PhD and MS-PhD Programs HANDBOOK

UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

SCHOOL OF NURSING

2023 – 2024

University of Rochester Mission:

We are a community in which all who work, teach, create and provide care are welcome and respected, and where all can pursue and achieve their highest objectives for themselves, their community, and the world.

Steeped in Rochester's rich history of social justice and entrepreneurial spirit, we will always be an inclusive, equitable, sustainable, and responsive organization at every level.

UR Meliora Values

The University of Rochester is defined by a deep commitment to **Meliora – ever better**. Embedded in that ideal are the values we share: **Equity, Leadership, Integrity, Openness, Respect, and Accountability**.

The **UR School of Nursing** is guided by this commitment and our **SON Unification Model.**

SCHOOL OF NURSING
UNIVERSITY *of* ROCHESTER

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SECTION I. GETTING STARTED

This handbook is meant to be used in conjunction with the [University of Rochester's Regulations and Policies for Graduate Students](#) and the [School of Nursing (SON) Student Handbook](#)

Founded in 1978, the PhD program was one of the earliest nursing PhD programs in the country. The PhD program exemplifies the Meliora values as students Learn, Discover, Heal, Create, and make the world ever better through the specific lens of improving health outcomes and nursing/health practice research. Diversity, inclusion and equity are evident in our holistic admission practices, our diverse and inclusive student cohorts and faculty and in the focus of our dissertation studies, which often examine social determinants of health and focus on under-served and at-risk individuals.

School/Work/Life Balance

Becoming a doctoral student reflects a major commitment and is a transition period to a new and added life responsibilities. We encourage you to take advantage of University and SON resources to assist you when needed. One commonly asked question is about whether to continue to work while also enrolled as a student.

Students who maintain full-time registration should consider this phase a full-time effort, and they need to carefully consider their academic commitments prior to making any outside commitments. All students should plan for several hours per week for reading and writing outside of class meetings. Additional hours may be devoted to required research assistant or teaching assistant requirements.

Full-time PhD students are strongly encouraged to limit employment to only 1-2 days a week. PhD students with certain fellowships may have restrictions on the number of hours per week of non-research work. MS-PhD students are strongly encouraged to limit employment to 1 day per week.

1.1 SON and PhD Administrative Structure

Administrative leadership for SON PhD programs rests with the PhD Program Director, who reports to and shares responsibility with the Dean of the School and the Associate Dean for Education and Student Affairs.

The PhD program is subject to all the rules and regulations for graduate study within the University under the leadership of the Vice Provost and University Dean of Graduate Education.

This handbook is meant to complement and specify additional aspects specific to PhD students in the School of Nursing.

The PhD Program Subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee is advisory to the PhD Program Director for student and programmatic concerns. The PhD Programs Director chairs the Subcommittee. The School of Nursing Associate Dean for Education and Student Affairs is an ex officio member. The PhD Subcommittee members include elected faculty with experience in the program and non-voting student representatives. Meetings consist of an open portion, in which policy is discussed with participation of student representatives, and a closed portion (held without the student representatives) in which individual students and applicants are discussed.

The subcommittee makes policy and procedural recommendations, acts on student admissions applications, makes recommendations regarding student progression, and provides ongoing review and approval of the PhD curriculum. Working within existing University and SON policies and bylaws, recommendations are forwarded to the SON Curriculum Committee and Student Affairs Committee as specified in SON bylaws.

For administration of the MS-PhD and MNE-PhD combined programs, the PhD Programs Director and the PhD Subcommittee work in conjunction with the Master's Program Directors and the Subcommittee for Master's Programs.

Student Representation Within the SON

The PhD Student Forum (or Doctoral Forum) was formed by PhD students in the School of Nursing who wanted an organization tailored to their specific needs. The functions of the PhD Student Forum are to facilitate an exchange of ideas and information among PhD students; and to coordinate and facilitate interchange among PhD students, the PhD Program Director, various SON faculty, and other guests outside of the SON.

1.2 Offices and Equipment

PhD Program Office

The PhD Program Office is located on the fourth floor of Helen Wood Hall (HWH) and is staffed Monday through Friday during business hours. The PhD Administrator manages the office and is a resource for any student questions or requests.

Student Workspaces and Equipment

Shared doctoral student areas: the 4th floor of HWH has several spaces dedicated to doctoral student use. Both PhD and DNP students have access to these areas. Students are responsible for protecting and caring for the valuable equipment and furnishings in these areas. This includes

maintaining the security of the limited-access entry, keeping kitchen areas clean, and properly shutting down computers.

Student offices: Each student is assigned shared office space with a desktop computer. As with common shared areas, students are expected to maintain the security and cleanliness of their assigned offices. Changes in assigned offices will be permitted if space is available and all parties involved agree to the change. If you lose or do not return an office key that is assigned to you, you will incur a charge of $15 or the current cost to replace that key.

Technology: Students receive a URMC username and password, which provides access to online library resources, intranet resources, and email. IT assigns these resources and provides instructions for access from campus, home, and/or mobile devices. Offsite access to secure drives may be restricted. Students should check their university email daily during the academic year and at least weekly during summer months for important messages.

Printing and Copying: Use HWH printers only when a hard copy is needed. The program office has a color printer and can print one copy of student documents that require color. Copiers are available for student use in Helen Wood Hall and Miner Library. All copiers require a pre-paid copy card, which can be purchased in the Miner Library. The UR ID card also may be used to store funds for copying.

Business cards: PhD students may have business cards made by contacting and completing a university requisition form. Students are charged for cost of the cards.

SECTION II. THE PHD CURRICULUM

2.1 Goals and Learning Outcomes

The goals of the PhD program are to produce:	After successful completion of the PhD program, the graduate will be able to:
Scholars who develop and refine the evidence base for culturally congruent, collaborative health care of individuals, groups, and populations	1. Critique, synthesize, and apply theory and research evidence on clinically relevant issues and problems 2. Articulate the contributions of the graduate's own research and that of their discipline

Scientists who design, conduct, and critique research for the improvement of health care and the advancement of theory and practice	3. Design, execute, and disseminate clinical research that is
	   a. Rigorous
	   b. Ethical
	   c. Theoretically congruent
	   d. Clinically and socially significant

Leaders and mentors who contribute to the dissemination, teaching, and advancement of research in academic and clinical settings and in national and international arenas	4. Demonstrate progression toward a leadership role in health science research, education and policy 5. Recognize the importance of mentoring students and facilitating professional advancement of colleagues in clinical and educational settings 6. Disseminate information through scholarly presentations and publications to promote the grown of the profession

2.2 Overview of the Program

PhD study is highly individualized and self-directed. The PhD curriculum can be conceptualized as encompassing several "phases," but it's important to note that these phases are all interconnected and interdependent.

Coursework and Qualifying Examination

The program begins with 2–3 years of intensive full-time coursework, which becomes increasingly specialized based on planned research directions and individual clinical or teaching tracks. The semester-by-semester plan of study is mapped out with the academic advisor before starting coursework (samples of program degree plans can be found on the SON website). All students complete a total of 360 hours of RA/TA work, which requires about 6 hours per week if completed over 4 academic semesters. Students are also required to complete an Individual Development Plan (IDP) and annual review in consultation with their academic advisor.

The Qualifying Exam is administered after student completion of required core coursework

(NUR 514). The qualifying exam demonstrates students are prepared to advance to candidacy, undertake independent research, and begin the dissertation.

Dissertation Proposal, Research, and Defense

After completing their coursework, and with their academic advisors' guidance, students form a dissertation advisory committee and identify a primary advisor from among eligible SON faculty (see Section IV of this handbook, "The Dissertation Process"). The dissertation proposal is a written document that is developed by the student and revised in response to critique by their dissertation advisory committee. The proposal may be written concurrently with final coursework or an intensive post-coursework phase. The more work the student has done on the proposal during the coursework phase, the more rapidly they will be able to complete and defend it.

Students who maintain full-time registration should consider this phase a full-time effort. History shows that students who return to full-time employment and attempt to do the proposal in their spare time have difficulty maintaining momentum toward program completion and meeting program progression requirements.

When the proposal is judged ready for defense, the student prepares a public presentation of the proposed research, which is followed by a critique and oral defense conducted in private with the dissertation committee. Additional changes in the written proposal may be requested at that time.

Dissertation research may involve collecting psychological, behavioral, experiential, and/or biophysical data from individuals, families, and communities; testing clinical interventions developed or refined by the student; analyzing previously collected data from local or faculty research projects or national datasets; or a combination of these.

Once the proposal has been successfully defended and research review board approval has been secured, the student conducts the dissertation research project independently under guidance of the committee. The final dissertation is then written, revised with critique from the committee, and presented publicly, followed by a private defense. The PhD degree is conferred after a successful defense and submission of final documentation to the office of Graduate Education.

2.3 Coursework

The University of Rochester requires a minimum of 90 credit hours for completion of the PhD degree. A maximum of 30 credit hours from a master's degree can be applied toward the 90-credit hour minimum. The remaining 60 credits are usually taken at the University as a matriculated student. If a required course has been taken prior to matriculation, with a grade of B- or better, it will satisfy the course requirement, but not the credit requirement; Additional credit hours will be required to meet the 60-credit hour minimum after matriculation.

The core curriculum for PhD students is as follows:

Course #	Course Name	Credits
NUR 560	Role of the Clinical Researcher	0
NUR 505	Epistemology and Concept Development	3
NUR 506	Epistemology and Theory Construction	3
NUR 507	Research Appraisal and Synthesis	3
NUR 508	Writing and Publishing in the Health Sciences	2
NUR 510	Applied Statistics I	3
NUR 512	Applied Statistics II	3
NUR 511	Basic Principles of Quantitative Research Design	3
NUR 555	Basic Principles of Qualitative Research Design	3
NUR 513	Research Measurement	3
NUR 514	Research Integration and Proposal Development	3
IND 501	Ethics and Professional Integrity in Clinical Research	1
Cognate Courses	[Four 3-credit courses, selected individually by student]	12
NUR 590	Dissertation Workshop (Required until proposal defense)	0 (see "Special Registrations")
NUR 595	PhD Research Credits	18 (see "Special Registrations")
	TOTAL	**60 credits**

All required coursework and RA/TA hours must be completed prior to the dissertation proposal defense.

Notes for Masters-PhD Students

Both the learning outcomes and requirements above **and** master's program learning outcomes and requirements apply to the MS/PhD and MNE/PhD programs, with the following exceptions:

1. One or more PhD cognates (varies by specialty track) are replaced by select master's-level courses.
2. The master's programs research requirement (ordinarily NUR 400) is met by taking the PhD research courses NUR 510, 511, and 512

2.4 Cognate Courses

Cognate courses are chosen with the assistance of the advisor to advance students to the cutting edge of their chosen research area. These courses may be focused on topical content or research methods. Students are encouraged to gain interdisciplinary exposure by taking cognates outside the SON. These courses may be chosen from among those carrying doctoral credit anywhere in the University with prior permission of the advisor and PhD Program Director. For courses offered by other University departments, consult the Graduate Studies Bulletin, available on the Graduate Studies website.

2.5 Special Registrations: NUR 590, 591, 595, and 995/999

Dissertation Workshop (NUR 590)

The purpose of the 0-credit Dissertation Workshop is to assist students who have completed their course work sustain momentum toward proposal defense. It provides a regular, organized opportunity to present work on proposal status and to receive feedback from faculty and fellow students.

Continuous registration and participation in NUR 590 is required from the semester following completion of NUR 514 through the dissertation proposal defense. However, registering for NUR 590 alone does not constitute full-time or part-time enrollment. If no other credits are taken, a student must register for NUR 995 or NUR 999 (see below) in conjunction with NUR 590.

Independent Study (NUR 591)

When no cognate in a student's area of interest is available at the University, and a University faculty member with the appropriate expertise is willing to supervise an independent study course, such a course may serve as a cognate. Independent study courses, if taken, should comprise only a small portion (3-6 credits) of the student's program of study. An independent study is not to be used if a course covering the same content is offered at the University.

Prior to registering for an independent study course, a "Summary of Proposed Activity for NUR 591 Reading Course/Independent Study" form (see handbook appendix for a link) should be completed by the student and supervising faculty. The requested is then forwarded to the Program Director and Associate Dean for Education and Student Affairs for final approval of the curricular integrity of the proposed independent study.

PhD Research Credits (NUR 595)

The PhD, MS-PhD, and MNE-PhD programs require a total of 18 dissertation research credits (NUR 595). These can be taken in varying amounts each semester until the required number of

credits is met. A contract is completed for each semester and a grade is issued, supported by the completed contract (see expectations below). Students may not use more than 12 credits of NUR 595 before completing the dissertation proposal defense.

Continuation of PhD Enrollment (NUR 995 and NUR 999)

The University of Rochester requires continuous enrollment from matriculation through completion. There are various scenarios in which it is not possible to register for enough credit-bearing courses to achieve full-time status, depending on a student's completion of formal coursework, the number of NUR 595 credits they have used, and/or their progress toward their dissertation/proposal.

In such cases, students maintain continuous enrollment by registering for either NUR 995 or NUR 999 (Continuation of Enrollment). Students enrolled in NUR 995 are considered to have part-time status, while students enrolled in NUR 999 have full-time status. Neither of these registrations is a credit-bearing course. Students register for NUR 995/999 under their advisor's name and pay a continuing enrollment fee each semester.

There are important financial considerations to bear in mind when choosing between NUR 995 and NUR 999. For one example, NUR 999 allows for continued deferment of student loan repayment, but NUR 995 does not. Students are strongly encouraged to consult with the program office prior to making a decision.

2.6 RA and TA Requirements

(Policy Under Review 2023 – 2024)

Assistantships prepare students to conduct their dissertation research and assume roles as academic faculty. Every PhD and MS/MNE-PhD student is required to engage in 360 hours of paid or unpaid teaching and research assistant work as a part of their program of study. Assistantship experiences are selected with the guidance of the faculty advisor and completed under the guidance of a faculty mentor. Advisors must approve in writing (forms available electronically; see handbook appendix) each RA or TA experience before it is begun on which they identify the nature of the research or teaching assignment and describe the planned research or teaching activities.

The goal of the required RA hours is to gain familiarity with the full scope of activities of clinical research. Students should seek exposure to as many aspects of research as possible, both to prepare for the dissertation and to gain essential skills that will not be practiced in the dissertation project. Research Assistantships are identified by the student and/or academic advisor. Academic advisors approve all RA experiences. Students may also approach faculty and inquire about opportunities. RA hours may be done with faculty outside the SON who agree to supervise the student in the learning experience, if the advisor and PhD Programs Director

approve and if the advisor is willing to maintain contact with the outside research supervisor to insure a productive experience.

The goal of the TA experience is to provide experience for students who anticipate future roles as academic faculty. Experiences may be arranged based on the student's individual learning plan. Opportunities may be discussed with faculty or the Programs Director, who will consult with the Associate Dean for Education and Student Affairs. Assignments are typically for an average of 6 hours per week or a total of 90 hours in a semester. Students should seek out a variety or course formats and levels to gain a broad exposure to teaching. TA work may include lectures, grading of papers and exams, leading discussion groups, and other experiences. The list on the TA Work forms and skills log at the back of this Handbook provide a guide to the activities students may be asked to perform. Instructors may ask students to be involved in other aspects of teaching as well. Students should maintain a cumulative checklist of research experiences using the TA Hours log form.

After RA or TA work is completed, the student documents, on another form that also is submitted to the PhD Programs Office, the number of hours completed for each activity along with the total number of hours completed. Students then have the hours and activities signed off by the supervising researcher or instructor. The hours are entered into PhD Program records and into the student's academic transcript maintained by the SON Registrar. Students are responsible for keeping a personal record of hours and activities completed for each RA and TA experience. This documentation may be requested to validate the total number of hours recorded on the summary form. Forms and skills logs are available electronically and in the back of the Handbook. The skills logs are used by the student to track the distribution of RA and TA experiences (these logs are not handed in and are for student/advisor use only). Students should use these to guide selection of experiences and maintain a cumulative record.

2.7 PhD Research Day

PhD Research Day is an event in early May (following the end of classes) in which students present short presentations to an audience of fellow students and faculty, followed by brief discussion and critique. The goals of PhD Research Day are to:

1. to facilitate student progress toward proposal defense by encouraging them to work with their advisors to plan their brief presentations;
2. showcase the areas of student research interest for SON faculty and fellow students;
3. provide a forum for exchange of ideas and suggestions to strengthen students' proposals;
4. create a conference-like venue to develop presentation and critique skills; and

5. serve as an annual milestone to inspire continued clarification and refinement of dissertation plans

Participation for the entire day is required of any student who has not yet defended their dissertation proposal. Students on Leave of Absence are excused. Presentations are not graded. Advisors are also expected to attend at least their advisees' presentations, and all faculty and students are welcome.

Presentation length is determined based on the number of presenters and is generally 10-15 minutes with a 5- to10-minute Q&A session. Students present in reverse order of their entry year in the program (i.e., first-year students present first, followed by second-year students, and so on). Presentations should reflect the students' thinking to date on their projected dissertation proposal. Students' topics or plans may change from one year to the next. Possible levels of development follow, recognizing that variations will occur:

- First-year PhD students should describe a problem and its significance, highlights of literature to date, and propose a research question with possible design to answer the question. First year MS-PhD students should at least be able to identify a problem, question, and literature highlights.

- 2nd-year PhD students should have a complete design, with sample, recruitment plan, etc., which they would have developed in NUR 514. 2nd-year MS-PhD students will be partway to this goal.

- 3rd-year presenters would be MS-PhD students at a similar program stage as 2nd-year students, described above. Other 3rd-time presenters should have a well-developed proposal and be on the brink of proposal defense.

Preparation Tips:

It is expected that some points of your research plan are not yet finalized. The earlier you are in the program, the less you are expected to have decided. The point of this day is to give a snapshot of where you are and get helpful input from your peers and especially from faculty you may not have discussed this with before.

You will be asked to email your presentation slides to the office prior to so we can load them. Plan on about one slide per minute of your talk. Decide the main points that you will be making and divide your content into those slides. The area that usually needs to be synthesized the most is the literature review—the maximum would be 2-3 slides. Use traditional research headings like: Problem and Significance, Purpose, Background Literature, Research Questions, Methods. Do not put full sentences on the slides—use phrases that you will then expand on.

Meet with your advisor to plan your slides and practice your presentation. Do not prepare a script to read unless absolutely necessary. Practice your presentation at a normal pace to be sure you

can deliver it within the time limit, including acknowledgments and side comments. A timekeeper will be empowered to cut off both students and faculty who go beyond the time limits for the presentation and the Q&A.

Presenters are expected to attend and participate in the entire day. Advisors know that they are expected to be there for your presentation or make other arrangements for someone to support you and take notes. Other faculty will come in and out, as in a real research conference, attending the topics that interest them.

SECTION III. THE QUALIFYING EXAM

(Policy Under Review 2023 – 2024)

Consistent with University policy, all PhD students complete a qualifying examination. The qualifying exam demonstrates that students are prepared to advance to candidacy, undertake independent research, and begin the dissertation. All PhD programs administer a qualifying examination as part of the PhD program requirements.

The exam takes place after successful completion of required core content (completion of NUR 514). The exam must be passed at least six months before the dissertation oral defense. The PhD Program Director will appoint a committee, of at least three full-time SON faculty members on the tenure track, to conduct the oral examination. After a failure, the exam may only be retaken once and must be retaken within the subsequent 12-month period.

SECTION IV. THE DISSERTATION PROCESS

The SON adheres to dissertation policies as per the University of Rochester's Regulations and Policies Concerning Graduate Studies. Detailed requirements for completing the PhD can be found on the Graduate Education website, where the dissertation manual is updated annually.

4.1 Forming a Dissertation Advisory Committee

The academic advisor assists the student in selecting the dissertation committee. The academic advisor may serve on the dissertation committee as primary advisor or internal member, if so desired. Students are strongly advised to first select a primary advisor before seeking out other committee members. Selecting additional faculty to serve on the dissertation committee should be done with guidance by the person who has agreed to fulfill the primary advisor role on the dissertation.

PhD students invite at least 3 faculty members to serve on their dissertation committees based on the potential of the faculty to guide the proposed research. This selection may be made as early as desired or at least 6 months prior to oral defense to allow sufficient time for discussion of the dissertation.

SON guidelines for selecting committee members are as follows:

1. Primary dissertation advisor
   a. Associate or full professor, on the tenure track, with primary dissertation advisory experience; **OR**
   b. A tenure-track assistant professor may be eligible, given strong evidence of an emergent program of research that includes
      i. First-authored, data-based publications
      ii. Extramural research funding as primary investigator
      iii. Three years on the tenure track; and
      iv. Previous membership on a PhD dissertation committee
2. Internal committee member
   a. SON tenure-track assistant, associate, or full professor; **OR**
   b. An associate or full professor of clinical nursing (PhD or DNSc) may be eligible

Note: Per University guidelines, instructional, clinical, and research faculty may petition to be included on a permanent roster of faculty eligible to sit on PhD committees. Such individuals should have a demonstrable record of research involvement and peer-reviewed publications.

3. External committee member
   a. Full-time faculty member from outside the SON, with an earned doctorate, holding the rank of assistant professor or higher, on the tenure track.
   b. External committee members may come from other universities.
   c. Faculty with secondary appointments to the SON (and therefore with primary appointments outside the SON) may serve as external committee members
4. Additional committee members (optional)
   a. Must hold a doctorate but need not hold a faculty position, within the UR or elsewhere
   b. See the UR graduate regulations and policies (pp. 10–11) for more information
   c. Must be approved by PhD Program Director, who then petitions the University Dean of Graduate Education before the dissertation defense is scheduled

Students should consult the Program Director if there are questions about faculty eligibility. Proposed members' curriculum vitae should be provided in the following scenarios:

- If an internal member is not on the tenure track and they have not previously served on a dissertation committee
- If an external member has not previously served on a UR dissertation committee

Pending approval of the Program Director, a memo confirming the establishment of the dissertation advisory committee is sent to the student, committee members, and the SON

registrar.

Ultimately, committee membership is subject to approval by the University Dean of Graduate Studies.

4.2 Dissertation Format Options

Dissertations from SON students may be done in one of two formats: (a) a traditional 5-chapter monograph format; or (b) the 3-paper dissertation option, wherein to fulfill the dissertation requirements students write three full-length manuscripts for specific scholarly, peer-reviewed journals, as approved by the dissertation committee. At minimum, all three manuscripts must be fully written, formatted according to journal specifications, and assessed by committee members as being ready for submission. Committee members may additionally require more robust standards (e.g., that one or more manuscripts be submitted or accepted for publication).

While the work of the dissertation is the same for either option, students may use the 3-paper option format as a way to enhance dissemination of their scholarship. Students select the dissertation format in consultation with their committee members prior to the proposal defense.

Students who have completed the proposal defense and then decide, with their committee members, to change from one dissertation option to the other will forward a written request to the PhD Programs Director that explains the rationale for the change in plans. Students choosing a change from the traditional 5-chapter dissertation option to the 3-paper option should include, in their rationale, how use of the 3 papers in this approach will sustain the focus on a single coherent research topic (not a series of unconnected topics).

4.2a Five-Chapter Dissertation Format

The sketch of dissertation chapters below may be used as a general framework for most dissertations, although the primary advisor has the final say on chapter content and format. For the proposal, all descriptions of the project should be in the future tense, ending with a timeline, and the references and appendices. In the completed dissertation, the first three chapters are updated and converted to the past tense, chapters 4 and 5 are added, and the timeline is removed.

Chapter I: Problem and Significance. In this chapter you describe the phenomenon under study and make the case for the seriousness of the issue you hope to address. Focus on a practical problem that is researchable and clearly identified as an area of interest and relevance to your profession. To convey its importance, include details on the incidence or prevalence of the illness or condition and its effects (physical, psychosocial, economic). Then, after a summary of current knowledge about or response to this problem (brief because you will do this in depth in Chapter II), conclude with an introductory statement of the purpose and overall design of the planned study.

Chapter II: Background and Orientation to the Problem. In this chapter, begin by explaining your orientation to the problem (the philosophical, theoretical, and/or epistemological view that will direct your choice of question and design). You may opt to take a biophysical approach, an epidemiologic one, a political one, a psychological or family-level one, etc. In some cases the rationale behind your choice will be clear, and in others you should defend your chosen approach over other theoretical perspectives. If you are planning a qualitative study, you can still review the main theoretical orientations that have been brought to bear on the issue, and then defend your choice to start over with an open-ended exploratory approach, based on evidence that existing frameworks have not sufficed to understand the problem.

In the main body of the chapter, you present your literature review: what is known about the influences on the problem and any solutions to date. Ideally, it should be organized according to your chosen framework. If there is no theory or framework covering your topic, create subtopics to reflect the areas of inquiry that touch on your focus. Synthesize current knowledge rather than describing individual studies. Use tables and figures as appropriate. Address not just the topics and findings of the research to date, but also the adequacy of the methods that have been used across disciplines to address the problem. If you have done a pilot study or instrument development study that revealed relevant findings, describe it here, concluding with how the main study will build on the pilot work. (If you did pilot work that was mainly to test your methods, describe it in the next chapter.) Conclude the synthesis with a tight summary of what is known and not known about the phenomenon and indicate the gap in knowledge you will fill with the proposed study. Include the specific aims/research questions/hypotheses.

Chapter III: Methods. Use the traditional headings of Design, Sample, Instruments (unless qualitative, in which case describe your methods under data collection), and Procedures (with subheadings for recruitment and data collection, protection of human subjects, and data analysis). Conclude with a timeline for study completion.

- Design: defend your choice of study design based on the literature to date. This includes your choice of a particular qualitative approach or a particular quantitative approach. For a quantitative study, you may provide a model of how variables are proposed to relate to one another.
- Sample: describe your target population, accessible population, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and sample size. Include power analysis if appropriate.
- Instruments: list variables to be measured (they should measure the concepts in the diagram or model in Chapter II if one has been included) and describe each one, as well as the support for your choice of tool or measurement approach. (Provide copies of tools in an Appendix.)

- Procedures: describe recruitment, data collection plans, and steps to be taken for protection of human subjects (or refer readers to RSRB application as appropriate). Data analysis may be organized by aim/research questions and described in depth.
- Analysis: Include very specific information about the quantitative analyses: the specific variables and specific statistical procedures to answer each study question. This level of detail is very helpful to guide the later analysis and ensures that the student and committee are in agreement about what the findings of the research will consist of.
  - For qualitative proposals, describe specifically how text will be prepared and analyzed to reach the desired final product for that type of qualitative approach.
- You may need a section after Data Analysis on how rigor will be maintained and how validity of findings will be optimized

In the final dissertation, quantitative studies should have the analysis section modified to include any ancillary or exploratory analyses and the rationale. Qualitative studies will need most of this chapter thoroughly rewritten to describe and explain the decisions that were made along the way during sampling and analysis.

Chapter IV: Results. This is to be written after completing the research. Opinions differ as to whether you refer to other literature in your Results chapter. Most nursing dissertations save any comments about the relationship of findings to existing literature for Chapter V. Another difference of opinion is on whether the final sample's demographics and characteristics should be described in Chapter III under Sample, or as results in Chapter IV.

For a quantitative study, after presenting the sample description (if not added to Chapter 3) and any initial descriptive results, go through your research questions/hypotheses one by one and present the findings. Avoid going into detail on the analytic steps, which should have been detailed in Chapter III. In the body of the chapter, present only those tables necessary to demonstrate the results relevant to your research questions. Preliminary analyses (such as correlation matrices or interaction tests) may be included as appendices if the primary advisor agrees.

For a qualitative study, present the overall integrated findings first and then lead the reader through the sub-parts of the main findings. For example, if a theory has been developed, present the theory and then provide description and supporting evidence for each component and relationship. If a qualitative description has been developed, present the integrated description and then describe the thematic components.

Chapter V: Discussion. Here you place the findings into context, including how they relate to existing literature and theory, and how they contribute to practice, education, and policy. These topic areas may be used as headings in the chapter. Limitations are acknowledged. Implications for future research are presented, including specific studies that logically follow from this one. Indicators of validity of qualitative findings should be discussed using criteria appropriate to the particular qualitative approach.

Avoid long repetitions of your findings from Chapter 4, providing only brief reminders of the main points as needed.

References: The School of Nursing policy is to use APA format for all references unless a different format is agreed upon by primary advisor and committee members.

Appendices: As required and per University formatting requirements.

4.2b Three-Paper Dissertation Format

Using this format, the PhD dissertation requirement is fulfilled by writing a minimum of three full-length papers in line with the manuscript expectations of the selected journals. The dissertation must form a coherent body of research in a particular scholarly area. Thus, the three papers must represent a single coherent research topic, not a series of unconnected topics.

<u>Example[1]</u>

Chapter 1: Introduction
Chapter 2: Paper/Manuscript #1
Chapter 3: Paper/Manuscript #2
Chapter 4: Paper/Manuscript #3
Chapter 5: Conclusion

Following this format, in Chapter 1 the student introduces and conveys the importance of the research question that is the focus of the investigation and the specific objectives of each individual paper/manuscript (i.e., each piece of logic or the story undergirding the dissertation

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[1] The number of chapters and placement of the papers is not cast in stone. For example, a student's choice to write a traditional literature review and/or methods chapter in order to elaborate on aspects of the research in greater detail than many journals will allow may result in papers being introduced in a different order. This presentational choice could result in the dissertation having more than 5 chapters, based on judgments about the clearest and most effective way to manage the content and sustain the logical flow of the research report.

that papers #1, #2, #3 will address). This overview should include the purpose and scope of each paper, the methodologies employed, and how the papers are integrated to represent a coherent body of research. In similar fashion, Chapter 5, the concluding chapter, brings everything together, anchoring the research by situating it within current literature and theory and helping the reader understand how the papers, collectively, contribute to a particular knowledge field. Limitations are acknowledged and implications for practice, education, policy, and future research are discussed as well. This presentational choice could result in the dissertation having more than 5 chapters, based on judgments about the clearest and most effective way to manage the content and sustain the logical flow of the research report.

The three papers form the dissertation's core and may include a literature review or meta-analysis, a methods paper (if methods are sufficiently novel), or multiple data-based manuscripts with the literature and methods integrated into each paper. The three papers must be distinct, and at least one should be based on data generated through the dissertation study as specified in the approved proposal.

The student must be listed as first author with the advisor and committee members as co-authors. Authorship should be negotiated between student, primary advisor, and committee members in advance and be consistent with academic standards and journal submission requirements.[2]

At minimum, all three manuscripts must be fully written, formatted according to journal specifications, and assessed by committee members as being ready for submission. Committee members may additionally require more robust standards (e.g., that one or more manuscripts be submitted or accepted for publication).

The student and dissertation committee should discuss expectations for each chapter and paper in advance. Agreement regarding those expectations should be documented in a signed memo with copies retained by the student and each committee member. A similar process of documentation and distribution of agreed-upon expectations should be followed whenever any substantive points or issues arise that require re-thinking or re-negotiation of anticipated chapter/paper content.

Three-paper dissertations are subject to the following administrative policies:

1. Documentation is required by the PhD program office
   a. Form A, submitted at the time of proposal defense
   b. Form B, submitted at the time of final dissertation defense

2. The student must be the first author on these papers and must be prepared to defend how the papers are based on their own dissertation research.

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[2] For information on determining authorship on papers submitted for publication, students and their dissertation committee members should refer to the Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts (URM) guidelines provided by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) or similar guidelines provided by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

3. At the discretion of the dissertation committee, up to two of the three papers may have been written, submitted, or published by the student prior to proposal defense if
   a. the student is first author on the paper;
   b. all committee members attest that the student did most of the work and most of the writing of the paper;
   c. the work was completed while the student was enrolled in the PhD program and is approved for inclusion in the dissertation by the committee; and
   d. the dissertation committee unanimously agrees that the papers together represent a single, cohesive research topic.

4. The dissertation must strictly adhere to University of Rochester Graduate Studies and ProQuest/UMI formatting requirements.

5. Copyright permission from the publishing journal must be obtained in order to use content from already published articles if they are not open access. The student must obtain a waiver from the copyright owner (usually the publisher) and include it as an appendix in the final dissertation. The student should inform the publisher about the intent to include content from the paper in a dissertation prior to signing a copyright agreement for publication.

4.3 Proposal Development and Defense

Successful completion of the qualifying examination and all coursework and RA/TA hours is required before the defense of the dissertation proposal.

Proposal Content

Regardless of the chosen dissertation format (five-chapter or three-paper), the dissertation proposal consists of content typically found in the first three chapters of the traditional 5-chapter dissertation monograph:

   a. The statement of the problem;
   b. The literature and theoretical orientation, if relevant; and
   c. The study methods
   d. The analysis plan

If the 3-paper option is selected, an NRSA proposal might be considered a preliminary version of the first three dissertation chapters and therefore, if committee members agree, an equivalent to

the dissertation proposal. Other grant applications may also fulfill the written proposal requirement rather than the traditional Chapters 1, 2, and 3.

The proposal should be written in the future tense and demonstrate a synthesis and application of philosophy of science, theory, core courses, cognate courses, and scientific methods in the student's research area. If you've done pilot work, refer to your experiences when describing your planned procedures, and explain which methods will be the same and which will be different. Conclude the proposal with a timeline for completion of the phases of the project and dissertation writing.

The student writes the proposal in close consultation with the primary dissertation advisor, who has the final authority on the content and organization of the proposal.

Oral Proposal Defense

Before a date is planned for the proposal defense, all members of the committee should confirm with the primary dissertation advisor that the proposal is ready to be defended. Members should receive a final draft well in advance of the defense date (at minimum, 2 weeks) so they can make notes and be prepared to discuss that version. Revisions may be made after the defense, as discussed below.

The student in consultation with committee members identifies a time for the defense. The PhD Program Director and office requires 2 weeks notification and have final approval of the designated time. The program office will schedule the room, IT requirements, and send out notifications of the event.

The student and advisor should discuss the procedures for the day of the defense and prepare for them. Proposal defenses usually last 1.5–2 hours; the advisor determines the plan of events, but the usual steps are as follows:

1. The student prepares a formal presentation, usually including PowerPoint slides, to last no more than 30 minutes. Generally, the methods of dissertation research should receive at least half the allotted time. Background literature should be summarized very briefly.

2. At the appointed time, the primary advisor welcomes the attendees and introduces the plan for the time, the committee members, and the student (including highlights from the student's CV)

3. Following introductory remarks are the proposal presentation by the student, a period for questions from attendees other than committee members, and then a closed session for committee members' questions, discussion, and determination of success

4. If the defense is successful, a signed memo is returned to the PhD Programs office. A proposal may be deemed successful but still include recommended changes or additions.

5. A final copy of the proposal should be provided for the PhD program office, as well as to committee members if they wish. Any changes/additions to the proposal, identified by the committee, must be reflected in the final document submitted to the program office

If the committee deems the proposal not yet satisfactory, revisions may be required before the memo is signed. If major revisions are required, especially if they affect the planned methods, the student may be delayed from starting the research until the revisions are complete. If required revisions are minor, the advisor may allow them to be completed while the student moves forward with the research.

4.4 Dissertation Defense Process and Timeline

The process of preparing and submitting your dissertation for defense requires careful planning and attention to detail. Students finalizing their dissertations should communicate with their committee members and the PhD program office early and often.

The SON adheres to all policies detailed in the University's [dissertation manual](#), which is accessible on the Graduate Education website. Please contact the PhD program office with any policy questions.

Selection of a Chair for the Final Defense

The University requires the nomination of a chair for the final dissertation committee. In the School of Nursing, the chair may be a faculty member within that school but will be outside the candidate's and advisor's defined area of specialty. Dissertation chairs may be chosen from inside or outside of the School of Nursing in accordance with the following criteria:

- the chair is uninvolved in the student's and advisor's work;
- the chair is administratively independent from inside committee members (i.e., has minimal influence over committee members' tenure or status);
- the chair has had prior experience serving on dissertation committees; and
- the chair has an earned doctorate and is tenured or tenure eligible

The role of the chair is to monitor and promote fairness and rigor in the conduct of the defense. The chair's status as a nonmember of the advisor's and student's working group enables distance from previously established judgments on the candidate's work.

When the student, in consultation with their primary advisor, has a potential chair in mind and a general idea about when they would like to schedule the defense, their nomination is forwarded to the Program Director for approval. The Program Director will initiate the request to the

requested /nominated chair. Pending approval of the Program Director, a memo confirming the establishment of the dissertation defense committee is sent to the student, committee members, and the SON registrar.

Note that final approval of the chair rests with the University dean of graduate education.

Formatting

The University has specific formatting guidelines (e.g., title page, margins, pagination, order of front matter, etc.) for PhD dissertations. Those guidelines are found in the thesis manual posted on the Graduate Education website. The SON preferred citation format is APA 7th edition, but students may use other citation formats under the guidance, and with approval, of their dissertation committees. For three-paper dissertations, students may follow the citation guidelines of the publication journals.

Defense Timeline: An Overview

The University has five dates in which PhDs are officially conferred each year, and each conferral date has a corresponding cycle of deadlines for the dissertation defense. Students should work closely with the program office to select a defense date that adheres to the University's PhD calendar and is agreeable to all committee members.

Careful planning is needed when scheduling a defense date. At minimum, students should plan to have completed writing the dissertation a month prior to their desired defense date. Per UR regulations, committee members must be given at least two weeks to review the dissertation before approving it for defense. If, upon review, committee members recommend revisions to the dissertation, those revisions must be incorporated and an updated dissertation reevaluated for committee approval.

The defense timeline can be visualized as follows:
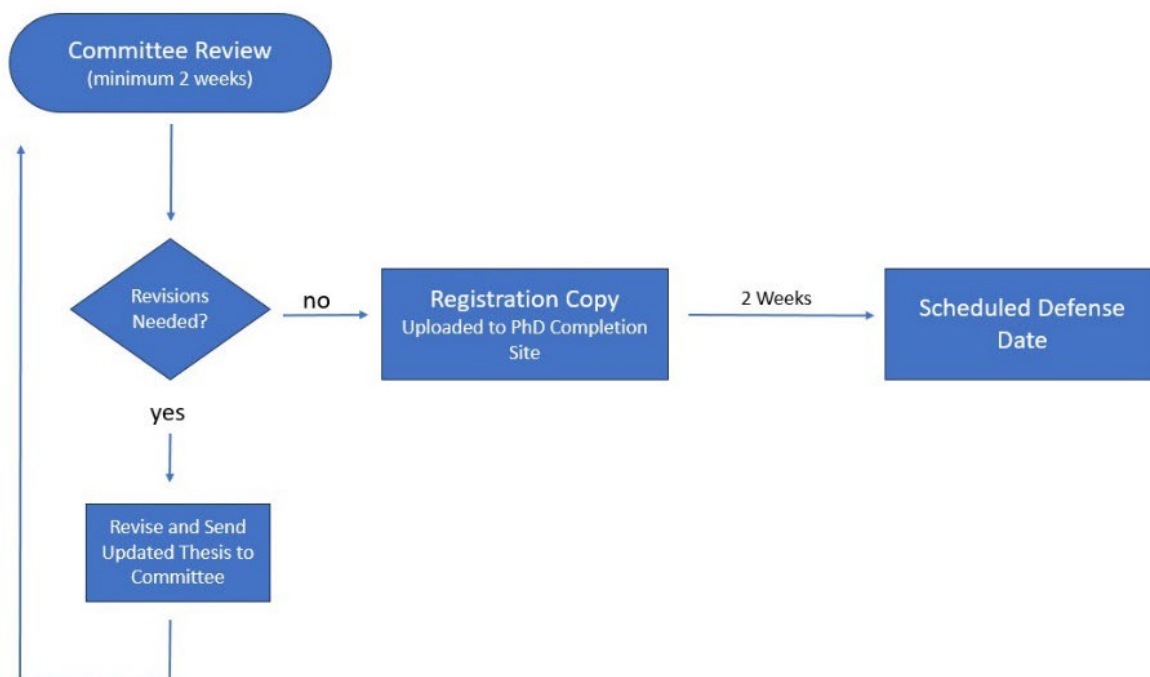
Prior to its final defense, the student's **completed** dissertation (i.e., the version of the dissertation deemed ready for defense by committee members) must be registered with the Office of the University Dean of Graduate Studies. The registered version of your dissertation (called the registration copy) to be used at the defense is not a draft. Although the examining committee may require revisions after the defense, the dissertation that is uploaded to the PhD completion website for registration for the final defense should be in final form. The Program Director, associate dean, dean, University Dean or appointed oral examination chair may turn back any dissertation that is insufficiently edited or carelessly formatted, and the defense will be postponed. It is in your best interest to produce a polished, carefully edited and well-written document for evaluation by the dissertation defense committee and chair.

For the dissertation to be officially registered, all committee members must read the dissertation and confirm that it is ready for final defense. If major revisions are requested by any member, those revisions should be completed before the registration copy is finalized or uploaded (ensuring all members agree it is ready for defense). Students are required to provide a copy of their thesis to their committee members, as well as the Program Director, at least 2 weeks before their thesis is uploaded to the PhD Completion Site.

At the time of upload, the registration copy must be distributed to all committee members, including the external chair, in the file format requested by each member. The PhD program office creates a record on the UR's PhD Completion Site, which includes the student's degree information, past degrees, important contact information, and registration copy of thesis in pdf format. Several offices and individuals need to sign off on the registration record, including the dissertation committee, PhD program office and director, and Graduate Studies office. The registration copy must be uploaded at least 2 weeks prior to the scheduled defense date. The defense cannot take place until the thesis is officially registered. Students will be notified when their thesis is officially registered.

Dissertation Defense

According to the University's Graduate Studies administration, the purpose of this oral examination is to ascertain whether the candidate proposed a significant dissertation topic and whether they defended the dissertation adequately by offering appropriate and effective arguments and by marshaling relevant and convincing evidence. The presentation and defense of a significant dissertation is the capstone of the work for the PhD degree.

The student is responsible for identifying a defense time (plan for a 2-hour session) that works for all members of the defense committee, including the outside chair. The student then notifies the Program Director, who approves the time. From there, the program office books the defense location and sends invitations to SON attendees.

The defense generally begins with an introduction of all committee members and the student. As with the proposal defense, the final defense is a public presentation of approximately 30 minutes (questions other than those from committee members may or may not be allowed), after which all but committee members are excused.

The committee members, led by the appointed chair, then conduct the final examination, usually lasting an hour but occasionally longer.

After the Defense

After a successful defense, you will receive a "Successful PhD Defense Notification" email from the Office of University Graduate Studies. Your committee, the Program Director, and/or Graduate Studies may recommend revisions to your dissertation; those changes must be incorporated into the final version of your dissertation.

You will be instructed to log in to the PhD Candidate Processing system to access post-defense instructions and forms. You will be advised to read all documents carefully and respond as requested. All steps must be completed as described in order to fulfill the requirements for the PhD degree. Contact the PhD program office (see also PhD calendar) to confirm the date by which all steps must be complete to receive your degree at the next conferral date, as well as to avoid having to register for the next semester.

You will receive a final email confirmation from Graduate Studies when all of your final materials have been received and accepted.

4.5 Conferral, Commencement, and Alumni Updates

The University policy is not to use the PhD designation after your name until after the Board of Trustees has formally awarded the degree. The degree is awarded by the Trustees at their next meeting after the defense (August, October, March, May, or December). After that date, the PhD credential may be used.

Commencement involves three ceremonies (you are not required to attend all three): a university-wide graduation ceremony; a university-wide doctoral ceremony, in which graduates are hooded and receive diplomas; and SON ceremony in which PhD graduates are presented and acknowledged.

After graduation, please keep the PhD Programs office informed of your contact information and current position. Alumni achievements are critically important indicators of the effectiveness and quality of the PhD program. We will contact you periodically for your evaluative comments about the program as well as your news.

SECTION V. ADVISING, EVALUATION, AND REGISTRATION POLICIES

5.1 Good Academic Standing and Progression Through the Program

Unless specified otherwise, all policies and procedures for both the Master's program and the PhD program apply to the MS (NP Specialties)/PhD and MS (MNE)/PhD combined programs.

Professional and Academic Honesty

Students are obligated to know the expectations for academic integrity upon entry into the program and will be held to these expectations in all academic activities. Suspected violations will be reported to a review panel, and serious penalties will be assessed for violations of these expectations. Please become familiar with this section of the School of Nursing Student Handbook

Disclosure of Potential Conflicts of Interest

University of Rochester faculty, students, post-PhD fellows, residents and staff must complete and sign forms indicating compliance with the University conflict of interest policy. This will ordinarily be completed once a year at fall registration. Forms are kept in a confidential file and attached when a student submits a research proposal. University policy and guidelines are available at https://rochester.edu/orpa/compliance/#fcoi

Special Considerations for Part-Time Students

Per University graduate regulations and policies, part-time students are subject to the following restrictions:

1. a minimum of two years (four consecutive semesters) in residence while enrolled as a part-time student is required,

2. the minimum registration will be two courses, each carrying at least three credit hours per calendar year (however, departments/programs may establish a higher minimum registration requirement), and

3. a student receiving grades lower than B (or S) in more than one-quarter of the courses for a given academic year may not be permitted to continue in the part-time program. Students should be aware that schools, departments, or programs may have more stringent requirements regarding minimum grade expectations.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

University policies regarding graduate students' grades can be found in its published Regulations and University Policies Concerning Graduates Studies, particularly on pp. 3-4. Unsatisfactory grades or lower and/or failure to pass the PhD Qualifying Examination are both examples of unsatisfactory academic progress. Unsatisfactory academic progress, at minimum, warrants academic probation and may be grounds for loss of federal, state, and/or institutional aid.

The SON handbook also details progression and probation procedures (see p. 34). Probationary Status will be assigned to any full-time student who has received a final grade of C (B- for part-time students) or below in any required course, including withdrawals and failing grades. An unsatisfactory final course grade, which indicates failing, has profound implications and may result in a student's separation from their program.

Specific to the SON PhD program, students earning an unsatisfactory grade in required core courses must repeat the course with a satisfactory grade, replacing the previous grade. However, unsatisfactory grades in non-core courses (such as cognates) will remain on the record. Academic progression may be delayed due to the need to repeat a required course. Probation

status will be removed when the student receives satisfactory grades for 9 credit hours of subsequent graduate study and when the course is successfully repeated if required.

Academic alerts are issued by faculty to provide formal, written, proactive feedback to a student when required. Through this notification students are alerted that additional efforts may be required to be successful in a course or program (see SON student handbook page 33).

Students earning more than one grade of C have raised the question of their ability to succeed in the program. A second C grade may result in a requirement to repeat the course(s), temporary suspension from the program, or separation (involuntary withdrawal) from the program. The PhD Subcommittee will make a recommendation to the Student Affairs Committee, which will base a decision on the student's total academic performance.

If a PhD, MS/PhD or MNE/PhD student receives a grade of E (failed) or WE (withdrawn-failing) in a course required for the program, including NUR 590, 595, 999, or 995, the PhD Subcommittee will make a recommendation to either (a) initiate or continue academic probation and allow the student to repeat the course or (b) separate the student from the program.

MS/PhD and MNE/PhD students are subject to MS policy requirements for the MS courses in the curriculum, and questionable academic performance is reviewed by both MS and PhD program subcommittees. Please see the SON Student Handbook for more detail on MS grading policy

Degree Time Limits and Extensions

Per University policy (see page 9), students have 7 calendar years after entry with a bachelor's degree or 6 years after entry with a master's degree to complete the PhD program. This time limit applies regardless of whether they have been enrolled full-time or part-time or have taken leaves of absence. Students readmitted after withdrawal are handled on an individual basis.

If the dissertation is not defended by the end of the final allotted year, a request for an extension of time to complete the program must be submitted to the PhD Programs Director by the student with supporting comments by the student and advisor. Forms to request an extension are available in the PhD program Box folder (see handbook appendix for link). Requests will be made prior to the extension occurring and with sufficient time for the PhD Subcommittee to review (e.g., early May if needed for September).

All requests for extension must be approved by the PhD Subcommittee. The approved extension duration will vary depending on the individual student's situation and may be limited to a few months. Requests for additional extensions are contingent on continuous progress toward degree completion. Failure to meet milestones over several program extensions can be (and has been) cause for separation from the program. Students who continue in the program for 12 or more years are reported to the University Dean of Graduate Studies.

Leaves of Absence and Withdrawals

Leaves of absence (without stipend support) may be granted, for personal or professional reasons, for a maximum of two semesters. If a student does not foresee being able to return to the program within one year, voluntary withdrawal (see below) is the better option. As noted above, time spent on a leave of absence counts toward the time limit for completion of the program.

A leave of absence requires completion of a Leave of Absence Request form ([available on SON website](#)) as well as signature of the PhD Program Director and the student's advisor(s). Students on LOA are not eligible for student health insurance and should explore the effects of LOA status on loan deferment.

Voluntary withdrawal is an appropriate action if a student's plans change, or the student feels unable to achieve satisfactory performance, has exhausted the option for a leave of absence, or does not foresee being able to return to satisfactory performance within one year. The student may reapply to the program after withdrawal. The application for re-admission will be judged with the student's prior academic performance taken into account.

Involuntary withdrawal, or administrative separation, may be incurred as a result of persistent failure to achieve satisfactory academic performance or progression based on program requirements listed above, failure to pass the qualifying exam for the second time, or as a result of a serious violation of School or University policy. Please see the [University Graduate Regulations and Policies](#) (page 5) for further information.

5.2 Faculty Advisors and Program Planning

The PhD Program Director assigns an academic advisor to each student. Students meet regularly (at least every 2 weeks is recommended) with their advisors to:

    a. Formulate a degree plan;
    b. Create and update annually an Individual Development Plan (IDP);
    c. Discuss ongoing academic progress and the development of dissertation research work;
    d. Seek out enrichment opportunities such as interdisciplinary seminars, conferences, and research collaborations;
    e. Identify suitable RA and TA opportunities; and
    f. Utilize resources available for academic and personal support

It is the student's responsibility to maintain regular contact with their advisor and to be accountable for their own progress and success in the program. Students and advisors may use Academic Advising Agreements outlining program expectations to ensure positive progression toward their goals.

If a student desires a change in advisor during the program, or the advisor leaves the School or becomes unable to continue, the student should discuss alternatives with the current advisor and with the PhD Programs Director, who makes the final decision.

5.3 Individual Development Plans and Annual Progress Reports

Students are required to create an Individual Development Plan (IDP) in consultation with their advisors. The IDP helps to guide and organize career development and training goals. The IDP should map out the general career path the student wants to take, specify short- and long-term goals, and maximize training opportunities to meet individual development needs. Since needs and goals evolve over time, the IDP is reviewed and revised at least once a year, via self-assessment by the student and comments from the advisor. The IDP form can be found in the program office Box folder (see this handbook's Appendix for a link).

At the end of each spring semester, each PhD and MS/MNE-PhD student submits to the PhD Programs office:

- a current Curriculum Vitae (template on G:/public drive and in Box); and
- An annual progress report, containing advisor comments and signature, to be attached as an addendum to the IDP

5.4 Registration Procedures and Requirements

Degree Plans

A degree plan is developed in conjunction with the advisor before the first semester of study and registered in SON-Db, the School of Nursing's internal academic affairs database. Any changes to the degree plan must be updated each semester prior to registration, approved by advisor and Program Director, and updated in SON-Db. Please notify the program office of any such changes or updates (e.g., course numbers and names of cognates, one identified).

Course Registration

Course registration takes place via UR Student (see handbook appendix for link) in November for the spring semester, in April for the summer semester, and in July for the fall semester.

Full-time status requires registration for 9 or more credits per semester. Part-time status requires registration for 6 credits or more per semester. Continuous registration in NUR 590 is required from the semester following completion of NUR 514 through the dissertation proposal defense.

Grading System

Per the University's Graduate Regulations and Policies (see pp. 3–4), grades for graduate students are reported through one of two systems. One is A (excellent), A–, B+, B (good), B–, C (poor), and E (failure). The other is S (satisfactory) and E (failure).

Incomplete Grades

Students can request an extension of time to complete course requirements from the course instructor. The request must be initiated by the student prior to the assignment deadlines. The incomplete grade cannot be used as a substitute for a failing grade when the student is doing unsatisfactory work. Granting of an Incomplete Contract is at the discretion of the course instructor. Contracts are initiated by course faculty via the electronic incomplete Contract System. If the student anticipates being unable to meet a previously negotiated extension date, the instructor must be notified. With instructor approval, a request for Extension on Previous Incomplete Contract form may be submitted. Typically, incomplete course work must be completed by the end of the following semester. Incomplete grades must be resolved before a student can complete program milestones, including the MS Comprehensive Examination, the PhD Qualifying Examination, and the dissertation proposal defense.

Special Course (NUR 591, 595, and 995/999) Registration and Grading

Independent studies (NUR 591) must be approved by both the Program Director and the Associate Dean of Education and Student Affairs prior to the start of the semester. Students should submit an Independent Study Form (see handbook appendix for link) for all necessary signatures in order to register for NUR 591. Independent studies are graded according to the criteria detailed in the approval form.

To ensure satisfactory progress in NUR 595, 995, or 999, each semester students and advisors must submit a contract outlining goals for the semester (students registered for both NUR 595 and 995/999 complete only one contract). This contract must be signed by both student and advisor and submitted to the PhD program office for filing with the Registrar prior to the start of the semester.

The goals set by advisor and student may be modified by mutual agreement, but absence of progress by mid-semester will warrant an Academic Alert, indicating a risk of failure. "Incomplete" grades may be issued only when illness or other unforeseeable events prevent completion of the work. Employment responsibilities are not sufficient reason for a grade of "Incomplete." If work demands are a significant impediment to progress, a Leave of Absence should be considered. An E grade (failure) is treated as are other unsatisfactory grades, academic probation or with dismissal from the program.

SECTION VI. FUNDING SUPPORT

Questions about financial matters should be directed to the PhD program office, which can then answer or direct those questions to the appropriate departments or offices.

6.1 Important Tax Information

In general, stipends and reimbursements paid by the University are reported to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Funds used for tuition, fees, books, and supplies can be subtracted from reported income on tax returns, but funds used for cost-of-living expenses, research, and travel are taxable. Details can be found on the IRS website.

6.2 Tuition

The School of Nursing provides tuition awards for PhD and MS-PhD students for the required courses in both the master's (credit hours may vary) and PhD programs (up to 60 credit hours) for full-time students.

Dropping, withdrawing from, or failing a course has implications for students' stipend support and tuition waiver; consult the SON student handbook and/or Program Director for further guidance. The SON will not pay tuition costs for credits registered after the 6 years allotted for completion of the PhD (7 years for MS-PhD). Students will be responsible for tuition costs after that.

Students (both full-time and part-time) who are eligible for employee tuition benefits are expected to use these benefits toward tuition costs. Please notify the PhD Programs office of eligibility or loss of eligibility for this benefit. Tuition benefits can cover only one semester of non-credit NUR 995 or 999 fees. Students funded under a National Research Service Awards (NRSA) can use the grant's tuition funds to pay NUR 995/999 fees.

UR employees should consult the website for UR employee tuition benefits for more information. Others should refer to their respective employers' tuition benefit policies.

6.3 Cost-of-Living Stipend Support

Full-time PhD and combined Master's/PhD program students are eligible for a cost-of-living stipend for 4 years. Students receiving this stipend are strongly encouraged to:

- Devote full-time effort to the program
- Maintain satisfactory academic progress
- Co-author 2 publications with faculty before the end of the third year of study
- Defend the dissertation proposal by the end of the third year of study

Students who fail to meet these expectations may be placing future/continuing stipend support in jeopardy. Stipend support may not be provided to students who are re-matriculated or who enter part-time and then decide to become full-time.

6.3 Health Insurance and Childcare Grants

As announced in August 2022, The University has expanded single-payer health insurance coverage to all full-time PhD students across the institution. Student health insurance is administered through University Health Service (UHS). Under this policy, students enroll in the student health insurance plan, and their health insurance fees are waived by the SON and the bursar's office. Please consult the Graduate Education website for enrollment instructions and further information.

In August 2023 the University launched a pilot childcare grant program for full-time PhD students, on University appointments, who are parents of children, newborn through age 6 ("student-parents"). The objective of this program is to provide some financial assistance to Rochester PhD students with childcare expenses. More information about the grant program, including eligibility requirements, can be found here.

6.4 Internal Awards and Fellowships

The Loretta C. Ford Fellowship is awarded to an RN student by the PhD Program Director. It was established in 1987 in honor of the School's first dean, Loretta C. Ford, RN, EdD, PNP, FAAN, FAANP, who is internationally renowned as a practitioner, teacher, and scholar and the co-creator, with Henry Silver, MD, of the nurse practitioner role. The Ford Fellowship is awarded to a nursing student demonstrating high potential for academic and professional success. The recipient is recognized at the fall Convocation.

The Jill Thayer Dissertation Award is presented to a PhD candidate at the School of Nursing or a School of Nursing faculty member who is pursuing a doctorate elsewhere. The purpose of the award is to support dissertation research in the area of nursing practice or education as it relates to personalizing/humanizing either of those vital encounters. Students whose proposals have been defended and approved by the student's PhD committee are eligible. The award is presented each fall at Convocation. This cash award is to be used for dissertation research expenses.

The Katharine Donohoe PhD Student Scholarly Practitioner Award, created in 1999, is named in honor of Katharine Donohoe, a PhD candidate, clinician, and clinical faculty member internationally known for her practice, research, and educational contributions to the care of

patients with neurological diseases, especially multiple sclerosis. This award recognizes PhD students, prepared as nurse practitioners, who have undertaken research focused on improving the well-being of the population served in their practice roles. The student's performance will exemplify clinical excellence, outstanding scholarship, and professional leadership. The award is presented each Fall at Convocation.

Students across the University may apply for **Susan B. Anthony Dissertation Awards**, research grants of up to $1000 which are awarded to the University of Rochester PhD candidates having completed (or nearly completed) dissertation research related to women's and/or gender studies.

Many **additional opportunities** supporting research activities are available across the University and Medical Center. For example, the UR Clinical & Translational Science Institute posts funding opportunities on its website. The SON website also contains information re: outside funding, and the University manages a searchable database of funding opportunities.

6.5 Applying for External Funding and Awards

6.5a Examples of External Funding/Awards

The PhD program strongly supports and facilitates student applications for a wide range of funding for PhD study and research. These include both scholarship and research funding applications. Funding sources for our students have included: the National Institutes of Health, Nurses Educational Funds, Inc.; Sigma Theta Tau International (and local chapters); nursing specialty organizations such as the Oncology Nursing Society; and non-profit organizations such as the American Cancer Society.

Federal funding is a major milestone for a new researcher. The **Individual National Research Service Award (NRSA) F31 training grant award** provides tuition support, funds for research and scholarly expenses, and a stipend. Applications may be submitted from the point of acceptance into the PhD program through the start of the final year (at least 9 months of funding must be requested). All students who are able to pursue full-time study and are eligible for these awards are encouraged to apply.

You are encouraged to contact the CRS to determine funding opportunities in your area of research interest. The CRS provides administrative support to students in the development of research proposals, including interpretation of application guidelines, identifying support to be provided, assembling the sections of the application, securing all required signoffs, and mailing or electronic submission of the proposal. Contact CRS staff for assistance in formatting and preparing grant applications.

6.5b External Awards Application Process

All applications for external funding must adhere to School of Nursing and University sign-off procedures. The PhD programs director and Center for Research Support (CRS) should be

notified of intent to apply for external funding as early as possible. Students should submit a Notice of Intent (NOI) form as soon as they decide to apply for funding and a minimum of 30 days prior to the application deadline. An organizational meeting for the student and faculty sponsor is scheduled with the CRS staff to review potential support and required sign-off procedures. Faculty sponsors and/or mentors must approve students' proposals **before** they are submitted to the CRS.

When PhD students receive funds from agencies, foundations, or associations in support of their research, the funds are disbursed through the SON research office (CRS). University policies and procedures are strictly observed because the University is subject to strict accounting regulations as a recipient of federal funds.

When a student has received acknowledgement that their proposal has been approved for funding, the first step is to provide a copy of this notification to the CRS. Upon receipt of this notification, the CRS will request that a grant account be established; both the CRS and the student will receive documentation of the established account. At that time, a meeting is scheduled between the student, faculty advisor, CRS administrator, and staff accountant assigned to this award to review and discuss University financial policies and procedures.

All research materials must be purchased through selected University vendors using established paperwork and forms and must be countersigned by the administrator for CRS. If a student makes a purchase or commitment prior to the administrator's review and signature, or fails to follow the University's established procedure, the student may be held liable for that expense.

When transactions involve hiring personnel, at least one month's lead time before the process of hiring can begin may be required for the preparation and approval of appropriate paperwork, which will confirm an appointment and initiate paychecks to be processed by other divisions within the University.

The student will receive monthly financial ledger reports, which reflect expenses to date, along with a cover sheet. The student is required to review the ledger for accuracy of the expenses and then sign and return the cover sheet indicating that the expenses listed on the ledger are accurate, or indicating any errors. This procedure is important as it meets many audit requirements. In addition, it is the student's responsibility to stay within the established budget.

Most research projects are awarded for a specific time period. When an award is reaching the expiration date, the student will be notified by the CRS administrator and/or the staff accountant that the account is about to expire unless an official extension from the funding agency is requested. If funds remain in the account and an extension is permitted by the funder, the student is responsible for submitting a request for extension in a timely fashion. This request should be coordinated through the CRS Administrator's office and like the initial grant proposal is co-signed by the Office of Project and Research Administration (ORPA).

All questions or concerns regarding the spending of research dollars, process to be utilized, or financial status should be reviewed with the Administrator for CRS.

6.6 Travel Funding for Scholarly Work

(Policy Under Review 2023 – 2024)

The School of Nursing supports and encourages student participation in professional meetings. Students who are presenting a paper or a poster as first author may submit a request for travel funding. The Program Director reviews and decides on funding based on annual budget allocation. The budget is reviewed annually and available funding may vary.

Contact the Program Director when submitting a first author abstract, so that potential funding needs can be pre planned.

ENRS (Eastern Nursing Research Society) is the regional nursing research association for New England and the mid-Atlantic states. ENRS holds an annual research conference in Spring, which includes events and awards oriented to PhD students. Attendance and presentation each year is an outstanding scholarly opportunity for School of Nursing PhD students and is recommended. Visit www.enrs-go.org for more information. CANS (Council for the Advancement of Nursing Science, https://www.nursingscience.org/home) is the research policy and facilitation arm for the American Academy of Nursing. Student presentation at the bi-annual State of the Science Congress on Nursing Research in September is encouraged. Travel budget allocation for these conferences is determined annually and is prioritized for students with first author abstracts.

Approval and Reimbursement Policies

Student travel policies and procedures are documented in detail in the program office Box file. A few important stipulations:

- Travel funding must be pre-approved by both the PhD Program Director and the Associate Dean for Education and Student Affairs
- Registration fees and airfare need to be arranged in advance by the SON. Please take advantage of any "early bird" discounts
- Printing costs for posters are also covered by the SON, but extra costs associated with rush orders will not be supported. Instructions for preparing posters and templates using official logo and colors are available electronically in the PhD folder on G:/public. Students' posters should include acknowledgement that support was received from the University of Rochester School of Nursing
- Other travel expenses (hotel, parking, etc.) are to be paid out-of-pocket by students and reimbursed upon their return

No more than 30 days after returning from travel, students should contact the program office and provide receipts for expenses incurred. Please allow several weeks for reimbursement.

Please note that University policies for travel are updated frequently; students should consult with the program office to keep abreast of any recent changes.

SECTION VII. SCHOLARLY ENGAGEMENT

7.1 The Importance of Scholarly Productivity

The most significant professional contributions of PhD-prepared individuals are the results of their scholarly work, disseminated in presentations and publications, which become part of the scientific foundation for clinical practice. Typically, the work is first presented at research conferences to gather feedback from scholarly peers and then submitted for publication in peer-reviewed journals. Funding for research and scholarship is also highly valued; funding enables the work to be completed and it is both a reflection of competitive selection through a peer-review process and a recognition of the importance and quality of the work. Scholarly productivity of students during and after completion of the program is one of the main measures of quality in PhD programs and is carefully tracked by the SON.

A curriculum vitae, or CV, is a scholar's comprehensive record of their scholarly work and takes the place of a resume. During the PhD program, students should begin building their CVs and establishing track records as active scholars. A link to a CV template is included in this handbook's appendix.

The main scholarly activities that students should focus on are research-focused presentations, publications, and grants. RA experiences offer ideal opportunities to contribute to ongoing faculty research and provide collaborative scholarship opportunities. Students also are encouraged to prepare presentations and manuscripts for publication from their course assignments, including integrative literature reviews, theoretical analyses, and papers related to research methods. Faculty can provide guidance as to which work is suitable for further development into an abstract for presentation or manuscript for publication.

Scholarship and/or grant funding can be sought for support of PhD study as well as for completion of dissertation research. As described in Section 6 of this handbook, grant funding is awarded by professional associations, internal SON and UR awards, charitable foundations, local organizations such as churches and community groups, and the offices and institutes of NIH. Even small awards are considered important achievements for PhD students. Students are encouraged to seek out these opportunities in advance of finalizing the dissertation proposal so that deadlines can be anticipated and met.

The PhD Program Office keeps track of students' scholarly achievements for program-evaluation purposes and to support requests for funding. Students should notify the Program Director when a paper or poster is submitted for presentation or publication as well as applying for scholarships and grants. We want to know both about submissions and notification decisions.

Support for Scholarly Engagement

The Harriet J Kitzman [Center for Research Support](#) (CRS) offers research support services to faculty and students under the leadership of the Associate Dean for Research

The research facilitation group at the CRS includes a team of data analysts and health project coordinators who provide services designed to connect researchers with resources as well as to speed

1. research development, including study design, methodology and statistical consultation; and
2. protocol development, including human subject protection inquires project management, data collection, data management, and statistical analyses

Consultation is available upon request to PhD students accompanied by their advisor. The administrative, proposal, and financial support group need to be involved and work with any and all external grant submissions. Contact the CRS for more information or to schedule an appointment.

Communication with Program Director and Office

Communicate early and often with the Program Director and office whenever you are considering submitting an application for scholarship or research support (internal or external). In addition to your advisor, we can provide guidance on resources and policies.

Please also communicate (early and often) about abstract or manuscript submission. Doing so helps us allocate budgets for travel funding support.

Finally, please communicate all notifications of scholarships, awards, abstract acceptance, and/or publications. We want to acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of PhD students by sharing their successes with the SON community.

7.2 Required Certifications and Approvals

HSPP Certification

To be eligible to conduct or work on research as a member of [URMC](#), students must be certified as having received training on the protection of human research participants. The University of Rochester has two programs that are available to investigators: [Human Subjects Protection Program (HSPP)](#) for research considered greater than minimal risk, and Ethical Principles in Research Program (ERPR)for research considered minimal risk.

PhD students must complete the HSPP program and provide a copy of the certification letter to the PhD Program Office by the start of their 2nd semester. The ERPR program is not acceptable for this requirement.

Certification and recertification (every 3 years) involves completion of a series of short on-line refresher modules with a brief quiz after each module.

Institutional Review Board Approval for Research

Before or after the proposal defense, students must obtain Institutional Review Board approval prior to conducting any research involving human or animal subjects. The application is submitted electronically with the advisor as PI and student as project coordinator. The UR's review board is called the Research Subjects Review Board, or RSRB. The RSRB website contains all the information required to obtain approval for the conduct of research involving human subjects, as well as other guidelines and links. Guidelines for the protection of animal subjects may be found at the UR's Committee on Animal Resources (UCAR) website.

All RSRB or UCAR applications for Research Review must have internal review for scientific merit before submission, using the following process:

1. Reformat the pilot proposal or dissertation proposal as a research protocol per RSRB instructions. Templates are available for protocol development on the URMC RSRB website. Be sure to clearly indicate when the "project coordinator" or "student researcher" is acting and when the PI (advisor) is referred to.

Before final submission an internal review is required:

2. Doctoral students' RSRB protocols may be reviewed by a member of their committee, excluding the primary advisor (who is officially the PI for the study). If the PI (primary dissertation advisor) wants another member of the committee to perform the review, the PI may directly approach and ask an eligible faculty member to perform the review.
   a. Only one (1) SON scientific review per protocol is necessary.
   b. If the protocol requires scientific review by another URMC committee, it will be determined by the primary faculty advisor (PI), who will explain the necessary procedures to the student.
   c. Eligible reviewers must be doctorally-prepared with HSPP or EPRP certification.
   d. They must also be SON faculty (full-time or part-time; tenure-track or clinical).
   e. Reviewers may not include study co-investigators, consultants, or the Associate Dean for Research.
3. Prepare consent forms and recruitment documents, which require RSRB approval.
4. Complete the online RSRB application, using the same language as in the protocol whenever possible to avoid confusion. Upload the final protocol and other materials. Do not select "this application is complete" until the advisor/PI reviews it, and do not submit the application.
   a. The primary dissertation advisor should be listed as the official Principal Investigator (PI) on the application form, and the student should be listed as the study coordinator, in order to receive all communications from the RSRB.
   b. The advisor must carefully review the application and take responsibility for the ethical conduct of the research.
5. The advisor as PI electronically submits the RSRB electronic application.

6. RSRB emails the School of Nursing faculty member responsible for verifying scientific merit review that the application has been received and is ready for scientific merit signoff.
7. If the protocol and scientific merit form(s) are satisfactory, the RSRB verification will be signed off electronically by the SON designated faculty member and the review of the application then begins.

RSRB approval can take well over a month. Students should plan ahead for this likelihood and work with their advisors to respond promptly to all requests for information and clarification. Students can check the RSRB application website to see the current status of the protocol review.

7.3 Authorship and Publication Best Practices

Acknowledgements on Student-Authored Publications

Manuscripts on which the author is identified as a UR student must be discussed with a faculty member prior to submission. When the results of the dissertation are published, the primary advisor and possibly other committee members are likely to have made contributions that warrant authorship and should at minimum be noted in the acknowledgments.

Students whose work is supported by NIH funding (or other grant funding), either to themselves or mentors, must acknowledge that support using NIH-approved language, and notify the publisher on submission. They must also ensure that the work is listed in the federal public access source according to federal requirements.

Co-Authorship with Faculty Publications

All individuals contributing to a manuscript for publication should be acknowledged. Major conceptual and writing contributions must be recognized by inclusion of the individual's name as an author. For research publications, substantial input to the formulation of the problem, creation of the design or intervention protocol, organization and conduct of the analyses, or interpretation of the results; or writing of a major portion of the publication constitute such contributions.

When the work is originated by the student and the development of the manuscript has been led by the student, and when the focus of a publication is a student's original thesis work, the student should be listed as first author. Students may be sole authors on publications developed independently if faculty contributions do not reach the level of authorship based on the criteria above. However, all work must be reviewed and approved by a faculty member prior to submission as it is from a University of Rochester student.

Accepting authorship for a publication means accepting responsibility for the accuracy, originality, proper acknowledgement, and ethical implications of the content of the publication.

Other contributions to the conduct of the work being described in the publication do not necessarily warrant authorship but should be acknowledged in the text or a footnote. Such contributions may include literature searches; data collection, coding or entry; recruiting participants; or running requested analyses.[3]

Publication of Work Involving URMC Staff or Clinical Data

Papers, posters, or presentations in which URMC staff have served as authors or research participants, in which protocols or clinical data including program evaluation data are presented, or in which SMH or URMC is identified must be reviewed by the Director of Nursing Research of SMH before submission for presentation or publication.

An ORCID ID can be obtained without charge at https://orcid.org/. Registration provides a unique alpha numeric code identifier. Currently required for all faculty, it is frequently requested during the journal submission process. Obtaining an ORCID identifier is recommended.

7.4 Learning Enhancement Opportunities

Events Sponsored by the SON

All doctoral students are **strongly encouraged** to attend oral proposal defenses and dissertation defenses. The SON sponsors clinical and research Grand Rounds and other research-related events, including discussions of research design issues and funding processes and presentations by visiting faculty and faculty candidates. PhD students are **strongly encouraged** to attend these events as part of their scholarly development. Notices are distributed by email.

Seminars and Presentations Throughout University and URMC

Research presentations and interest groups can be found throughout the University and Medical Center, and PhD students are welcome at most of these. Advisors and faculty can direct students to events on topics of interest.

Professional Organizations

Involvement in professional organizations and service groups is also part of scholarly development. Your advisor can direct you to local and national organizations that may enhance your learning and may also benefit from your engagement and expertise.

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[3] See, for example, the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors' authorship recommendations

APPENDIX: IMPORTANT FORMS AND RESOURCES

University- and SON-Wide Policies

University Graduate Polices and Regulations

SON Student Handbook

SON PhD Box Folder (access granted by PhD program office)

- Sample degree plans
- Advising and progress report forms
- Special course registration forms
- TA and RA forms
- Travel policies and forms
- Links to University resources and support services

UR Graduate Education Dissertation Completion Website