculty, a copy of his or her curriculum vitae and statement indicating experience as a doctoral committee member and research experience relevant to the students’ research topic should accompany the request for approval submitted to the Ph.D. Program Director. The College of Nursing Tenure and Promotion Committee must approve the request before submission to The Graduate School.

Written and Oral Comprehensive Exam

Students must pass a written and oral comprehensive examination under the direction of their Doctoral Committee. In the College of Nursing, the written and oral defense of the dissertation proposal constitutes the Comprehensive Exam. Doctoral Committee members have two weeks (10 business days) to review drafts of dissertation chapters. Once the proposal is finalized the student initiates the Comprehensive Exam/Dissertation Defense Approval Form ([Appendix F](#)). The proposal defense may be scheduled when the signed Comprehensive Exam Approval Form is submitted to the Ph.D. Program Office. The written and oral portions of the Comprehensive Exam (Dissertation Proposal) are administered by the Doctoral Committee in accordance with the approved Ph.D. Dissertation Proposal Guidelines in ([Appendix G](#)). Two attempts at both the written and oral comprehensive exam are permitted. Upon successful completion of the written and oral Comprehensive Exam/Dissertation Proposal, the Ph.D. student must submit a completed Doctoral Comprehensive Exam Verification Form to The Graduate School (available at [http://gradschool.sc.edu](http://gradschool.sc.edu)).
Dissertation

The Doctoral Committee directs the student in the preparation of the dissertation in accordance with the approved Ph.D. Dissertation Guidelines (Appendix H). Doctoral Committee members have two weeks (10 business days) to review drafts of dissertation chapters, and the final dissertation. Once the dissertation is finalized the student initiates the Dissertation Defense Approval Form. The Dissertation Defense may be scheduled when the signed Dissertation Defense Approval Form is submitted to the Ph.D. Program Office. The Doctoral Committee examines the student on the dissertation at the time of the public dissertation defense and informs the Dean of The Graduate School as to whether the student passed or failed. The dissertation cannot be submitted to The Graduate School until it has been approved and signed by members of the Doctoral Committee.

A candidate must present a dissertation and abstract approved by the student's Doctoral Committee and the Dean of The Graduate School no later than five years after the comprehensive examination has been successfully completed.

Dissertation Deadlines

Specific deadlines are outlined on The Graduate School website in the Doctoral Progress to Degree section http://gradschool.sc.edu/students/progress-doc.asp. Students are urged to consult multiple Graduate School information sources to ensure timely adherence to all deadlines in their final term of enrollment, including

- Completion of dissertation research and other degree requirements (language examination, etc.).
- Application for Graduation. Submit application for graduation to The Graduate School.
- Dissertation Defense Announcement. Students are required to publish their dissertation defense date, title, and abstract on The Graduate School website 14 days prior to public defense. Consult The Graduate School website for the published deadlines for each semester at http://gradschool.sc.edu/students/progress-doc.asp
- Dissertation Signature and Approval Form is available on The Graduate School website http://gradschool.sc.edu/forms/
- Dissertation Final Approval. Verify dates with The Graduate School regarding deadlines for the final approved dissertation that is submitted via the electronic thesis and dissertation/ETD process.
- Order academic regalia (graduation gown, hood, etc.) from the USC Bookstore (if attending Convocation and/or hooding).
- Attend the College of Nursing Convocation and USC doctoral hooding ceremony

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Preparing Future Faculty Professional Development Program

All Ph.D. students are strongly encouraged to successfully complete the requirements for Preparing Future Faculty (PFF). The PFF is a national credentialing program established by the Council of Graduate Schools, the Association of American Colleges and Universities, the Pew Charitable Trust and the National Science Foundation. At USC, the PFF program is administered through a partnership between the Center for Teaching Excellence and The Graduate School. Information about the PFF program is available at [http://sc.edu/cte/PreparingFutureFaculty.php](http://sc.edu/cte/PreparingFutureFaculty.php).

Ph.D. Program Objectives

The Ph.D. degree is designed to prepare graduates for a lifetime of intellectual inquiry through creative scholarship and research. Students in this doctoral program acquire the knowledge and skills to conduct research that will contribute to furthering nursing practice, education, and administration.

Ph.D. Learning Objectives

- Students will demonstrate skills necessary to analyze, apply and develop theories within the context of the planning and implementation of nursing and health research.
- Students are able to identify and implement the necessary steps in the research process for nursing practice, education, and research.

Change of Program or Major

After the student has been admitted to a Ph.D. program, the program or major may be changed. Both the existing Program Director and the Program Director from the “new” program must approve this transfer. Some graduate programs require essays and/or interviews; this is up to the discretion of the “new” program. Requests will be evaluated on a space available basis and may require a delay in the program of study.

If both Program Directors approve the transfer, an Update Request Form (URF) [http://gradschool.sc.edu/prospective/apply-grad.asp?page=apply](http://gradschool.sc.edu/prospective/apply-grad.asp?page=apply) must be submitted to the Graduate School. Along with the Update Request Form, current students will submit new recommendations and an updated goal statement for the new program requested. Students who missed a semester will also need to submit an updated nursing license and updated CastleBranch information. There may be additional program specific
requirements. (Alert: submission of the Update Request Form puts a hold on registration and suspends the existing program of study.)
Courses & Registration

Online Courses
All nursing courses in the Ph.D. Program are partially delivered online through Blackboard Course Management System which allows USC faculty to create a secure course web site for class communications, posting assignments, posting readings, linking to complementary web sites, administering exams, and much more. In courses that use Blackboard, the course syllabus will provide basic information about accessing Blackboard https://blackboard.sc.edu. Additional information about Blackboard is available at http://www.uts.sc.edu/academic/blackboard/.

Students access online courses by logging in at https://blackboard.sc.edu. Courses offered in this format are constructed and conducted differently than traditional classroom courses. Below are some suggestions on how to be successful in online courses:

- Become familiar with Blackboard (Bb), the course software,
- Learn how to access Bb using Multifactor authentication,
- Read the “How to…” guides that are found in each course. They are well worth your time,
- Participate actively in the course.

Academic Advising
For most graduate students, the academic advisor is the Program Director or student graduate advisor. Advisors are the principal source of assistance to students in planning an academic program, seeking advice and dealing with problems as they arise. However, it is the responsibility of the student to maintain contact with the advisor. Faculty and staff will make every effort to help students but cannot be expected to be responsible for problems not brought to their attention in a timely manner.

A mandatory online and on campus orientation is required for all new Ph.D. students. Each student receives advisement and is provided a Program of Study and a Plan of Study developed by the appropriate Program Director prior to initial registration. Thereafter, all Ph.D. students are required to participate in advisement as needed as communicated via Blackboard announcements. Deviation from the plan of study will result in a mandatory advisement with the appropriate Program Director prior to subsequent registration. Enrollment in other special courses is contingent upon a student fulfilling additional requirements by stated deadlines (i.e., prerequisites, immunization and other health requirements, health agency requirements, contractual agreements in effect).

Course Registration
Registering for courses is an important task that all students must complete throughout their time at USC. New and transfer graduate Nursing students may not register for nursing courses until they have been admitted to the program, agreed to the plan of study and completed orientation. See link below for Self Service Carolina (SSC) (our registration system).

The University Registrar establishes the official calendars followed by the University of South Carolina system. Access the full current and upcoming semester academic calendars to find key dates and information including holidays, registration dates, payment deadlines, drop or add dates, as well as exams and commencement for each term. Each part of term has specific drop, add, and refund dates. Review your schedule in SSC https://my.sc.edu/ to determine the part of term for your classes.

Registration Tips

Step 1: Review your Plan of Study in Central. Log in: http://con-central.nurs.sc.edu/studentportal - make note of the courses you are projected to take in the next term. If you have questions about your plan of study or the courses you are scheduled to take, contact your program director.

Step 2: Check your Registration Time Ticket in SSC - see “Registration” then “Registration Notices and Holds”. Make a note of the date/time and set a reminder in your calendar.

What is a Registration Time Ticket? It is the time the Registrar's office has appointed a student to begin registration for the next term.

Step 3: Check your student account for holds. See "Registration" then "Registration Notices and Holds." What should you do if you have a hold on your account in SSC? Contact the office that placed the hold on your account and determine what needs to be done to have the hold removed. Ensure your hold is removed before the time on your Registration Time Ticket.

What is an Advisement Hold? Advisement holds are placed on student records by the College of Nursing to ensure students complete all prerequisite requirements or face advisement holds prevent registration. Advisement holds will be removed by staff as compliance is confirmed.

Step 4: Continuing students: Confirm your CastleBranch account is up to date - Sign in to your CastleBranch account and view your "To Do List" - take care of any overdue items before the time on your Registration Time Ticket.
Step 5: Register for the classes listed on your plan of study at your designated registration time (See Step 2 above to determine your designated time).

Students must register only for those courses listed on their plan of study. Students who deviate from their plan of study may be removed from courses by the College of Nursing.

Need help with the Registration Processes in SSC? See the SSC tutorials: https://tinyurl.com/yyc78wg3

Course Restrictions

Registration for a clinical nursing course is limited to students admitted to a College of Nursing graduate degree or certificate program.

Registration Advisement holds are placed on student records for the following reasons:

(1) Prior to clinical course: Each graduate Nursing student is placed on registration hold before the start of the upcoming registration term in which a clinical experience will occur. Each student must be fully compliant with program requirements of completed DPOS by end of first semester of enrollment and request registration “signoff” from the student graduate advisor for the registration hold to be lifted and to register for classes. The registration holds are lifted by student graduate advisor(s). This is an opportunity for students and the Program Director/Advisors to ensure that the Program of Study and planned course registration is correct.

(2) NURS 840/840A (independent study courses) requires completion of an independent study contract (G-ISC) by the student and faculty member that must be filed with the student’s Graduate Advisor for the student’s file and in the USC Registrar's Office.

Course Selection and Drop Period

The University of South Carolina Registrar’s web page SSC https://my.sc.edu/ enables students to register via the internet and access their personal information
such as grades, financial aid, fees, and class schedule. **The most up to date information is posted online.**

Students can use **SSC** [https://my.sc.edu/](https://my.sc.edu/) to add, drop, or change a course or section. Any change in enrollment must be recorded with the Registrar’s Office. Students may check the **Academic Calendar** online at [http://registrar.sc.edu/html/calendar/default.stm](http://registrar.sc.edu/html/calendar/default.stm) for the last day to drop a course without a grade of “W” being recorded and for the last day to drop a course or withdraw without a grade of “WF” being recorded. Please note a “W” does constitute an attempt of a course. Failure to complete the official course withdrawal process has serious implications for calculation of the final course grade and calculation of grade point averages. Students should discuss any potential changes with their program director and assigned student graduate advisor prior to making the changes.

For a refund schedule, please see the **Tuition Refund** section below for more information. Please note that should a student fail to attend classes in a course for which s/he is registered, s/he **may not** be automatically dropped from the course. Students who fail to drop a course they are not taking, but are still registered for, within the drop/add period may receive a grade of FN in that course.

Applicants to the Ph.D. program may not register for nursing courses until they are admitted to the program, have agreed to the plan of study and completed orientation.

Registration for independent study courses requires an independent study contract (see Independent Study Courses).

**Enrollment Status**

Students enrolled in full-time or part-time study are entitled to use the full services of the University. Full-time status requires enrollment in at least nine credit hours during a regular semester and six credit hours during the summer. For the purposes of financial aid, a student must be enrolled in at least 6 hours per semester to be eligible for financial aid. Students may elect not to enroll for a summer session; however, they are not entitled to use faculty, computing or library resources during that time. Graduate School requires any student who misses one or more semesters to submit an **Update Request Form** to renew your enrollment privileges. In some cases, if a planned term away is pre-arranged and approved prior to the term, this requirement may be waived. If three years or more lapse between enrollments, students must reapply for admission.
Tuition Refund

Each part of term has specific drop, add, and refund dates. Review your schedule in SSC https://my.sc.edu/ to determine the part of term for your classes.

Withdrawal deadlines should not be used in determining how to receive a 100% refund on tuition. For more details, please review the withdrawal information provided by the University Registrar, or view the Parts of Term Dates and Deadlines located in the Academics section of my.sc.edu.

Course Load

The definition for full-time enrollment status for graduate students is found at https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/international_student_services/immigration/maintaining-your-immigration-status/full-time-enrollment-requirements/index.php.

Special Enrollment (Z Status)

Students nearing completion of a doctoral degree requiring a dissertation may be granted special enrollment status and certified as half-time or full-time if the student has completed course work required for the degree except dissertation preparation (899). Eligibility requires verification of three conditions by the student’s academic advisor or program graduate director. The memo requesting Z-status must indicate that:

1. All course work on the program of study has been completed except for dissertation preparation (899);
2. The student is working on the dissertation full-time, or if applicable, at least half-time; and
3. The student is not employed outside their graduate assistantship or, if applicable, employed no more than half-time if not on a graduate assistantship.

A Z-status request for under-enrollment privilege must be term-specific and is limited to two terms. Z-status for under-enrollment privilege may be extended beyond two terms with the approval of and justification from the academic unit and with the approval of the dean of The Graduate School.

Students who request exemption from full-time enrollment for financial aid purposes must submit the Special Academic Enrollment Release form (F 6.2) from the Office of Financial Aid.

Independent Study Courses
The purpose of an independent study is to allow the student to pursue an area of academic interest not adequately covered by the regular course structure. Students seeking to enroll in an independent study course should work with a faculty member willing to serve as Instructor of Record. Prior to enrolling in the course, the student and faculty member will meet to develop the learning objectives and course outcomes.

**Registration for Independent Study**

The *Graduate School Independent Study Contract form (G-ISC)* is required for any graded, for-credit course in which the student is doing independent academic work. This contract is to contain the following information:

- **Course Description** should give insight into the content to be covered within one semester or part of the semester.
- **List of Tasks** should include 1) a brief description of each task and how it will be assessed, 2) an estimate of when it will be due or accomplished, and 3) the weighted contribution toward a final grade, preferably expressed as a percentage. The total of all of the tasks should be 100 percent.
- **Grading Scale**

This form must be approved by course faculty and Graduate Director. See additional required approval below. Students send an approved copy of the G-ISC to the Office of the University Registrar before registering for the course.

**Summer Sessions**

There are typically three sessions offered each summer. Accelerated courses are typically scheduled to begin after spring final exams and run through July. Non-clinical courses typically are scheduled to begin after spring final exams and run through the first of August. Clinical Courses are typically scheduled to begin after spring final exams and run through mid-August. Registration for summer and fall courses occurs simultaneously during the Advance Registration period in the spring semester. Unlike fall and spring registration, summer registration is on a first-come, first-served basis.

**Class Attendance & Absences**

Policies regarding absence from classes are determined by the instructor(s) responsible for the course. Any special circumstances (including but not limited to religious holidays) must be discussed with the course director prior to the start of the semester.

Students are required to attend all clinical components of their course work. Absences from the clinical portion of a nursing course will not be excused except for a documented illness (of the student), family death or critical illness. Students with excessive excused
absences from clinical may be asked to share the cost of the make-up clinical hours with the School of Nursing. Excessive absences for any reason may necessitate repetition of the entire course.

Unexcused absences from clinical may result in a failing grade for the course based on the discretion of the course director. If the course director allows a student to make up an unexcused absence from clinical, and faculty coverage is needed, the student must pay the current rate per day missed.

Withdrawal from Course and/or from University

A student may attempt a specific graduate course twice in the graduate program. An attempt is any grade or W received in a course. Each Ph.D. course may only be attempted twice.

Students can drop a course or withdraw with a grade of W or WF via SSC. Deadlines for dropping a course without receiving a W and WF, as well as refund dates, are determined by the part of term to which a course is attached. Every part of term during a semester has a drop/add deadline.

Withdrawals are defined by the time in the semester you wish to withdraw. There are both academic and financial implications associated with the date you drop your course(s). Hardship Withdrawals (defined as medical, mental health, or special circumstance) are only considered for past semesters or the current semester’s WF period.

Should you wish to withdraw from a course with a grade of W or WF, a grade of W or WF will be recorded on your transcript. A grade of W will not be calculated in your GPA but will be recorded on your permanent record. Prior to withdrawing, you are encouraged to view your Concise Student Schedule located on the Registration tab of the Student section found in SSC to identify your part of term. Speak with a counselor at the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships for questions regarding how dropping some or all your courses will impact your aid (e.g. federal and private loans, grants, scholarships, special status, etc.).
Courses dropped after the WF deadline will be recorded as a WF on your permanent record. The grade of WF is treated as an F in the calculation of your GPA. The WF deadline will vary based on the part of term for your class found in SSC.

Students who have a serious and compelling extenuating circumstance may petition the Graduate School to grant a late withdrawal (AS-122A) for a course. Approval must be obtained from the Assistant Dean. Students petitioning for an exception must contact the Executive Director for Student Affairs to begin this process. Form AS-122A must be approved by the Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies (ADGS), the student’s instructor and the Graduate School prior to withdrawal. Note: W or WF does count as an attempt of the course. Only two attempts per course are permitted.

For information about tuition refunds, please contact the Bursar’s Office.

Leave of Absence or Inactive Status

A student taking one or more semesters off from coursework will require submission of an Update Request Form. The Admission Committee will review the URF and determine the semester of return based on the student’s revised Program of Study.

Ph.D. students must contact their program director and/or graduate advisor if taking one or more semesters off from coursework.

Transfer Credit

Course work not part of a completed certificate program or graduate degree from USC or another institution may be transferred for credit toward a doctoral degree. A limited amount of course work may be transferred from another institution for credit toward a doctoral degree. The exact number of transfer hours varies by program but may not constitute more than 50 percent of the hours listed on a program of study, not including dissertation preparation (899) or the equivalent.

The transfer course work must be relevant to the program and have course content and a level of instruction equivalent to that offered by the University’s own graduate programs. Approval for acceptance of transfer credit to a student’s program of study must be approved and justified by the student’s academic program and submitted to the dean of the Graduate School for final approval on the Request for Transfer of Academic Credit (G-RTC) form. Only credits with grades of B or better (equivalent to 3.0 on a 4.0 grading scale) may be transferred from another institution into a doctoral degree program. Course work transferred for credit toward a doctoral degree must be from an accredited institution and must be no more than ten years old at the time of graduation.
The appropriate content faculty member reviews the syllabus to determine equivalency and to make a formal recommendation to the appropriate program director. The Program Director routes his/her recommendation along with faculty member’s recommendation to the Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies (ADGS) for final CON approval. Outdated transfer courses (courses completed outside the ten-year period preceding graduation date) cannot be revalidated.

Please refer to the Graduate Studies Bulletin Academic Regulations section on Transfer Credit in http://bulletin.sc.edu/index.php before contacting the student graduate advisor for more information about transfer credit.

Revalidation of Outdated Courses

Students enrolled in a doctoral program at the University of South Carolina may, with permission of the academic program, request revalidation of USC graduate courses over ten years old for inclusion on the doctoral program of study. Each academic unit will determine whether a course is appropriate for revalidation. All instructions for revalidation must be followed and the Permit for Revalidation Examination (PRE) form must be completed and submitted to the dean of The Graduate School for approval prior to revalidation. Proof of payment of revalidation fees must be submitted with the Permit for Revalidation Examination form.

- **Note:** Coursework taken at other institutions may not be revalidated.

- Revalidation of a course requires that the student demonstrate current knowledge of the course content by a faculty member who currently is teaching or has taught the course.

The College of Nursing Program Director recommends approval to the ADGS, who then sends the request to The Graduate School for approval. A per credit hour fee must be paid to the Bursar’s Office before revalidation can occur and a receipt must accompany the Permit for Revalidation Examination form for approvals. It is the student’s responsibility to track the Permit for Revalidation Examination form.

Grades, Grade Reports and Transcripts

**Grades**

**FN** (Failure-Non Attendance) and **UN** (Unsatisfactory-Non Attendance) grades are assigned to students who never attended or have stopped attending class but have not officially dropped or withdrawn. Faculty are required to provide a last date of attendance when assigning this grade. The grade and the last date of attendance
are used in determining the recalculation of awarded funds for financial aid recipients. Reporting the last date of attendance is critical to avoid potential financial liability for the institution.

FN and UN grades are displayed and calculated as F and U grades on the official transcript.

WF is assigned for student withdrawal from a course after the penalty deadline prescribed in the academic and refund calendars on the registrar’s Web site. (See section on “Dropping A Course.”) The grade of WF is treated as an F in the evaluation of suspension conditions and grade point average computation.

W is assigned for student withdrawal from a course after the late registration period but before the penalty date. Courses dropped during the late registration period (as published in the academic and refund calendars on the registrar’s Web site) will not be recorded on a student’s permanent record. In exceptional cases, the grade W will be used after the first seven weeks of a semester, primarily in cases of withdrawal from the University or from a course for medical reasons (See section on “Dropping A Course.”). A grade of W will not enter into the evaluation of suspension conditions or in grade point average computation but will be recorded on a student’s permanent record.

I, Incomplete, is assigned at the discretion of the instructor when, in the instructor’s judgment, a student is unable to complete some portion of the assigned work in a course because of an unanticipated illness, accident, work-related responsibility, family hardship, or verified learning disability. The grade of I is not intended to give students additional time to complete course assignments unless there is some indication that the specified condition or event prevented the student from completing course assignments on time. By arrangement with the instructor, the student will have up to 12 months in which to complete the work before a permanent grade is recorded. Re-enrolling in the course will not make up an Incomplete. An Assignment of Incomplete Grade form (AS-5) must be completed by the instructor and submitted to the Office of the University Registrar explaining the reason for the I and conditions for make-up. A grade of I is not computed in calculating a student’s grade point average. After 12 months an I that has not been made up is changed to a grade of F or to the back-up grade indicated by the faculty member on the Assignment of Incomplete Grade form.
\textbf{T}, a Graduate School symbol, is assigned to indicate enrollment in Thesis Preparation (799) and Dissertation Preparation (899). Courses with this symbol will be counted as hours attempted and hours earned only. Grade points will not be awarded. For unsatisfactory work the grade of U should be assigned. The grade of I cannot be assigned in courses numbered 799 and 899.

\textbf{AUD} indicates a course was carried on an audit basis (See section on “Auditing” for more information).

\textbf{NR}, No Record, is assigned in the event that the grade is not available at the time final grades are submitted. It is a temporary mark on the transcript and must be replaced by a grade. If replacement does not occur before the last week of the following the term for which the grade was recorded, a grade of F will be assigned. The NR is ignored in computing the GPA.

\textbf{Grading of Ph.D. Project Courses}

Completion or satisfactory progress in these courses will be indicated by the grade of ‘T’; unsatisfactory progress will be indicated by a grade of ‘U’. No other grading options (i.e., Incomplete) are available. These grades will not be used to calculate the student’s GPA. However, as noted above, the College of Nursing does not allow a student to continue in the program with a grade of ‘U’ in two courses.

\textbf{Grades Reports and Transcripts}

Student grade report is viewable within \textbf{SSC} in the Grades section. Final grades are due 72 hours after the exams. If your grade is not posted, contact your instructor.

At any point in the semester, it’s easy to view your USC GPA. Just log in to \textbf{SSC} to view your academic record. If you need an official copy of your grades, order a \textbf{transcript}. Transcripts are maintained by the Office of the Registrar \url{https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/registrar/transcripts_and_records/transcripts/index.php}, not by the College of Nursing.

\textbf{Grade Disagreement}

The role of the ADGS in matters of grade disagreement is to investigate the processes used by faculty in determining the grade and advise the faculty member in handling any perceived problems with applying grading processes outlined in the syllabus or any other apparent violations of fairness. The Faculty member ultimately determines the grade that is awarded.
Course Materials

Textbooks
Most assigned textbooks are available in the University Bookstore. The University Bookstore is located on the first floor of the Russell House. Several other bookstores such as the South Carolina Bookstore and Addams University Bookstore, located near campus, also sell required textbook and academic supplies.

Course / Faculty Evaluations
At the end of each course, students evaluate the course and its instructor. The results of these evaluations are maintained by the Office of Academic Affairs.
Academic Regulations

Good Standing
A student in good standing is defined as a student who:

- Maintains the proper GPA
- Maintains the proper course load (without incompletes)
- Is not on academic probation
- Does not have two consecutive semesters of non-enrollment
- Is on an approved leave of absence
- Is not on financial hold nor carrying past due balances
- Has completed the immunizations, background check, and drug screening processes with no identified problems

A student must maintain a **cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0** to remain in good academic standing and to graduate from the College of Nursing and the University.

Academic Probation
A student will be placed on probation if they:

- Have a cumulative GPA of less than 3.0 (**B**) at the end of any semester. Student is allowed one calendar year to raise the cumulative GPA to at least 3.00.
- Have a cumulative GPA of less than 3.0 due to conversion of grades of incomplete at end of semester in which the grade is posted. Student is allowed one major semester of probation dating from the semester in which the Incomplete conversion grade is received by the Registrar to raise the cumulative GPA to 3.00 or above.
- Have earned less than a minimum grade of 80% (**B**) in any graduate course work. If a grade lower than B is earned, this course must be repeated in order to enroll in subsequent nursing courses. However, the initial below B grade remains on the student record and counts toward the “Two C Rule” (see Academic Dismissal).

Academic Dismissal and Appeals for Reinstatement
A student will be dismissed from the College of Nursing if they:

- Receive two grades of 79.99% (**C+**) or lower in the same NURS course or in any two NURS courses.
- Fail a required graduate course twice or withdrawing from the course on the first attempt and failing the course on the second attempt or vice versa. A student
may only attempt a specific graduate course twice in the graduate program. An attempt is any grade or W received in a course.

- Have a grade of 'U’ in two courses
- Have a cumulative GPA of less than 3.0 at end of one calendar year of academic probation.
- Have a cumulative GPA of less than 3.0 at end of major semester of probation dating from the semester in which the Incomplete conversion grade is received by the Registrar.
- Are banned from a clinical agency because of unprofessional, unethical, or illegal behavior.
- Have a professional (RN or APRN) licensure suspension or revocation.
- A student in a post-license program who becomes no longer licensed or has any form of restriction/probation as a registered professional nurse by any license granting authority, no longer meet the admission criteria of the program and are no longer eligible to progress. The student will need to notify the program director immediately of the change in their licensure status. An academic record hold will be placed on the student’s records. The hold may be released upon becoming licensed or restriction/probation removed.

Appeals for reinstatement from students should be reviewed first by the Executive Director of Student Affairs. If the appeal is approved, then the Student Petitions Committee must forward it to the Dean of the Graduate School for action. (see Student Petitions Committee below).

Grading Policies

The College of Nursing uses a 10-point grading scale with no grade rounding.

- A = 90-100
- B+ = 87-89.99
- B  = 80-86.99
- C+ = 77-79.99
- C   = 70-76.99
- D+ = 67-69.99
- D   = 60-66.99
- F   = 59.99 or lower

The Grade Point Average (GPA) is tabulated at the end of each semester. The University of South Carolina grades on a standard 4.0 grading system found at https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/registrar/transcripts_and_records/grade_point_scale/index.php.
Graduate School Academic Forgiveness

The Graduate School Academic Forgiveness Policy is outlined in the Graduate Student Bulletin in the Academic Regulations section.

Course Failure

If a required course is failed, it must be repeated at the next available offering and a satisfactory grade must be achieved. The repeated course may not be taken with the Pass/Fail Option. Any courses for which the failed course is a prerequisite may not be taken until a satisfactory grade in the prerequisite course has been achieved. However, the failing grade remains on the transcript even though the student has repeated the course and obtained a passing grade or above. The failing grade is still calculated into the cumulative GPA. Violation(s) of the Nurse Practice Act will be reported to the Board of Nursing.

Incomplete Policy

A student who fails to complete a course within the prescribed period and does not withdraw from the course will receive, at the instructor’s discretion, either a grade of I (incomplete) or F (failure). If an I grade is granted but not completed in the time period outlined the grade will revert to a F or faculty determined grade.

Incompletes in Non-Clinical Courses

A grade of incomplete in a non-clinical course is assigned by the instructor only under the following conditions:

- The student has academic good standing in the course with a passing grade average.
- The student has no more than two outstanding course requirements unmet in the course.
- The student and instructor have completed an Assignment of Incomplete Grade Form (AS-5).
- The student and instructor have an agreed date of submission for all outstanding course requirements. The student has up to 12 months to complete the work unless the instructor has given an earlier deadline.
Any grade of incomplete which remains after one calendar year from date of assignment automatically converts to either an “F” or the backup grade assigned by the instructor.

Examination Policies

1. All exams must be completed by the due date/time. Failure to complete any exam by the due date/time will result in a grade of 0 for that assignment. In case of emergencies and/or extenuating circumstances, please notify the faculty in advance.
2. Point deductions will be incurred for failure to complete the exams in the designated time frame. If you exceed the time limits for the exams, 2 points per minute will be subtracted from the grade.
3. Discussion or reproduction of any online assessment (e.g. exams or quizzes) in any form is a violation of academic integrity and, if it happens, will be reported.
4. All exams must be proctored. Students have 2 options for taking proctored exams:
   1. Testing center at USC Columbia. No Fee.
   2. Proctor U. Per exam fee paid by the student.

Degree Completion and Graduation

Application for a Degree

To be eligible for graduation a student must meet all University and College of Nursing standards for receiving a degree. Candidates for degrees must file a formal application during the last semester before graduation prior to the deadline set by the Registrar’s Office. Deadlines are posted for each term on the official academic calendar of the University Registrar. Applications filed after the deadline result will not be accepted and will delay receipt of diploma. At the time of graduation, the student’s cumulative grade point average (GPA) must be at least 3.00. Additionally, the student’s average on all grades recorded on the program of study for courses numbered 700 or above must be at least 3.00 and all courses listed on the program of study must be at least 3.00.
Student Resources

Role of Executive Director of Student Affairs

One of the roles of the Executive Director of Student Affairs is to serve as a student advocate in the College of Nursing. The Executive Director of Student Affairs serves as the initial contact for concerns such as requesting exception to a college policy (petitions) or a grievance. The Executive Director serves as a confidential, informal and independent resource for graduate student concerns and conflicts within the College of Nursing. Ms. Cheryl Nelson can be reached at (803) 777-8777 or email cynelson@email.sc.edu.

Role of Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity

The Associate Dean for DEI strives for impartiality, fairness and objectivity in the treatment of all students and the consideration of their issues in the College of Nursing. She also serves as a confidential resource for student concerns and conflicts within the College of Nursing. Dr. Jenerette can be reached at (803) 576-8332 or email cjeneret@mailbox.sc.edu.

Role of Ombudsman

The Graduate School Ombudsman serves as a confidential, neutral, informal and independent resource for graduate student concerns and conflicts. The Ombudsman strives for impartiality, fairness and objectivity in the treatment of graduate students and the consideration of their issues. The Ombudsman advocates for fair and equitably administered processes but does not advocate on behalf of the student.

Communications made to The Graduate School Ombuds are not notice to the University. However, the Ombudsman may refer individuals to the appropriate place where formal notice to the University can be made. To ensure confidentiality, graduate students with concerns or conflicts should not email the Ombudsman; instead, call or arrange a visit to Mr. Dale Moore, 803-777-8237, Close-Hipp Building, 1705 College Street.

Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support

The USC Division of Student Affairs collaborates with campus and external constituents to provide access, facilitate students’ progress and persistence, advance learning, and shape responsible citizens and future leaders. More information about the offices under the division is available at https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/student_affairs/index.php.
Student Petition Policy

Overview
Students who feel they are entitled to relief from or deviation in the academic regulations of the University or the College of Nursing should apply through the petition process of the Student Petitions Committee of the College.

The purview of the Student Petitions Committee is to address student petitions, in accordance with College and University guidelines. Students will receive an email notification within 24 hours followed by a letter informing them of the Committee’s decision and outlining the required course of action. A copy will be sent to the student’s advisor and Program Director. All matters of academic discipline are acted upon through the Student Petitions Committee of the College of Nursing.

Meetings

The Student Petitions Committee meets three times a year at the close of the fall, spring, and summer semesters, and as needed, to rule on specific academic problems.

Petitions

A student must petition the Committee in writing, describing the situation, and may be asked to present his or her case at the Committee meeting. The petition should be submitted to the Executive Director of Student Affairs.

Grievance Policy

Overview
For nonacademic issues, see the current USC Student Handbook, USC Policies and Procedures Manual located at http://www.sc.edu/policies/policiesbydivision.php. For academic issues refer to both the current USC Policies and Procedures Manual at the
http://www.sc.edu/policies/policiesbydivision.php and the College of Nursing policy below.

The graduate student academic grievance policy describes the channel of resolution used in the College of Nursing to resolve students’ academic issues or complaints. The channel requires that the student seek resolution with the faculty member alleged to have caused the problem and, if not resolved, the student should initiate resolution through a defined set of procedures.

Students are encouraged to meet with their course faculty if they have academic problems. Further procedures for resolution of differences are outlined in the Student Grievance Policy-Academic of the current USC Policies and Procedures Manual http://www.sc.edu/policies/policiesbydivision.php and this College of Nursing Graduate Student Handbook. Contact the Executive Director of Student Affairs in the College of Nursing for assistance.

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**Graduate Student Grievance Policy - Academic**

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA**  
**COLLEGE OF NURSING**  
**GRADUATE STUDENT GRIEVANCE POLICY - ACADEMIC**

The purpose of this policy is to inform students of their rights and responsibilities regarding the academic issues cited below.

1. **Protection of freedom of expression.** Students should be free to take reasoned exceptions to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion. They are responsible, however, for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.

2. **Protection against improper academic evaluation.** Students should have protection, through orderly procedures, against prejudiced or capricious academic evaluation. At the same time, they are responsible for maintaining standards of academic performance established for each course in which they are enrolled.

3. **Protection against improper disclosure.** Information about student views, beliefs, and political associations which professors acquire in the course of their work as instructors, advisors, and counselors should be considered as confidential. Protection against improper disclosure is a serious professional obligation. Judgments about a student's ability and character may be disclosed under appropriate circumstances, normally with the knowledge and consent of the student.

**STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCESS**
If a student perceives that any of the protections described above have been violated, the student should initiate resolution through the following channels and in the sequence indicated.

1. Discuss the issue with the faculty member involved in the alleged violation. The discussion must take place within 30 calendar days after the end of the semester during which the alleged incident occurred. If the complaint is not resolved with the faculty involved, then go to the next step

2. Notify the Executive Director of Student Affairs, who will explain the grievance policy and the student’s rights and responsibilities. The Director will assist the student in completing a written narrative describing the alleged violation of the protections described above. The narrative must contain the nature of the problem or complaint, reasonable evidence to support the case, background material, and a description of what has been done to resolve the problem.

3. Meet with the ADGS and submit the written narrative describing the alleged violation. The ADGS will send to the student a written response within 10 regular working days following the meeting. If, after receiving the ADGS response, the complaint is not resolved to the aggrieved student’s satisfaction, the student must notify the ADGS within 10 working days of receiving the letter and request a grievance hearing. The ADGS will appoint an Ad Hoc Grievance Committee of four faculty members, one of whom will serve as chair, and three students to conduct the grievance hearing. The grievance hearing will be held within 10 regular working days of the student’s request. The ADGS will distribute the written narrative of the student’s grievance to the Ad Hoc Grievance Committee and the faculty alleged to have caused the violation at the time of appointment to the Ad Hoc Committee.

4. Attend the grievance hearing and present the alleged violation(s) to the Ad Hoc Grievance Committee and answer questions. The faculty member(s) who is alleged to have caused the grievance has the right to be present during all presentations of evidence to the Committee. The student and the faculty member may call witnesses. However, the Chair of the Ad Hoc Grievance Committee must be notified in writing at least 24 hours before the hearing of the names of all witnesses and the reason each witness has been called.

It is the responsibility of the student and the faculty member, respectively, to arrange for the appearance of witnesses. The ADGS may not attend the grievance hearing.

The Ad Hoc Grievance Committee must schedule a hearing; inform the faculty involved in writing and schedule his/her appearances at the hearing; maintain
accurate, confidential records of the case; conduct the hearing in a fair and impartial manner; and inform the student and the faculty member(s) of the decision within two regular working days of the hearing.

**APPEAL**

Graduate students may file an appeal of the decision of the Ad Hoc Grievance Committee to the Dean of the College of Nursing within ten days of receipt of the finding of the Ad Hoc Grievance Committee. The appeal must be filed on grounds that cite procedural error that results in a bias decision; new evidence; or penalty imposed that is not appropriate to the violation. If the Dean finds merit in any of the above claims, the Dean will appoint a new Ad Hoc Grievance Committee who will conduct a new grievance hearing. If the Dean does not find merit to student claims, the finding of the Ad Hoc Grievance Committee will be upheld.

Graduate students may appeal decisions to the Graduate School. Appeals accepted by the Graduate School for consideration of reversal or modification of the Departmental decision are those with one or more of the following cited as grounds: inequitable application of regulations, bias, conflict with regulations, or extenuating circumstance. See current Graduate Bulletin for addition information.

A faculty member who feels aggrieved as a result of student grievance proceedings has the right to appear before the University Faculty Grievance Committee and present his/her case to the Committee. The process is described in the Faculty Manual.

*Policy may be changed at anytime*
Travel to Research Sites

Students are responsible for transportation to sites for their research each semester and for covering the cost of travel. It is the obligation of students to provide their own vehicle collision and/or bodily injury liability insurance for their personal vehicles. Neither the College of Nursing nor the University of South Carolina is responsible for any vehicle occurrences or transportation.

Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Protocol (Reviewed April 2019)

Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Protocol

This protocol applies to all USC Columbia campus employees, student employees and all other USC students who have an exposure to a potentially infectious biological material. A potentially infectious material or biological hazard may include an incident involving a microorganism (e.g. bacterial agent, viral agent, and fungal agent), human-derived material, biological toxin, or an incident involving recombinant DNA research. Exposures through sexual contact are not included in this protocol.

Procedures for needle sticks or other exposure to a potentially infectious material:
• Report the incident immediately to the supervisor and clinical faculty to authorize medical evaluation. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring students are offered immediate medical care, appropriate diagnostics and treatment.
  ➢ Percutaneous Exposure (e.g., needle stick, cut, animal bite) – Immediately wash or flush the exposed area with soap and water for 10 minutes.
  ➢ Mucous Membrane Exposure (i.e., eyes, nose or mouth) – Flush the exposed area with water. If exposure is to the eyes, flush eyes (holding open) using the eyewash station for 10 minutes.

• The student or supervisor should immediately notify the appropriate entity within the health care institution where the exposure occurs, in order to initiate testing of the "source patient" for HIV, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C infection. It is important for rapid HIV testing to be completed with results available within a few hours. Each institution has its own procedures for obtaining "source patient" testing, and supervising faculty should know these procedures. If there is uncertainty about whom to contact within the host institution, instructions should be obtained from one or more of the following:
  ➢ Employee health office
  ➢ Charge nurse for the floor or unit where the exposure occurred
- Infection control nurse
- Administrative officer of the day
- Clinic director (for outpatient sites)

- Once the necessary “source patient” testing has been ordered, seek medical treatment as soon as possible after the incident (see below for specific instructions)

- Notify Executive Director of Student Affairs of incident at 803-608-7770 between the hours of 9am-9pm. Leave a message with return phone number if no answer. If no response within one hour, call the Office of Academic Affairs at 803-777-7412.

- Call CompEndium for non-emergency injuries. In an emergency, visit a local emergency room or call 911. Follow these five important steps to report your injury:
  - Immediately report the injury to your supervisor. You and your supervisor call CompEndium together at 877-709-2667 to report the injury.
  - Follow CompEndium’s Nurse Case Manager’s instructions for any authorized treatment and further reporting.
  - Complete an Employee Injury Report [pdf] and have your supervisor complete a Supervisor’s Report [pdf]. Fax both reports to CompEndium at 877-710-2667 and to (803 777-0616, ATTN: Executive Director of Student Affairs.)
  - If the treating physician does not release you to return to work, be sure to complete the Benefits Election section at the bottom of the Employee Injury Report. Meet with your department HR Contact for an explanation of your options or call the Benefits Office at 803-777-6650 for assistance.
  - Report the injury to CompEndium Services within 10 days of the date of injury.

All exposure incidents in the clinical agencies and the client-simulated laboratory (CSL) shall be reported, investigated, and documented. If an exposure occurs and there is no faculty present, the student must notify faculty and/or the Office of Academic Affairs as soon as possible.

Workers’ Compensation covers the following populations who experience a bloodborne pathogen exposure while working or at clinical if appropriate reports are filed:
- All university employees and apprenticeship students in the Colleges of Education, Exercise Science, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Physical Therapy, and Social Work.
• Work study students and graduate assistants who are exposed while on the job.

Students who suffer a Non-Job Related/Non clinical related Blood borne Pathogen Exposure during an enrolled academic session:
• Should report to the Student Health Services for initial evaluation and referral. If the SHC is closed, students may seek care at the Palmetto Richland Hospital Emergency Department. If away from Columbia area, the student should report to the nearest hospital emergency department.

Evaluation and Review
The ADGS is responsible for annually reviewing this policy and procedures and its effectiveness and for updating the program as needed.
Financial Information

Tuition and Fees

Tuition is charged based on the number of credit hours taken in a given semester. Please see the Courses and Registration section of this handbook for Tuition Refund policies.

Financial Assistance

The USC Office of Financial Aid and Scholarship help you evaluate your costs and determine what type of financial aid support you need — loans, scholarships, grants or student employment. To be fully considered for all financial aid resources, you must complete a new Free Application for Federal Student Aid each year and all of your paperwork must be received before the April 1 annual priority deadline. You may contact the Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships directly with any financial aid questions: uscfaid@mailbox.sc.edu or 803-777-8134.

The College of Nursing has one graduate scholarship application that is used for consideration for all eligible departmental scholarships in the college. Each year, the online scholarship application will be available on our website in December and the application will be due no later than March 15th of the following year. College of Nursing award decisions are expected to be finalized and announced late July/early August of each year.

In addition, as external scholarships are announced, this information is shared with students via Blackboard in the appropriate communities under Fellowship and External Scholarship Opportunities.

Scholarships, traineeships, and research funding opportunities may be available through the College, The Graduate school, the University and extramural sources.

Graduate Assistantships

The College offers a limited number of graduate assistantships with stipends. Tuition assistance for graduate assistantships is sometimes available to graduate students enrolled in at least six (6) credit hours during the fall and spring semesters; summer assistantships requires at least three (3) credit hours of enrollment. Contact the College of Nursing Human Resources Director for more information at (803) 777-6918.

Funded Research Opportunities

Opportunities to participate on funded research programs may be available to full-time graduate students. This experience can be a valuable addition to a student’s studies. For
further information the student may consult the Office of Research at (803) 777-6488 (Gene Brown).

External Scholarship Opportunities

**External Scholarships List**

We encourage all students to seek outside funding opportunities. Many nursing societies and private organizations offer a variety of grants that are open to students who are not eligible for traditional need-based financial aid. This list is not all inclusive.

**40 Nursing Scholarships for All Kinds of Students**

This comprehensive resource is provided through allnursingschools.com. Choosing a career in nursing means you’ll be entering a meaningful field that has a positive outlook for job growth as well as increasing opportunities for advancement. However, it can take years of costly education to qualify as a nursing professional and figuring out how you’ll pay for school can be an overwhelming task.

**50 Great Scholarships for Nursing Students**

This scholarship resource is provided through healthcare-administration-degree.net

**Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses Foundation (AMSN)**

This program is available to students in LPN-to-RN, RN-to-BSN, RN-to-MSN, BSN-to-MSN, or MSN-to-Doctorate programs. Applicants must be a member of AMSN.

**Action Behavior Center ABA Therapy Scholarship**

ABA Therapy Scholarship for undergraduate students pursuing a degree in some field relating to research on autism spectrum disorder or clinical therapy positions (psychology, applied behavior analysis, education, or a variety of natural or applied sciences). $1,000 awarded semi-annually.

**After College**

A searchable database of internships. For more help on finding internships that are right for you, we urge you to meet with your academic mentors, who are here to help guide you through the process.

**AfterCollege/AACN Nursing Faculty Scholarship**
This scholarship is for full-time students in a baccalaureate-to-doctoral degree or Doctor of Nursing Practice program who want to pursue nursing faculty careers. When they graduate, recipients of this scholarship must teach at a nursing school for at least the duration equivalent to each year of support they received.

**Air Force Nurse Corps**

The US Air Force offers various two-, three-, and four-year scholarships for nursing majors pursuing a BSN degree. When these students graduate, they are commissioned as second lieutenants with an active duty service requirement of at least four years.

**American Association of University Women (AAUW) International Fellowships**

AAUW’s International Fellowship program has been in existence since 1917. The program provides support for women pursuing full-time graduate or postdoctoral study in the U.S. who are not U.S. citizens or permanent residents. A limited number of awards are available for study outside of the U.S. (excluding the applicant’s home country) to women who are members of Graduate Women International (see the list of GWI affiliates). Preference is given to women who show prior commitment to the advancement of women and girls through civic, community, or professional work.

Up to five International Fellowships for master’s/first professional degrees will be renewable for a second year; fellows will receive application information for this competitive program during their fellowship year.

**American Holistic Nurses’ Association (AHNA)**

To qualify, students must be a current member of AHNA and be enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate nursing program related to holistic nursing.

**American Nephrology Nurses’ Association (ANNA)**

ANNA provides various scholarship opportunities for their members who are working on a BSN or advanced nursing degree. To qualify, you must be a full member of ANNA for at least two years and be currently employed in nephrology nursing.

**Army Nurse Corps Nurse Anesthetist Scholarships**

The US Army offers three scholarship programs to provide opportunities for nurses who serve in the Army Nurse Corps or Army Reserve Nurse Corps to become nurse anesthetists. Please note that this scholarship requires an active duty service obligation.
Army ROTC Nurse Program Scholarships
Offers two-, three-, and four-year scholarships for undergraduate nursing students who are US citizens.

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
This initiative funds tuition for low-income minority students who are seeking undergraduate and graduate degrees.

Caring.com Scholarship
Caring.com is a leading senior care resource for family caregivers seeking information and support as they care for aging parents, spouses and other loved ones. The Caring.com Student-Caregiver scholarship is open to full-time college students at an accredited two-or-four-year college or university in the United States.

Cherokee Uniform Scholarship Inspired Comfort Award
Cherokee Uniforms recognize the compassion, competence, and skill of those who take care of our sick and injured and provide scholarships to those who are called to the nursing profession.

Discover Nursing Scholarship Search
Nurses are the unsung heroes of healthcare. Every day, their creativity, innovation, and healing touch change patients’ lives—and the world. Johnson & Johnson is proud to advocate for those changing human health in this dynamic profession.

ENA Emergency Nurses Association
This program is for undergraduate, advanced practice, doctoral, and faculty doctoral students.

Fastweb
Fastweb scholarship search is a comprehensive source of local and national college-specific scholarships.

FinAid.org
FinAid.org was established in the fall of 1994 as a public service. This award-winning site has grown into the most comprehensive source of student financial aid information, advice and tools — on or off the web.

Fund for Lesbian and Gay Scholarships (FLAGS)
This fund provides financial assistance to gay, lesbian, and bisexual students who are involved in their community.

**Giva Nursing Student Scholarship**
This is a semi-annual scholarship for outstanding nursing students.

**Hispanic Scholarship Fund (HSF)**
Through collaboration with major corporations, HSF is the nation’s largest provider of scholarships and financial aid to Latino/Latina students.

**Indian Health Service (IHS)**
The Health Professions Scholarship Program is open to full- and part-time American Indian and Alaska Native students who want an undergraduate or graduate education in the healthcare field. Priority is given to graduate students, as well as junior- and senior-level undergrad students. To qualify, one must be a member of a federally recognized tribe and agree to serve one year in an IHS facility (or other program that serves Indian people) for each year of financial support. Pre-nursing scholarships are also available.

**Kaplun Marx Scholarship**
This is a $1000 scholarship given annually to a current or incoming college student who produces the best essay on the given topic.

**The League Foundation**
Scholarships are available to LGBTQ high school seniors in the US.

**Minority Nurse Faculty Scholarship**
AACN, with support from the Johnson & Johnson Campaign for Nursing’s Future, is currently offering scholarship funding to underrepresented minority (URM) nursing students who plan to work as nursing faculty after graduation. Applicants must be enrolled full-time in a doctoral nursing program or a clinically-focused master’s degree program.

**Minority Nurse Magazine Scholarship Program**
For racial and ethnic minority nursing students who are enrolled in their third or fourth year of an accredited four-year BSN program, or in an accelerated program that leads to a BSN degree or an accelerated master’s entry nursing program that bypasses the traditional BSN degree (such as a BA-to-MSN). Only open to US citizens or permanent residents.
**National Association of Hispanic Nurses (NAHN)**

NAHN provides scholarships and financial aid based on academic standing and potential to be a role model for future nursing students.

**National Black Nurses Association (NBNA)**

NBNA provides scholarships to current students with at least one year left in a nursing program. Applicants must be members of NBNA and be associated with a local chapter.

**National Coalition of Ethnic Minority Nurse Associations (NCEMNA)**

This award is for BSN and master’s degree nursing students who are members of one of the five NCEMNA member associations: Asian American/Pacific Islander Nurses Association, National Alaska Native American Indian Nurses Association, National Association of Hispanic Nurses, National Black Nurses Association, and Philippine Nurses Association of American. Scholarship recipients must be nominated by their association.

**National Health Service Corps (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)**

In exchange for at least two-year service at a health care facility with a critical shortage of nurses, the Nursing Scholarship Program pays full tuition, educational costs, and provides a monthly stipend.

**National Institutes for Health (NIH)**

The NIH Undergraduate Scholarship Program (UGSP) offers competitive scholarships to exceptional students from disadvantaged backgrounds that are committed to biomedical, behavioral, and social science research careers at the NIH. The National Institute for Nursing Research (NINR) at NIH offers predoctoral fellowships for doctoral students.

**National Student Nurses Association (NSNA)**

NSNA provides scholarships to students based on academic achievement, financial need, and involvement in community health and student nursing associations.

**Nurse.org – List of Nursing Scholarships**

Nurse.org impacts the lives of nurses and nursing students by publishing thought-provoking content and launching culture-changing initiatives.

**Nursing.org – Scholarship Database**

Nursing.org offers their own scholarships to assist users of their site, however they also offer a searchable nursing scholarship database. There are an incredible
number of funding opportunities available and we encourage students to apply for as many sources of funding as they can! Use their customizable filters to discover the different nursing scholarships available to you.

**Nurse Corps Scholarship Program**

This program enables students who are accepted or enrolled in diploma, associate, baccalaureate, or graduate nursing programs—including RN to BSN, RN to MSN-NP, and Direct Entry MSN-NP programs—to receive funding for tuition, fees, and other educational costs in exchange for working at an eligible NURSE Corps site upon graduation. The NURSE Corps Scholarship Program is a selective program of the US Government that works to alleviate the critical shortage of nurses in specific types of health care facilities located in Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs).

**Nurses Educational Funds, Inc**

This program is for minority RNs who are enrolled in a master’s or doctoral degree program in their field. Various other graduate-level scholarships are also available. All recipients must be US citizens and members of a professional association.

Nurses Faculty Loan Program

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Bureau of Health Professions provides a loan program to prepare nursing faculty. These loans are available on a limited basis to full-time students who complete a nursing education component and commit to teaching in a nursing education program for four consecutive years following graduation. Up to 85% of the load may be forgiven and the remaining 15% repaid at 3% interest, depending on the HRSA criteria. These loans are available depending on Congressional budget approval. Announcements posted in Blackboard.

**Nurse Practitioner Healthcare Foundation (NPHF)**

NPHF awards scholarships to practicing nurse practitioners and graduate nurse practitioner students.

**Oncology Nursing Society Foundation (ONSF)**

ONSF supplies over seventy scholarships to students and practitioners who are committed to patients with cancer.

**The Point Foundation**

This foundation provides financial support, mentoring, leadership training, and hope to promising students who are marginalized due to sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.
Transcultural Nursing Society (TCNS)
This award is for a TCNS member who is enrolled full- or part-time in a graduate program and is focusing on transcultural, cross-cultural, or international nursing.

Tylenol® Scholarship
The pain-reliever company awards $350,000 each year to students dedicated to healthcare professions.

US Department of Defense
The DoD provides multiple scholarship and financial assistance programs to US military veterans. Military.com has additional scholarship information.

Additional Scholarship Search Resources:

- College Board Scholarship Search
Student Records

Confidentiality of Student Records

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), passed by Congress in 1974, requires educational institutions to provide students access to their educational records, to allow students to correct inaccurate or misleading information in these records, and to limit the release of information to third parties. Additional information is available online.
Graduation

Requirements

PhD students are expected to complete their program of study in 10 years or fewer. Candidates who are unable to meet this requirement must petition for an extension to the ADGS. Any additional requirements in effect at the time of re-evaluation must be completed.

All failing (“F”) and Incomplete grades must be cleared or completed by graduation day or the student’s name will be removed from the graduation list. A cumulative GPA of 3.0 is required. All University balances must be paid in full. At the time of graduation, the student’s cumulative grade point average (GPA) must be at least 3.00. Additionally, the student’s average on all grades recorded on the program of study for courses numbered 700 or above must be at least 3.00 and all courses listed on the program of study must be at least 3.00.

Procedures

The graduation application is the first step you will need to take in order to graduate from your academic program. Review the application and award processes here to better understand what happens once you submit your application.

Ceremonies

The Doctoral Commencement and Hooding Ceremony is the official University graduation ceremony for doctoral students. Traditionally held in the Koger Center for the Arts, the ceremony is attended by most recipients of the doctoral degree. To be eligible to participate, you must have completed the degree requirements, submitted an application for graduation for the term in which the commencement ceremony will be held, have an approved dissertation on file with the Graduate School and submitted the online Survey of Earned Doctorates.

Commencement exercises are held for degree candidates in both Fall and Spring each year. The President of the University of South Carolina presides over commencement. To honor their commitment, each degree candidate is recognized by name and congratulated by the dean of the graduate’s college or school. Click here for additional information regarding commencement.

In addition, the College of Nursing celebrates the accomplishments of the graduating class with a special Convocation ceremony in both Fall and Spring each year.
Students who are on schedule to be candidates for graduation or who have already graduated may request to participate in commencement exercises for a term other than their actual graduation term. In order to be considered to walk late, students must submit the form found at [https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/registrar/forms/early_late.php](https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/registrar/forms/early_late.php).

**Diplomas**

Students with outstanding University balances, incompletes, “NR” or uncleared “F” grades at the time of graduation will not be able to obtain their diplomas nor will they be able to obtain any official transcripts or other University information until the balances are paid in full.

Have a question about your degree or diploma? Review frequently asked questions to find answers at [https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/registrar/graduation/degree_diploma_faq/index.php](https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/registrar/graduation/degree_diploma_faq/index.php)

**Graduation Awards**

Students are encouraged to nominate themselves or others for the College of Nursing Student Awards. More information about the nomination process will be disseminated to students during the academic year.

**Alumni**

Upon graduation, students of the College become alumni of the University of South Carolina. The College's alumni family is a major support system for the College and alumni donors help to support several scholarships annually. Alumni are electronically sent copies of *USC College of Nursing Gamecock CONnection* and invited to attend annual alumni events and celebrations. All graduates are encouraged to notify the alumni office or the My Carolina Alumni Association of address changes. Contact us at sc.edu/nursing/alumni.
The Individual Development Plan (IDP) is a mechanism for creating and accomplishing both long- and short-term goals in pursuit of a desired career goal. To receive maximum benefit from the IDP process, it is essential that both graduate students and their faculty mentor(s) participate fully in the process. The IDP will need to be revised as circumstances change, and it is most helpful if the mentor and graduate student work together to modify the IDP.
Part I. Review of Past Year (to be completed by Graduate Student)
Research Training and Professional Progress
Provide a timeline of major research accomplishments over the past year.
List all accomplishments from the past year in the following categories. Provide as much detail as possible (dates, locations, titles, departments, names, etc.).

Honors and Awards

Grant or Fellowship Funding Applications (both applied for and received)

Publications

Presentations at Professional Meetings

Seminar Presentations

Patents

Clinical Activity

New research skills/new techniques acquired

Research Mentoring (supervision of undergraduate/high school students)

Teaching Activity (course lectures, labs or courses taught)

Service on Committees (Departmental, College, University)

Leadership or organizational activity (such as leadership position in organization, session chair at professional meeting, role in organization of symposium or professional meeting, etc.)

Other Professional Activities
Part II. Goals for Next Year (to be completed by Graduate Student)

A. Research Goals
   Provide a timeline of research activities planned for the next year. When planning for the next year, it is advisable to break large projects into smaller sections to create a feasible timeline.
B. Training and Professional Goals and Progress

List all planned activities for the next year in the following categories. Provide as much detail as possible (titles, name of meeting, name of funding program, etc.).

Expected grant or fellowship applications

Expected publications (indicate status—in preparation, in review, in press; target journal)

Expected presentations and meeting attendance

Expected leadership or management activities

Expected teaching activities (including mentoring)

Other expected professional training
Part III. Career Goals and Planning (to be completed by Graduate Students)

What is your current career goal? (Need ideas? Look here: http://www.sc.edu/career/exploremajors.html)

Why does this career appeal to you?

What other career path(s) interest(s) you?

Why does this / do these career path(s) appeal to you?

In order to be competitive for your desired career path(s), what additional training or experience is needed prior to applying for positions? Have you accounted for these needs in Part II above?

Are there constraints that will affect your job search? (partner’s career, visa issues, geographic limitations, etc.)

When do you anticipate going on the job market?
Part IV. Mentor Comments and Recommendations
(to be completed by mentors)

In this section, mentors should evaluate
• the graduate student’s progress from the previous year
• the feasibility and appropriateness of the plan for the next year
• the progress towards career goals

Primary Mentor Comments and Recommendations:

Secondary Mentor Comments and Recommendations:
**APPENDIX B: NIH Bio sketch Template**

OMB No. 0925-0001 and 0925-0002 (Rev. 09/17 Approved Through 03/31/2020)

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**BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

Provide the following information for the Senior/key personnel and other significant contributors. Follow this format for each person. **DO NOT EXCEED FIVE PAGES.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>eRA COMMONS USER NAME (credential, e.g., agency login):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSITION TITLE:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EDUCATION/TRAINING** *(Begin with baccalaureate or other initial professional education, such as nursing, include postdoctoral training and residency training if applicable. Add/delete rows as necessary.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTITUTION AND LOCATION</th>
<th>DEGREE (if applicable)</th>
<th>Completion Date MM/YYYY</th>
<th>FIELD OF STUDY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

A. Personal Statement

B. Positions and Honors

C. Contributions to Science

D. Additional Information: Research Support and/or Scholastic Performance
APPENDIX C: Ph.D. Overview of the PhD Candidacy Exam: Purpose and Evaluation Criteria

PHD OVERVIEW OF THE PHD CANDIDACY EXAM: PURPOSE AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

Introduction
The purpose of this document is to set forth expectations, guidelines, criteria, resources and useful references for the preparation, and evaluation of College of Nursing PhD Candidacy Examination. The Candidacy Examination is an opportunity for students to demonstrate scholarship. Scholarship is defined as command of a subject that encompasses discovery, integration, application, and/or teaching of knowledge (Boyer, 1990). Characteristics of scholarliness include demonstrated understanding of the relationships among theory, research, practice, and philosophy. Scholarship also includes appreciation and understanding of the value of pluralism in paradigms, articulation of the boundaries and domains of practice, research, and nursing science and how these domains influence each other.

As a student progresses through the PhD program relationships among theory, research, philosophy, and practice become apparent through a synthesis of the discipline’s different components. Over time, various course assignments contribute to this synthesis. For example, concept and philosophical analysis papers, integrative research reviews, analysis and critique of models, theories and research reports help the student synthesize existing knowledge from theoretical and data-based literature. Based on this analysis and synthesis students gain the knowledge, skill and abilities to advance nursing science based on their own nursing research agenda. The candidacy examination provides students an opportunity to demonstrate what they know, and how they think, and how they have organized and integrated or synthesized issues. The written and oral defense components of the examination should provide evidence of mastery of content associated with a student’s completion of the core nursing courses. The examination provides faculty with evidence of the student’s mastery of knowledge, skill, and abilities necessary to conduct the research required at the dissertation stage of the program. The examination is an opportunity for the student to demonstrate they have the knowledge and values that support professional identity as a nurse scientist invested in the scholarly development of the discipline.

Faculty members who evaluate candidacy exams are looking for evidence that the student is a critical thinker who can demonstrate synthesis and be advanced to the dissertation stage. Critical thinking is defined as purposeful self-regulatory judgment which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference, as well as the explanation of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological or contextual considerations upon which that judgment is based (Facione & Facione, 1996). Synthesis is the ability to put together various elements and parts so as to form a whole. Synthesis is the process of combining elements from many sources to put them together into a structure, pattern or product not clearly present before. The synthesis represents personal and professional expression of disciplined inquiry. In order to
synthesize one must develop some of the characteristics of an ideal thinker. The ideal thinker has been described as “habitually inquisitive, well-informed, trustful of reason, open minded, flexible, fair minded in evaluation, honest in facing personal biases, prudent in making judgments, willing to reconsider, clear about issues, orderly in complex matters, diligent in seeking relevant information, reasonable in the selection of criteria, focused in inquiry, and persistent in seeking results which are as precise as the subject and the circumstances of inquiry permit (Facione & Facione, 1996). The examination provides the student an opportunity to demonstrate these competencies.

The definition of critical thinking can be expanded and includes many sub-skills. Evidence that these skills are employed in the development of one’s ideas and oral defense is useful criteria for evaluation purposes. Critical thinking skills and sub-skills and corresponding elements are outlined below. In evaluating the examination faculty will pay attention to the presence or absence of these skills. Questions that you may want to consider as a means to help you reflect on your paper are outlined. Finally, an evaluation checklist faculty use in grading the examination is attached for your information.

**Critical Thinking Skills**

**Interpretation:** categorize, decode sentences, and clarify meaning. Knowledge of specifics and ways and means for dealing with specific facts, trends, conventions, methods, theories, content relative to nursing theory and research given an identified phenomenon of concern.

**Analysis:** examine ideas, identify arguments, and analyze arguments. Analysis of concepts, principles, theories, methods, and relationships among concepts, theories, variables, measures, methods, and outcomes.

**Inference:** query evidence, conjecture alternatives, draw conclusions. Interpretation, explanation and discussion of implications, consequences, corollaries and effects. Derive logical consequences given analysis of the evidence, and consequential results.

**Explanation:** state results, justify procedures, present arguments. Inductive, deductive or retroductive development of propositions and their relationships or theoretical/conceptual framework associated with a research tradition.

**Evaluation:** assess claims, assess arguments. Ability to indicate logical fallacies and to compare work with standards or criteria relevant to state-of-the-art scholarship and research-based evidence.

**Synthesis.** Ability to draw upon many elements from many sources and put them together in a pattern or structure, plan, or communication not clearly present before -- a unique communication, a plan or proposed set of operations, derivation of a set of abstract relations based on disciplined inquiry.

Questions to Consider in Evaluation of the Written Examination. Given these skills, several questions guide faculty and students in evaluating both the written and oral components of the examination. For example:

1. To what degree does the paper demonstrate knowledge of specifics and ways and means for dealing with specific facts, trends, conventions, methods, theories, content and process relative to nursing theory and research given the identified phenomenon of concern or issue raised by the question?

2. To what degree does the paper illustrate competent and critical analysis of concepts, principles, theories, methods, and relationships among the elements of the question or among concepts, theories, variables, measures, methods and outcomes associated with the subject matter of the paper?

3. To what degree is competence evident in the interpretation, explanation, and discussion of the implications, corollaries, consequences and effects of issues or observations raised in the paper?

4. To what degree is the student able to derive logical consequences from the analysis of evidence presented? Are the consequential results of that analysis adequately discussed and evaluated? Are the applications and relevancy of these issues for nursing science made explicit?

5. How specifically did the student present and justify arguments and state results? To what degree does the student adequately develop propositions, and relationships among ideas that are associated with the research traditions relevant to the topic of the paper or the issues and observations related to the question?

6. To what degree does the student express in writing or verbally the knowledge, values, and commitments, associated with being a nurse scientist?

7. To what degree do you think the student possesses the knowledge, skills and abilities to conduct independent research?

8. Does the paper demonstrate synthesis?

9. Should the student be advanced to candidacy status? If not, why not?

The checklist on the next page can assist faculty in determining the acceptability or unacceptable nature of the criteria identified.

References and Resources

*Guidelines may be changed at anytime
Eligibility
Students take the PhD Candidacy Examination immediately following completion of the required core courses in nursing theory (NURS 800, 801), professional roles and socialization (NURS 803, 804, 870), nursing research (NURS 810, 811, 813), and the statistics requirement. The PhD candidacy examination process is discussed with pre-candidacy students during academic advisement sessions with the PhD Program Director and the Major Professor/Advisor appointed to serve as Chair of the student’s Candidacy Examination Committee.

Application for the PhD Candidacy Examination
PhD Candidacy Examination application forms and guidelines are available from the Student Service Coordinator for the PhD Program. Completed applications must be returned to the PhD Program Director.

Examination Schedule and Procedures
The PhD Candidacy Examination consists of a written paper (Phase I) and oral defense (Phase II) that are evaluated by a panel of three Graduate Faculty members from the College of Nursing.
Phase I consists of generating and submitting a written paper addressing questions selected by graduate faculty.
Phase II consists of defending the written paper to the faculty panel.

Phase I. The Chair of the student’s Candidacy Examination Committee will distribute the examination questions to the student on the assigned date. The student prepares a written paper, divided into 5 sections: 1) Overview of the phenomenon of interest/area of research; 2) Presentation and discussion of a conceptual framework related to the phenomenon of interest; 3) Synthesis of current state of the science in the phenomenon of interest; 4) Critique of current methodological approaches used in advancing knowledge related to the phenomenon of interest; and 5) Presentation of projected research trajectory, including the dissertation and beyond. The completed examination paper must be returned to the Student Services Coordinator by the due date. The paper must be typed and double-spaced, using APA’s Publication Manual (current edition), and must be no longer than 30 pages, excluding bibliography.

Students must make arrangements with the PhD Program Office for the submission of the completed paper (i.e., hand-delivered hard copy; electronic PDF submission, etc.). Such arrangements must be specified in writing by the student and approved by the PhD Program Director in advance of the examination date. The student is responsible for logistics and expenses related to such arrangements. Regardless of individual arrangements, the written paper must be received by 4:00 p.m. on the due date. NO LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL BE APPROVED OR ACCEPTED. If the written exam is not
submitted by the designated due date, the candidacy exam will be re-scheduled for the following semester.

Phase II. When the student turns in the completed examination paper, a one-hour appointment is scheduled by the chair of the student’s Candidacy Examination Committee with the student and the faculty panel for oral defense of the paper. The oral defense is held approximately two weeks following submission of the written paper. In the event that the student does not complete Phase II at the scheduled time, the candidacy exam will be re-scheduled for the following semester.

The faculty panel consists of 3 CON Graduate Faculty members, two selected by the student and one assigned by the PhD Program Director. The PhD Program Director appoints one of the committee members to serve as Chair. The panel is assigned to read the student’s written paper and conduct the oral defense. The purpose of the oral examination is clarification, elaboration, and defense of the major ideas presented in the paper. The oral defense is taped and documentation of both portions of the examination is retained in student file until the student graduates or leaves the program. The Chair is responsible for convening the oral defense session and returning copies of the written paper, tape, and evaluation results to the Office of Student Services.

**Evaluation**

Each committee member independently evaluates the written portion of the exam prior to conducting the oral defense. The examination result is determined by the faculty panel following the oral portion of the exam. Consensus must be achieved by at least 2 of the 3 faculty panel members in reading the paper and conducting the oral examination. The evaluation outcome may be either “Pass,” or “Fail.”

A grade of Pass is awarded to the student who clearly demonstrates synthesis of nursing theory and research. The Pass rating is required for recommendation to candidacy.

A grade of Fail indicates that the student’s presentation of ideas is not at an acceptable level of synthesis. The student who fails the candidacy examination obtains written feedback from the Graduate Director and the Faculty Panel Chair regarding performance and appropriate remediation with negotiated timeframes for remediation and reexamination.

**Re-Examination**

The procedure for a second PhD Candidacy Examination is the same as for the original candidacy examination. The second examination date is planned to accommodate remediation recommendations. The procedure for administration and evaluation of the second candidacy examination is the same as with the first attempt. The student who fails the examination after two attempts is not eligible for admission to candidacy for the PhD in Nursing Science and may not enroll in further doctoral level course work through the College of Nursing.
Notification of Results
PhD Candidacy Examination results are sent to the student from the PhD Program Director or the Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies. A copy of the letter is placed in the student’s academic file in the College of Nursing. Notification of individual students’ satisfactory examination performance is communicated to the Dean of the Graduate School through the Doctoral Qualifying Exam Verification form for review and approval. The Dean of The Graduate School notifies the student of admission to PhD candidacy, pending documentation of full admission to the PhD Program and an approved Program of Study.

*Procedures may be changed at any time.
APPENDIX E: Criteria for Grading Ph.D. Candidacy Examination

CRITERIA FOR GRADING PHD CANDIDACY EXAMINATION

Summary of Phases I and II

Reader: __________________________  Student: __________________________

Overall Rating:  Acceptable __________  Unacceptable__________

Instructions: The ten criteria below are considered to be applicable across all areas. Acceptable ratings by two of the three panel members must be obtained for each area. Unacceptable ratings should be accompanied by rationale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>ACCEPTABLE</th>
<th>UNACCEPTABLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Demonstrated depth of knowledge</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Demonstrated analysis of knowledge</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Based answer on breadth of Knowledge, (conceptual, clinical, and/or empirical).</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Synthesized relevant knowledge to support answer.</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Demonstrated critical thinking in assessing and answering the question.</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Demonstrated an ability to integrate experiential knowledge and own ideas with extant knowledge in the field.</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Presented the answer logically, derived logical consequences based on evidence.</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Articulated the answer clearly.</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Supported the answer with pertinent references and resources (current, classic, significant).</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Written and presented in a scholarly manner.</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>______</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Comments:
APPENDIX F: Comprehensive Exam/Dissertation Defense Approval Form

PhD in Nursing Science

**Doctoral Committee Comprehensive Exam/Dissertation Defense Approval Form**

**Instructions:** By signing this form, Doctoral Committee members signify they have reviewed the student’s dissertation proposal (used for the Comprehensive Exam) or completed dissertation and give approval to the student to schedule the oral Comprehensive Exam or the Dissertation Defense. The completed form should be submitted to the PhD Program office by the student two weeks prior to scheduling the Comprehensive Exam or the Dissertation Defense. Some faculty are employed only Fall and Spring semesters and may not be available for summer defenses.

Semester: _____Fall  _____Spring  _____Summer  Year:_______

Student Name:__________________________________________________________

__________We certify that the PhD candidate has permission to schedule the Comprehensive Exam.

__________We certify that the PhD candidate has permission to schedule the dissertation defense.

_______________________________________________
Doctoral Committee Chair Signature  Date

_______________________________________________
Doctoral Committee Member Signature Date

_______________________________________________
Doctoral Committee Member Signature Date

_______________________________________________
Doctoral Committee Member Signature Date
APPENDIX G: Ph.D. Dissertation Proposal Guidelines

PHD DISSERTATION PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

Approved by the CON Graduate Council January 11, 2016

This is the general format for the Dissertation Proposal in the College of Nursing. Students are expected to work closely with their Dissertation Chair and Committee members in tailoring the proposal to the context and methods of the dissertation research.

The Dissertation Proposal in the College of Nursing is organized as follows:
- Chapter 1 Introduction
- Chapter 2 Review of the Literature
- Chapter 3 Conceptual Framework
- Chapter 4 Research Plan

The following are general guidelines for the content of each chapter.

CHAPTER 1 Introduction
Identification of the phenomenon of interest
Background, context, and discussion of the relevance and significance to nursing science
Specific aims of the proposed research

CHAPTER 2 Review of the Literature
A review of the relevant literature (i.e., scoping review, systematic review, narrative review, etc.) in relation to the phenomenon of interest. This chapter may be presented in manuscript format.

CHAPTER 3 Conceptual/Theoretical Framework
Discussion of the conceptual/theoretical framework(s) guiding the proposed research.
This chapter may be presented in manuscript format.

CHAPTER 4 Research Plan
Presentation of the proposed research plan, including (as warranted) description of the research setting and context, participant recruitment plan and strategies, data collection method(s), data analysis strategies, ethical considerations and protection of human subjects, and researcher engagement/reflexivity.
APPENDIX H: Ph.D. Dissertation Guidelines

PHD DISSERTATION GUIDELINES

Approved at the April 13, 2015 CON Graduate Council Meeting

The USC College of Nursing PhD Dissertation includes 3 manuscripts which have been published by, submitted to, or ready for submission to a peer-reviewed journal during the period of matriculation as a PhD student in USC College of Nursing. The 3-manuscript dissertation consists of one conceptual, theoretical, or methodological manuscript or an integrated literature review and two data-based manuscripts reporting findings from the dissertation research.

Format and Structure of Three-Manuscript Dissertation

Chapter 1 – Introduction to the research; includes summary of the aims, background, and methods and brief overview of the 3 manuscripts and target journals.

Chapters 2-4 - Each of these 3 chapters contains one of the three manuscripts prepared for submission, submitted, or published in peer-reviewed journals.

- Chapter 2 – Chapter 2 contains one article that is either an integrated review of the literature or a theoretical, conceptual, or methodological manuscript.
- Chapters 3 and 4 – Each of these chapters contains a data-based manuscript consisting of specific aims, background, methods, results, and conclusions.
- Each manuscript included in the dissertation must be formatted for a specific journal.
- At least 1 of the 3 manuscripts must have been submitted prior to the dissertation defense.

Manuscripts submitted for publication prior to the final dissertation defense must have the approval of all dissertation committee members in order to be included in the final dissertation.

- Manuscripts that have not been submitted at the time of the Dissertation Defense must have prior approval of all committee members in order to be included in the dissertation.

Chapter 5 - Conclusions and Recommendations; includes a synthesis of the conclusions of the research, discussion of implications for nursing research, education, and practice, and presentation of future research directions.

Authorship: The PhD Candidate must be the first author on all three manuscripts, each of which must be prepared under the guidance of at least 1 member of the candidate’s Dissertation Committee. The student should consult the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association for further information on publication credit or other professional organization guidelines on authorship and acknowledgement of contributions.

***If the student has not submitted the remaining manuscripts within a two-year period following graduation, the faculty members involved in the dissertation research may re-negotiate authorship order on subsequent publication submissions.
Note: These guidelines apply to all students admitted to the PhD Program in Fall 2015 and beyond. Students admitted prior to Fall 2015 have the option, but are not required, to use the manuscript dissertation format.