University of Missouri-St Louis
College of Nursing

PhD Student Handbook

2017 - 2018
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Overview

Introduction

This handbook contains material specific to the College of Nursing, including policies regarding progression and retention. It is meant to supplement the information contained in the University Bulletin and the Triton Manual (aka Student Planner). You are encouraged to review all three of these manuals to obtain important information that will assist you in planning and implementing your program of study. Please feel free to contact the Office of Student Services (314-516-6066) for further clarification.

History

The University of Missouri–St. Louis (UMSL) is one of four campuses that constitute the University of Missouri, the ninth largest university system in the United States. Founded in 1839, the University of Missouri became a land-grant institution in 1862. The St. Louis campus was established in 1963, becoming the largest university serving St. Louis and third largest in the state. History specific to the College of Nursing can be found on our website by clicking here.

Mission

The mission of the College of Nursing at University of Missouri–St. Louis is to shape the future of nursing and healthcare locally, regionally, nationally and globally through education, research, practice and policy. We develop nurses who are dedicated to the pursuit of excellence and leadership through innovative baccalaureate, masters and doctoral programs. We leverage strategic partnerships to generate, translate, disseminate and apply knowledge that will improve health.

In accordance with its most recent Strategic Plan (approved in April 2013), the College of Nursing at the University of Missouri-St. Louis has also adopted its own Vision Statement, Strategic Priorities and Core Values, all of which may be viewed on our website by clicking here.

College Governance

The bylaws of the Faculty Association provide the mechanism for faculty governance. Standing committees have various functions, working to assure that appropriate policies are in place to maintain strong academic programs.

College Committees

Executive Committee: Provides leadership for College of Nursing.
Undergraduate Committee: Provides leadership for curriculum, program evaluation, and student relations.
Graduate Committee: Provides leadership for curriculum, certification, program evaluation, and student relations.
Faculty Affairs Committee: Facilitates faculty development and addresses faculty issues and concerns.
Scholarship, Research and Evidence-Based Practice Committee: Provides leadership for research and scholarship.
Innovations in Practice and Partnerships Committee: Identifies trends and future opportunities in nursing practice, research, and scholarship, health care, health systems delivery; and assists leadership in facilitating community based partnership to achieve College of Nursing mission, vision, and goals.
Student Participation in College Committees

Students are encouraged to participate on college committees. Those who are interested in serving on the Undergraduate and Graduate Committees, Dean’s Advisory Council, or Evaluation and Outcome Committee should contact the Office of Student Services. Committees meet monthly. Students may address concerns to specific committees by contacting the chair of the committee.

Non-discrimination

It is the policy of the University of Missouri to provide equal opportunity for all enrolled students and applicants for admission to the University on the basis of merit without discrimination on the basis of their race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age or disability, or Vietnam era veteran status. Sexual harassment shall be considered discrimination because of sex. This policy shall not be interpreted in such a way as to violate the legal rights of religious organizations or military organizations associated with the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

UMSL Graduate School

Overview

Your doctoral education is guided by policies of the UMSL Graduate School. Graduate School policies must be followed because the UMSL Graduate School awards your doctoral degree. Many of these policies and procedures are tailored to meet the need of doctoral students in College of Nursing. This Doctoral Student Handbook provides links to these policies and includes additional college-related guidelines.

All doctoral students in nursing first complete their program-specific coursework. This is followed by a comprehensive examination that is designed to assess your readiness to complete your doctoral research project. You will prepare a written proposal and present it to your faculty. Your dissertation research, after receipt of approval from your faculty committee, the Institutional Review Board, and the Graduate School, is implemented. Your findings are presented in a public meeting to your peers and faculty. Your doctoral studies are completed after your dissertation is approved.

Doctoral Enrollment

Full-time status is defined as 9-credit hours per semester. Some funders require full-time enrollment. The College of Nursing offers part-time and full-time programs of study.

After students complete their course work, achieve candidacy, and complete the UMSL residence requirement, they must remain enrolled during fall and spring semesters until the degree is completed. Failure to register in any regular semester will result in termination from the Graduate School. If students so terminated decide to reapply and if they are readmitted, they will be subject to all regulations in effect at the time of readmission, and will be required to enroll for at least 1-credit hour in each semester since their last enrollment.

When doctoral students are enrolled for research credit, the credit amount may vary, but the student must register for all work required, and the credit total may exceed the minimum requirements.
International and Permanent Resident Students

International students shall meet the requirements for admission to the Graduate School. In addition, international students whose native language is not English and who have spent less than two of the last three years in an English-speaking country are required to submit scores from an internationally accepted standardized examination before a decision is made on admission.

Teaching assistantships will be awarded only to students with demonstrated oral English proficiency.

All students with international coursework (whether they are classified as an international student, as a citizen, or as a permanent resident of the United States) must submit official transcripts from the international school(s) as well as a credential evaluation from World Education Services (WES). Please click here for detailed information on this process.

Doctoral Residency Requirement

The majority of credits used to satisfy requirements for a doctoral degree must be completed in residence at UMSL. The residence requirement may be satisfied with dissertation credit hours, graduate institutes, and credit courses taken through Continuing Education, as well as regular courses.

Residency normally requires that doctoral students successfully complete a minimum of 15 hours over three consecutive terms, which may include summer. The Dean of the Graduate School may grant exceptions upon recommendation by the program.

Doctoral Time Limitation

The maximum amount of time allowed for completion of a doctoral degree will be 8-years after the first course enrollment.

A maximum of 12 hours of graduate credit completed as a post-master's-degree student prior to admission to a doctoral program may apply toward a doctoral degree. Inclusion of such course work is subject to unit approval and must have been completed within 8-years of the time the doctoral degree is awarded. Exceptions to this regulation shall be justified on academically defensible grounds and approved by the Graduate Dean prior to filing the program of study.

When doctoral students have earned a master's degree at any institution, appropriate credits may be applied toward meeting the requirement for the doctoral degree, subject to unit approval. Such credits shall constitute less than half of the total credits required for the doctorate. For example, for a doctoral degree requiring 90 hours of work beyond the bachelor's degree, no more than 44 credits from a master's degree may apply to the doctoral degree. Credit for courses taken for a master's degree is exempt from the 8-year time limitation.
From Admission to Candidacy

Advisor versus Chair: What is the difference?

When a student is admitted to the program, he/she is assigned an Advisor whose areas of expertise are matched with the student’s area or methods of interest. The Advisor will help the student select:

1. Courses in line with his or her program of study,
2. Potential electives, and
3. Relevant cognates.

The Advisor will meet monthly with the student (or more often as needed) to provide guidance as the student develops depth in his/her area of focus. Advisors can often suggest scholarship and research activities in which the student might consider participating to enrich his or her program of study and academic experience.

As the student completes 24 hours of coursework, the Advisor may become the student’s chair or another suitable chair may be chosen to direct the comprehensive exam committee and the dissertation study. Students may confer with the PhD program director, if needed, to discuss potential choices.

To formalize the choice of chair, the student is responsible for circulating and acquiring needed signatures on the D forms (see D form policy). Once all needed signatures are obtained, the student forwards the completed form(s) to the Graduate School as indicated in the directions on the forms. The student is encouraged to include his or her advisor with a courtesy copy (cc).

The Advisor can be changed at any time during the student’s first 24 credit hours in his or her program of study. The change of Advisor can be initiated by the Advisor or the student. The PhD Program Director may be enlisted to assist in considering whether and how to change advisors.

A Comprehensive Examination or Dissertation Chair can be changed, if circumstances warrant, and should only be initiated in consultation with the PhD Program Director.

Advisor/Chair descriptions approved by PhD Faculty 4/7/2017

Please understand that faculty can only advise 3-4 students at a time. Advisors and committee chairs must be regular members of the UMSL Graduate Faculty. These are faculty who have earned PhDs and who are appointed as tenured or tenure track faculty. You can find a list of approved graduate faculty on the Graduate School website. You will need to discriminate between regular graduate faculty and those who have term appointments. For questions, please consult the PhD Program Director.

After you have successfully completed your comprehensive exam and the Graduate Dean has signed doctoral form D-3, you become an official candidate for your degree. Congratulations!! This is a significant milestone in completion of your doctorate!

From Candidacy to Doctoral 'Hood'

Now that you are a candidate, your remaining education and the time to degree completion is largely in your hands. Working with your advisor you need to finalize your dissertation committee by submitting the appropriate doctoral form (D-form). And, working with your dissertation committee, it is time to finalize your proposal using the degree specific guidelines found in this handbook. When all of your committee members have agreed to the plans in your proposal, you need to seek IRB approval using the guidelines in this handbook. You are required to be continuously enrolled in the Graduate School between candidacy and graduation. When you have received IRB
approval(s), it is time for the Graduate Dean to approve your proposal. To do this, you submit doctoral form D-5 along with the proposal that your committee approved and the IRB approval memo. When this approval is completed, you may begin your work. At this point, you will be working closely with your dissertation committee to complete the work and write the final dissertation.

At this phase of doctoral study, students often feel somewhat lonely because they are no longer routinely seeing their faculty and student colleagues. But, it is important to continue to progress toward completion of your degree. Some students arrange to have regular contact with their advisor during this period as they find it helps them to sustain the energy to complete their doctorate. And, other students arrange for regular contact with their student colleagues. You should do whatever keeps you energized!

When your committee is satisfied with the completed document, doctoral form D-6 is signed and sent to the Graduate Dean along with your nearly done written dissertation. You will also plan a date and place for your dissertation presentation, including your project abstract and submit these to the Graduate Dean. The Graduate School will invite the entire campus community to your dissertation presentation but it is unusual for there to be more than a dozen or so nursing faculty and students in attendance. Following your presentation, the audience has the opportunity to ask questions. The audience is then excused and you continue to meet with your committee who will also vote their approval that your doctorate is now complete. It is important to abide by the graduation schedule for the term in which you plan to graduate as these deadlines are strictly enforced. At this point, you may need to make some changes to your dissertation and when those are completed, you will present your dissertation to the Graduate School and it will be published either electronically or as a document.

Generally, graduates who are being awarded doctoral degrees are introduced individually at the graduation ceremony and are hooded by their dissertation advisor. The hood is an academic tradition that indicates the colors of your school and discipline and signifies completion of the highest academic degree.

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR ACHIEVEMENT, DOCTOR!

Graduation

Graduation under a Specific Catalogue

Students are bound by graduation policies and requirements found in the University Bulletin or college policies in use at the time of their initial enrollment or readmission to the College of Nursing. Curricular changes may be imposed within the nursing major with the assurance that students will be notified of all changes.

Applying for Graduation

Your graduation is not automatic, even after you’ve met all the requirements. You must notify the university that you intend to graduate by submitting “D” forms throughout your degree program of study.

Your program director submits a list of graduating doctoral students soon after the start of their last semester. If your program director is not aware that you plan to graduate, it may be too late to include your name in the commencement bulletin. Just as has been the case throughout your program, good communication with faculty will help assure that your graduation is successful. Students must be enrolled on campus in their final semester.
Academic Advising and D-Forms

The Academic Advisor for graduate students will assist you in registering for your courses after you and your faculty advisor develop a plan of study, including cognates and electives. The plan of study needs to be updated yearly, with a copy provided to your faculty advisor, the PhD Program Director, and in the Office of Student Services. The plan of study may be changed by mutual agreement with your faculty advisor and approval of the PhD Program Director. You can find a copy of the plan of study in the Appendix of this handbook.

It is essential that you communicate with your Academic Advisor in a timely manner about enrollment in courses. You are responsible for processing the important doctoral progression forms, also known in the university as the D-Forms Doctoral Level Forms (D1 - D10). Copies of these forms are also filed in your student file in the Office of Student Services. Contact information for our Academic Advising Staff can be found on our website.

What is a “D” form?

The “D” forms are indicators of successful completion of the required steps comprising the dissertation process. The “D” forms are located on the Graduate School website. There are student and faculty responsibilities for the “D” forms, as noted below.

Student Responsibility for “D” Forms

It is the student’s responsibility to:

- Review the D forms required at the Graduate School website,
- Review the timeline for completing the D forms in the PhD student handbook,
- Complete the D forms,
- Obtain the necessary signatures, and
- Submit completed forms to the Graduate School with a cc to his or her Advisor/Chair, the UMSL graduate student advisor, and the PhD Program Director.

The Graduate School’s representative will return approved D forms to the student and his or her advisor. It is the student’s responsibility to check online to be sure that his/her required forms are approved.

Please note:

- Failure to get approval on one or more forms could delay graduation;
- The Graduate School does not allow proposal defense (D5) and dissertation defense (D7) to occur in the same semester.

Faculty Responsibility for “D” Forms

The faculty serving as Advisors and Chairs are responsible for:

- Reviewing the Graduate School policies regarding D forms,
- Reminding advisees/mentees to update their “D” forms,
- Reviewing D forms for completeness, and
- Providing signed forms back to students in a timely manner.

Advisors and Chairs can refer to the table in this PhD handbook if there are questions about when a form needs to be submitted.

Policy Approved by the PhD Faculty Group, 3/3/2017; Approved by Graduate Curriculum Committee, 3 2017
# Timeline for CON PhD Students & Candidates

Note: **It is the student’s responsibility to acquire required signatures on the D forms and to submit the forms to the PhD Program Director and to the Graduate School.** Be sure to keep a copy of all signed forms for your files.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Estimated Time or Due Date</th>
<th>Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Begin doctoral studies</td>
<td>Plan your program of study with your advisor. Meet a minimum of once per semester with your advisor.</td>
<td>None needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify a chair for your comprehensive exams; work with this chair to identify 2 additional committee members</td>
<td>By the completion of 24 credit hours of coursework</td>
<td>D1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete coursework and pass comprehensive examination; apply for Candidacy</td>
<td>File form as soon as you are eligible</td>
<td>D3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify dissertation committee; your dissertation chair may be the same or different faculty member as the chair for your comprehensive exam</td>
<td>By first semester of Candidacy</td>
<td>D2, D4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remain continuously enrolled, fall and spring semesters (at least 1 credit of N7499)</td>
<td>Self-motivation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write dissertation proposal while working with advice from your chair and committee as needed; communicate a minimum of monthly with your chair</td>
<td>Self-motivation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defend proposal</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td>D5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply for IRB approval if using human participants</td>
<td>Self-motivation</td>
<td>IRB forms on web site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit dissertation proposal, D5, and IRB approval letter to the PhD Program Director who will forward it to the Graduate School. Submit curriculum vitae for any faculty member who is off-campus (UMSL).</td>
<td>Self-motivation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive approval from Graduate Dean</td>
<td>Approximately 2 weeks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** The process from the proposal defense to Graduate Dean’s approval normally takes 2-3 months for motivated students when it includes the IRB process.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan a pre-defense meeting with your committee (optional but strongly recommended)</th>
<th>At least 1 month prior to desired oral defense date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| When committee members are satisfied the dissertation is ready for defense and indicate so by their signature, identify possible dissertation defense dates 3 weeks after submission below | By:  
- October 1st for December graduation;  
- March 1st for May graduation;  
- June 1st for August graduation  
D6 |
| Submit an essentially final copy of the abstract for your dissertation to the PhD Program Director; make changes based on feedback | At least 4 weeks prior to submitting to the Graduate School |
| After obtaining approval for your abstract, submit an essentially final copy of the dissertation with the D6 and D9 (proposing a dissertation defense date at least 3 weeks later) to the Graduate School | At least 3 weeks before the proposed dissertation defense date; defense date should be at least 3 weeks before commencement  
D6, D9 |
| Receive approval of Graduate Dean | Within 3 weeks |
| Defend dissertation during a 2-hour defense | By:  
- mid-November for December graduation;  
- mid-April for May graduation;  
- mid-July for August graduation (consult calendar on Graduate School web site for exact dates)  
D7 |
| Revise dissertation | See final submission guidelines in Appendix 2 of Graduate School Rules and Regulations or on Graduate School web site |
| Register for any remaining dissertation credits (N7499; must have at least 12) |  |
| Obtain advisor approval. Submit dissertation, D7 to Graduate School in Woods Hall. Complete the Survey of Earned Doctorates and the Proquest documents online. Student account must have a zero balance. | By Noon Friday before commencement (absolute); earlier is better  
D7 |

**PhD in Nursing**

**Objectives of the PhD Program**

At the end of the program the graduate will have the expertise and knowledge to:

- Develop expertise and knowledge to establish a program of research & scholarship.
- Translate nursing research into practice & policy to improve health & healthcare systems.
- Provide leadership to effect change in healthcare practice, policy, & education issues by collaboration & partnerships.
- Collaborate effectively with interdisciplinary teams.
• Improve the healthcare quality of life, individuals/families/communities regionally, nationally & internationally.

Approved by the PhD committee 5/12/2014

Outcomes of the PhD Program

• Integrate professional values and ethics into the nurse scientist role.
• Advance the discipline of nursing through the generation of new knowledge and theory.
  o Publishing
  o Presenting
• Demonstrate excellence as a clinical researcher in the health sciences in a focal area of nursing.
  o Identified area of clinical practice expertise
  o Identified program of research
  o Plan for continued funding to support program of research
  o Publications
  o Abstracts
• Synthesize theories from nursing, natural, or behavioral sciences for application to a specific area of nursing.
  o Program of research
• Advance theory and evidence-based clinical practice.
  o Publications
  o Presentations
  o Teaching
  o Influencing practice
• Assume nurse scientist roles in health sciences centers, educational institutions, and other settings.
  o Program of research
  o Influencing practice
  o Influencing policy
• Proficiencies/competencies to be accomplished during doctoral program:
  o Critical analysis of philosophical and ethical underpinnings of various theoretical and methodological approaches to research problem areas
  o Development of logical and consistent argument to support need for study of problem area
  o Concept clarification/synthesis
  o Oral presentation, poster presentation
  o Research question, design, data analysis techniques and interpretation of findings
  o Critique of research articles
  o Publication
  o Meta-analysis
  o IRB, HIPAA
  o Integrative review
  o State of science paper
  o Pilot studies
• Completion of IRB approval for pilot studies, proposed study

Grading Procedure

Course requirements and methodology for assigning grades are the prerogative of the faculty of each course. Examinations and other graded assignments may be scheduled periodically, with or without notice, and at the end of the semester at the discretion of the faculty.

The PhD program is a considerable investment of time and resources, and the CON faculty and staff are here to
facilitate your success. Students who are not making satisfactory progress in courses are encouraged to confer with course faculty regularly and with the Office of Student Services personnel in the Nursing Administration Building. Resources are available throughout UMSL that may be helpful in helping you to reach your goals.

**Grading Scale**

The CON has adopted the following grading scale. Grades are recorded as letters, with pluses and minuses used at the discretion of the faculty. The Graduate School does not recognize “D” grades.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentile Score</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95-100</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93-94</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91-92</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-90</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85-86</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82-84</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76-81</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 76</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students often take classes from other departments or colleges at UMSL or from other universities in the area. You will receive the grade using the grading scale that is in place in that institution. These grading scales are likely to differ from the one we use in the CON. Be sure to check your syllabus and with your instructor if you have any questions.

**Programs of Study**

The College of Nursing offers the BSN-PhD and MSN-PhD programs of study. There are 72 hours of credits required for the PhD. Students with a MSN degree are able to apply some of their MSN coursework toward the PhD degree. The minimum number of credit hours per semester is 6.

Both of these programs of study can be taken as full-time or part-time students. The programs of study can be found in the appendix of this handbook.

The PhD program offers primarily asynchronous online courses while some courses do have synchronous online office hours or discussions. Some of the synchronous sessions are required while others are not. Always check during registration for the next semester to see if there are required sessions that you will need to set time aside to attend via internet.

**Cognates**

All PhD students (BSN-PhD and MSN-PhD) are required to take a minimum of 9 credit hours of cognates. With advisor approval, students can take any graduate level course within the University system within the guidelines specified below. Only one course can be taken from a university other than the University of Missouri according to the UMSL Graduate School to count toward the doctoral degree.

**What is a cognate?**

A cognate is a graduate level course that directly applies to the dissertation. Of the 9 credit hours of cognates required, a student is encouraged to select:
1. No more than one 3-credit hour methods course, and  
2. A minimum of one 3-credit hour course from a non-nursing discipline.

Any deviation from this plan must be approved by the PhD Program Director before registering for a course.

**Electives**

BSN-PhD students must take a minimum of 6 credit hours of electives. MSN-PhD students may choose to take electives that are above the minimum required credits and courses required in the program of study.

What is an elective?

An elective is any graduate level course that broadly applies to the student’s interests and may be targeted toward anticipated roles after graduation. Electives include courses focused on:

1. Professional development,  
2. Educational area of specialization,  
3. Knowledge of the nursing discipline,  
4. Development as a teacher or leader, or  
5. Additional knowledge and skills in an area of curiosity.

**Education Requirements of Specific Funders**

Students needing to meet the requirements of specific funders may be required to take more than the minimum number of cognates or electives to do so, unless the requirements of the funder are aligned with the focus of his/her dissertation. MSN-PhD students may take electives to fulfill the requirements of specific funders.

**Independent Study Guidelines and Process**

Independent study is available as an elective means of increasing knowledge within a student’s content area. Students who wish to pursue independent study must follow these guidelines:

- The student is responsible for identifying and initiating contact with a faculty member whose content area is of interest to the student.  
- The student and faculty member must establish mutually agreed upon course objectives and evaluation criteria. The agreement is to be recorded on a form, which may be obtained from an Academic Advisor. This form must be completed PRIOR to registering for the course.  
- The faculty member provides guidance as needed throughout the course; the degree of independence will vary with student learning objectives.  
- Credit allocation can vary from 1-3 credits per semester depending on the nature of the objectives and content requirements. No more than 6 independent study credits may be used to meet graduation requirements.  
- Request an Independent Study Form (see Appendix in this handbook) from the Academic Advisor’s office and complete it with the supervising faculty.  
- Make copies of the form, submit one to your faculty member, one to the academic advisor, and keep one for yourself.

**Special Topics Courses**

There may be times in your program of study when you will take a special topics course. The purpose of this course is to explore special topics related to PhD dissertations. This course can be used for a cognate, an
elective, or for students who are enrolling in one of the shared courses available through the UM-funded CARMA initiative (Collaborations for Advanced Research Methods and Analysis).

The number and name of the course is: Nurse 7870: Special Topics in Scientific Foundations of Research. The course is for 1-3 credit hours and may require the consent of the instructor.

The actual title of the course may change to reflect the specific content to be covered. An example of this with course number and name is: N7870: Special Topics in Scientific Foundations of Research – Comparative Effectiveness Research.

**CARMA Courses**

Throughout your program of study you will hear us refer to CARMA courses. CARMA stands for Collaborations for Advanced Research Methods and Analyses. This collaboration is an effort funded by the University of Missouri System whereby we share courses across institutions (e.g., University of Missouri campuses in Kansas City, Rolla, Columbia, and St Louis). Because there are 3 schools/colleges of nursing within the Missouri system – we are sharing some of our courses with our colleagues in Columbia and Kansas City. When you are in a shared course, the faculty member teaching the course may be on the UMSL campus or he/she may be in Columbia or Kansas City.

What does this mean for you as a student? There are a number of benefits from the CARMA courses.

1. These courses have advanced content in methods and statistics that often requires specialized training and real-life experience that is not uniformly available across all PhD prepared faculty. By sharing courses across the University of Missouri system – we can capitalize on these unique areas of specialization that will provide a deeper level of training for you as scientists.

2. You have a larger selection of online advanced methods and statistics classes available to you for your program of study to support your dissertation research and expand your skill set. The CARMA initiative has allowed us to add courses in:
   - A. Comparative Effectiveness Research
   - B. Structural Equation Modeling
   - C. Hierarchical Linear Regression
   - D. Design, Implementation, and Evaluation of Health Interventions
   - E. Advanced Qualitative Inquiry
   - F. Qualitative Systematic Reviews
   - G. Participatory Research Methods
   - H. Psychometrics

3. You will have a larger cohort of students in your class – some of whom may not be nurses so you will benefit from discussions that look at issues through various professional viewpoints. This experience will provide a deep foundation for you as you share courses in:
   - A. Design & Methods
   - B. Qualitative Methods
   - C. Biostatistics 2
   - D. Mixed Methods

4. You will have a larger cadre of faculty colleagues who may become members of your comprehensive exam or dissertation committees – or at the very least, resources to you as you complete your degree and build your program of research.

**Please note: These remain UMSL courses for UMSL students. You will register for the UMSL course number as shown on your program of study or as shown on a flyer you receive prior to registration.**

If the course is taught by a faculty member at one of the other campuses, you will have an UMSL faculty member designated for the course who you can contact should you have difficulty acquiring the readings or gaining access to the Canvas site for the course.
Faculty at all of the campuses have worked together for the past 2 years to make sure that your educational foundations are strong for all of the shared courses and to agree on content that is presented in each course – regardless of what campus teaches the course. We continue to meet together face-to-face to evaluate the quality of the course offerings and to refine content, if needed. We are all dedicated to making sure that you get the information that you need to continue your path to become a doctorally prepared researcher!

Each semester you will receive a flyer about CARMA courses that are available in the next semester so that you can discuss them with your advisor/chair to see if they will augment your program of study.

**Presentations of Students’ Work**

**Reflection Day**

We have an annual day when all PhD students and faculty come together to share progress, successes, and encouragement. This is called our Collaborative Reflection on the Doctoral Journey Day. It is scheduled for the Thursday prior to classes beginning in Spring semester. It is expected that all students will attend.

In the fall semester, we will send out a template for a brief slide presentation that is needed by each student. These 3 slides allow you to highlight your successes in the past year and to share any significant findings to date. In addition, students often use these slides and their brief 10- to 15-minute oral presentations to identify challenges and help needed from the attendees. We celebrate presentations and share information on funding for PhD student presentations or dissertation work. It is a time of connecting and rejuvenation – so mark this day on your calendar and come ready to connect with your peers and faculty.

**PhD Student Presentations of their Dissertation Work-in-Process**

While you are a student, we will be encouraging you to submit an abstract of your work for consideration of presentation at a professional meeting, such as the Midwest Nursing Research Conference. You will have the opportunity to use the abstracts developed during your course work for these submissions. Do not hesitate when the call for abstracts is out. Work with your advisor or a faculty member to hone your abstract and submit for a presentation!

There are funds available from the Graduate School for student travel and there are often internal funds from the College of Nursing too. So don’t let the cost discourage you from participating! But DO acknowledge the source of your funding on your presentation materials – and on your resume or curriculum vitae!

**Students’ PhD Committees**

There are two major committees for all PhD students. One is the PhD Comprehensive Exam Committee and the other is the PhD Dissertation Committee. A complete description of these committees can be found at the Graduate School website. A brief description and guidance for CON PhD students is below.

**PhD Comprehensive Examination Committee**

Graduate School policies describe the expectations for comprehensive examinations and the comprehensive examination committee. This committee oversees the administration of the PhD comprehensive examination. The UMSL Graduate School policy indicates that “The Comprehensive Examination Committee will consist of no fewer than three members of the UMSL graduate faculty appointed by the Graduate Dean upon recommendation of the unit (CON).
Working with your advisor, identify at least three members of the regular graduate faculty (PhD prepared tenured and tenure-track faculty; list is on the Graduate School website) to serve on this committee. Invite these faculties to serve on your comprehensive exam committee. This committee is formalized using the appropriate D form, which must be approved by the PhD Program Director and the Dean of the Graduate School. This committee typically becomes your dissertation committee.

**PhD Dissertation Committee**

This committee oversees the implementation and completion of the dissertation. The UMSL Graduate School policy dictates that “the doctoral dissertation committee shall consist of at least four members of the graduate faculty who can contribute their expertise to the dissertation study: the committee chair, and at least one other [regular graduate faculty] member from the College of nursing”. A recognized scholar from outside the University may serve as a member upon the recommendation of the college and approval of the Graduate Dean. The Graduate Dean shall approve the committee membership and any changes in the committee membership. This committee is appointed by submitting the doctoral form D-4. If an outside member is proposed, the curriculum vitae of this individual must be included at the time the D-4 is submitted.

**PhD Comprehensive Examination Guidelines**

**PhD Comprehensive Examination Committee**

The student, working with his or her chairperson, must identify a minimum of three members of the regular graduate faculty at UMSL. This includes a minimum of two members from the College of Nursing. A fourth committee member from outside the College of Nursing may be asked to participate fully in the comprehensive examination committee’s activities. After consultation with the chair, it is the student’s responsibility to invite each member to serve on the committee.

The signed D-1 form, appointment of comprehensive examination committee, must be submitted by the student to the PhD program director and then to the dean of the graduate school for approval.

**Purpose of the Comprehensive Examination**

The examination is taken upon completion of all coursework and immediately precedes admission to candidacy for the PhD degree program. The comprehensive examination is a synthesis experience designed to validate the student’s mastery of the PhD program curriculum and readiness to conduct independent research within the student’s area of research emphasis. There is a written and an oral component to the comprehensive examination.

**Written component**

The comprehensive examination shall consist of three questions selected by the committee chair with input from the faculty members serving on the committee. The three main questions may have subparts and will include: a theoretical question, a methodological question, and a nursing science question. The three questions will be related to the student’s program of study and dissertation work. The written examination may not include work completed as a part of the student’s program of study or a prepared manuscript.

The written component will be submitted electronically as a Word file that adheres to the most recent edition of the American Psychological Association’s guidelines. The written exam will be double-spaced using size 12 font and 1 inch margins. The written exam will be between 25 and 30 pages in length or approximately 10 pages per answer excluding the title page, references, or appendices. The student must support his or her comments with appropriate citations.

The PhD faculty members strongly recommend that a student clears his/her schedule for a 2-week period to
accomplish the exam. This is an intensive time of thinking, writing, and researching the literature.

The following criteria will be used in the evaluation of the written comprehensive examination:

- **Responsiveness.** The paper addresses each of the three questions as applied to the student’s identified program of research.
- **Clarity.** Writing style is clear, consistent, and concise.
- **Logic.** The development of answers to each question flows smoothly from point to point throughout the paper.
- **Accuracy.** Information is correctly presented and appropriately referenced. Research and theoretical terminology are used appropriately.
- **Breadth.** An appropriate variety of information from the literature is integrated in the answers to examine questions to show comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the subject matter.
- **Depth.** Specific evidence from research studies or other peer-reviewed sources is included to illustrate or otherwise support the point being made and to show a depth of understanding.
- **Analysis.** The student demonstrates the ability to critically evaluate the theoretical and empirical literature, demonstrate gaps, prioritize information, and come to warranted conclusions. The comprehensive examination responses provide a critical analysis of the several possible conclusions that can be drawn from the theoretical and empirical literature.
- **Synthesis.** The student’s responses demonstrate an independent synthesis of the literature including insights, patterns, meanings, and implications that are relevant to the student’s area of research emphasis. Conclusions about the need for additional research and evaluation are included.

**Written Comprehensive Examination Timeline**

- Comprehensive examination questions are emailed to the student by the chairperson on the agreed-upon day at 9 AM CST.
- The student returns his or her written responses to the chairperson via email no more than 14 days later at 5 PM CST.
- Upon receipt of the comprehensive examination, the committee members have two weeks to complete their evaluation of the examination and report pass, fail, or other recommendations to the chairperson.

**Oral Component of the Comprehensive Examination**

The oral examination should be scheduled within two weeks of the student receiving notice of passing the written portion of the comprehensive examination. The oral portion of the comprehensive examination will be a scholarly discussion of the student’s written examination with the committee members. The student must be able to clearly articulate and demonstrate a significant grasp of content areas covered in the written portion of the comprehensive examination and respond adequately to questions. This is a good time to clear up any inconsistencies or vague areas noted in the written comprehensive examination that were not significant enough to be a failure but which provide area for growth in knowledge and expertise by the student.

**Application for Candidacy**

The comprehensive examination is successfully completed when there is consensus among members of the comprehensive examination committee to pass the student on both components of the examination. If consensus by the committee is not reached, the PhD program director or his or her designee will mediate the decision to pass or fail the student.

The student’s success is documented on the D-3 form, Application for Candidacy, which is then submitted to the Graduate School. The Graduate School establishes candidacy.
Failure to Pass the Comprehensive Examination

A failure occurs when the committee determines that the student has not demonstrated proficiency in the written or oral examination components and/or the student’s responses do not reflect readiness to conduct dissertation research. Failing any part of the written comprehensive examination precludes the student from taking the oral part. If the student passes the written component but fails the oral component, the student fails the entire comprehensive examination. The committee reports its decision to the student immediately and later in writing. The committee reports its decision to the Graduate School by submitting the completed D -3 form, Application to Candidacy.

The chairperson will solicit committee members evaluations of the weaknesses or deficiencies of the students work and provide suggestions for steps the student can take to become fully prepared for a repeat examination. The chairperson will provide to the student these weaknesses, deficiencies, and steps needed. A second comprehensive examination may be scheduled once the student’s learning needs have been addressed.

Timelines for Taking the Second (Final) Comprehensive Examination

- Failure of one question: the student must wait a minimum of two months and a maximum of six months between the first and second or final comprehensive examination.
- Failure of two questions: the student must wait a minimum of three months and a maximum of six months between the first and second final comprehensive examination.
- Failure of three questions: the student must wait a minimum of three months and a maximum of one year between the first and second final comprehensive examination.

The second (final) comprehensive examination follows the same procedures outlined above. If the student does not successfully complete the second (final) comprehensive examination, the student will be dismissed from the PhD program. This comprehensive examination policy precludes any examination beyond the second and final comprehensive exam.

Approved by the PhD Program Faculty March 3, 2017
Revised from the policies approved by the Graduate Committee, January 23, 2014

PhD in Nursing Dissertation Policies

Dissertation Research

Dissertations represent original contributions to the scholarship of the field. The doctoral dissertation work is based on original research conducted by the student and is conducted under the guidance of the UMSL graduate faculty in accordance with Graduate School policies and procedures. The dissertation research should demonstrate the candidate’s mastery of research and scholarly methodologies, theory, and tools of the discipline. The dissertation should demonstrate the candidate’s ability to address a major intellectual problem and to propose meaningful questions, identify appropriate methods, and draw conclusions related to the proposed research.

Dissertation Proposal

After the written and oral comprehensive exams have been successfully completed, the student must present a dissertation proposal and have it approved by his or her dissertation committee. Preparation of a dissertation proposal is the first step in the process of conducting dissertation research. The proposal is a formal Word document that adheres to the most recent addition of the American Psychological Association format recommendations, detailing the process for completing the dissertation research and the scientific underpinnings of the student’s choices. The student will complete the dissertation proposal for the traditional dissertation or the alternative dissertation, as determined in discussions with the dissertation chair and his/her
dissertation committee. Format guidelines for these two choices appear in the appendices of this handbook.

The dissertation chair heads the student’s dissertation committee and is the faculty member with primary responsibility for guiding and approving each phase of proposal development and the conduct of the research. Ordinarily the dissertation chair reads and makes suggestions about preliminary drafts of the proposal before a more refined version of the proposal is distributed to members of the dissertation committee for review. It is expected that the entire dissertation committee meets at least once prior to the formal dissertation proposal defense.

The student may review IRB documentation prior to the proposal defense and may begin filling in the required documentation, but final documents will not be submitted for IRB approval until the proposal is approved by the dissertation committee. The student may complete applications and submit proposals for external funding of dissertation research prior to the proposal meeting under the guidance of the dissertation chair.

**Pilot Study Prior to Dissertation Research**

In certain circumstances, the student may need to conduct a pilot study prior to the dissertation proposal. The pilot study may be conducted for purposes such as identifying questions for interviews, preferences of participants, testing instruments, establishing feasibility, etc. These activities are often conducted under the N7499 registration and credit hours required will be negotiated with the faculty member supervising the work. These activities, expected outcomes, and grading will be formalized with completion of an Independent Study form to be filed with the responsible faculty member, student, and CON graduate advisor.

The pilot study activities and associated N7499 credits may begin prior to the dissertation proposal defense, with agreement of the dissertation committee members and after obtaining approval through the Institutional Review Board (if appropriate).

A minimum of 12 N7499 credits are required for dissertation work. A minimum of 8 credits of N7499 need to be earned after completing the dissertation proposal defense, gaining formal IRB approval for the dissertation plan, and receiving approval from the Graduate College for proceeding with the dissertation plan. As a result, lengthy or involved pilot studies may require the student take more than the minimum of 12 credits of N7499.

Data collected with appropriate IRB approvals and prior to the successful completion of the dissertation proposal defense and receipt of approval from the Graduate School may or may not be appropriate to include with the dissertation data. The appropriateness is dependent on the design of the study, rationale for including pre-defense pilot data, and approvals from the dissertation committee members and the Graduate School.

**Dissertation Proposal Defense**

The dissertation proposal defense is a formal meeting of the dissertation committee during which the student is examined face-to-face about the proposal and an agreement is reached about the specific nature of the proposed dissertation research. Ordinarily the dissertation proposal defense will not exceed two hours in length.

The student may be asked to answer questions about and defend any aspect of the proposal, including his/her choice of problem to be studied, the theoretical and empirical background for the study, the methodology chosen (including instrumentation, design, statistics, etc.), and anticipated difficulties and ways to handle them. Because the proposed research reflects the students understanding of the area of specialization and the integration of knowledge of various aspects of the science of nursing as well as knowledge from disciplines relevant to the research topic, the proposal defense provides an opportunity for the dissertation committee to assess mastery of these areas.
The dissertation committee evaluates the student’s performance in the dissertation proposal defense by taking into account the student’s evidence of familiarity with and ability to assess the most important literature (classic and current) in the field, ability to cite the work of authorities in the field, ability to articulate and take defensible positions on key conceptual, theoretical, substantive, and methodological issues regarding the area of research, evidence of critical and creative thinking about the area of science, and an ability to present and defend plans for research that advances the field of study. The dissertation committee also assesses the quality and feasibility of the proposed research.

Following completion of the defense, the committee confers to determine grading and any specific recommendations for revision of the dissertation proposal. The student is then informed of the committee’s decision. Grading options for the dissertation proposal defense include pass and fail.

- A passing grade signifies an acceptable performance by the student in answering questions posed during the defense and an acceptable proposal for the dissertation research.
- A grade of fail signifies unacceptable performance by the student in answering questions posed during the defense or an unacceptable proposal requiring major revision.
- Students who fail the dissertation proposal defense on first attempt are permitted to submit a revised copy of the dissertation proposal and to repeat the defense no sooner than one month and no longer than six months after the initial defense.

A student who fails the dissertation proposal defense a second time or who does not make the required changes and re-defend the proposal within the designated time frame is terminated from the PhD program.

For students selecting the alternative dissertation format, the proposal defense will conclude with a discussion among dissertation committee members and the student about:

- Expectations for types of papers that will fulfill the requirements,
- Roles of committee members in guiding the dissemination of dissertation research results,
- Agreement for order of authorship, and
- Targeted journals.

These decisions will be documented on a research agreement form that will be signed by all members and the student and then filed with the PhD program director. No changes will be allowed to the document unless all members agree to the changes. An inability to reach agreement regarding format, manuscript expectations, authorship, or any other issues will result in the student completing the traditional dissertation format.

The results of the dissertation proposal defense are reported to the PhD program director. The approved proposal constitutes a ‘contract’ with the student about what will be required for dissertation research. Any unanticipated major modifications to the proposal must be approved in writing by the entire committee.

Upon receiving approval of the dissertation proposal, the student then submits the required IRB forms. Upon receipt of IRB approval, the dissertation proposal, the IRB approval, and the required D-form are submitted to the PhD Program Director for signing. After this, the student submits the documents to the graduate school for approval. The criteria that the Graduate Dean uses to review proposals for quality are found at this link: [http://www.umsl.edu/gradschool/admitted/graduatehandbook.html#TheProposal](http://www.umsl.edu/gradschool/admitted/graduatehandbook.html#TheProposal)

No research can be conducted until receipt of approval from the Graduate Dean. Please see the timeline table for help in planning how long these activities may take.

**Policies and Protocols Related to Alternative Dissertations**

The student has a choice of whether to complete a traditional or an alternative (manuscript) dissertation. This decision is made collaboratively with the student and his or her dissertation committee before the research begins. This section details guidance regarding the alternative dissertation as informed by a review of the literature and a review of protocols and processes at other Colleges of Nursing. These points may help a
student make a decision about which type of dissertation he/she will complete.

- The product from the alternative dissertation will be three publishable quality full-length manuscripts developed and submitted to peer-reviewed journals.
- At least one of the manuscripts is to be data-based from the dissertation research and one will be an integrative review of the literature. The third manuscript can be data-based from the dissertation research or another type of manuscript as agreed upon with the dissertation committee.
- The manuscripts should be cohesive and demonstrate a logical building of the dissertation work. Each should stand on its own as a non-duplicative scholarly contribution. Each article or manuscript can refer to the other, as one would when publishing different works that refer to prior methods, findings, etc., but the articles must be discrete. For example, each should have a unique literature review, methods section, findings, discussion, tables, figures, and references, as appropriate.
- All manuscripts, whether data-based or not, must be prepared from start to finish under the supervision of the dissertation committee. Planned content for the three manuscripts, including titles, authorship, and potential journals for submission, must be agreed upon by the dissertation committee members. Committee members must be available to the student for guidance while the dissertation research is in progress.
- The student must be primary author on these manuscripts and must be able to defend how they are based on the student’s own work.
- The dissertation committee must approve submission of each manuscript for publication prior to it being submitted by the student.
- One of the manuscripts should be submitted for review prior to the student’s dissertation defense. The other two manuscripts need to be submitted for review prior to graduation sign-off by faculty.

We acknowledge that quality of journals is an important consideration, but leave the determination for selection of quality journals up to the dissertation committee. When the three journals have been selected, the dissertation chair will notify the program director of the focus of it manuscript, identified target journal, and rationale for selection.

The choice of journal may be influenced by Journal copyright policy. It is the student’s responsibility to determine any journal restrictions for publishing alternative dissertation manuscripts and to notify his or her dissertation committee members.

### Scheduling of the Dissertation Defense

The student will follow the guidance on the UMSL Graduate School website to schedule the dissertation defense: [http://www.umsl.edu/divisions/graduate/current/dissertation.html](http://www.umsl.edu/divisions/graduate/current/dissertation.html). Students will need to schedule a date with sufficient time to secure attendance by all dissertation committee members and available space. It is recommended that students begin scheduling their dissertation defense, after receiving approval to do so from the dissertation chair, as far in advance as possible. It is the student’s responsibility to plan in accordance with graduation deadlines and to allow sufficient time for any changes to the dissertation after the defense.

A pre-defense practice session may be recommended by any member of the dissertation committee. This informal session should be scheduled at least 1 month prior to the final defense. The purpose of this session is to familiarize the student with what to expect during the final defense and provide opportunity for the student to practice answering questions. The dissertation committee members can offer suggestions, strategies, and encouragement to the student as he/she prepares for the final public defense.

### UMI/ProQuest Submission

This is a requirement for all students. Please refer to the Graduate Policies found at: [http://www.umsl.edu/divisions/graduate/current/dissertation.html](http://www.umsl.edu/divisions/graduate/current/dissertation.html)
Doctoral Dissertation Defense

Please see the Graduate College policies regarding doctoral dissertation/dissertation defense: http://www.umsl.edu/divisions/graduate/current/dissertation.html

Please allow at least one month for your committee members to review the dissertation manuscript, unless all dissertation committee members agree to a briefer period. Appropriate updates and suitable notice should be sent to all dissertation committee members by the student.

The final oral examination (dissertation defense) is mandatory. In general, it is expected that oral defenses will be held on campus and during regular business hours in order to facilitate student, faculty, and public accessibility. Defenses must be scheduled with the Graduate School at least 3 weeks in advance of the defense date. Dissertation defenses are open to all members of the university community and the general public.

The dissertation defense will take approximately 2 hours, including 20-30 minutes for the student’s formal presentation of his or her dissertation research to be followed by questions from the dissertation committee. Questions will be opened up to the public at the conclusion of committee members’ questioning. The question and answer part of the dissertation defense concludes when dissertation committee members have no further questions. At that time, everyone is excused from the room and the dissertation committee members deliberate on the student’s work.

If the student passes the dissertation defense, the remaining time might be spent discussing needed changes in the final dissertation to obtain dissertation committee approvals. If the student does not pass the dissertation defense, the dissertation committee will discuss with the student whether he or she has an option for a repeat examination.

Approved by the PhD Program Faculty 2/26/2014
Approved by the College of Nursing Graduate Committee 3/6/2014

UMSL Institutional Research Board (IRB)

College of Nursing IRB Policies

UMSL Institutional Review Board (IRB) review is required of students who are investigators in human subject research conducted on or off-campus, whether or not one anticipates that the findings will be presented or published. Human subject research includes data bases with human subjects’ information. Students proposing to engage in human subject research must have a faculty member as a sponsor (usually your faculty advisor or dissertation chair) under whose supervision the research will be conducted.

The IRB process is an electronic process through IRBnet. The information for electronic IRB submission is located on the University of Missouri – St Louis Office of Research Administration home page. Click on the IRBnet link where indicated.

Important IRB Information and Deadlines

Applications

- Full Review: It is VERY important to complete the electronic IRB submission 10 days (NO
EXCEPTIONS) before the scheduled meeting. Dates of the meetings are found on the UMSL website for the Office of Research Administration. If you miss the deadline, your IRB review will be delayed one month.

- **Expedited or Exempt Reviews:** The electronic IRB submission may be completed at any time. There are no deadlines. The review process is normally completed in from 1-2 weeks.

**Modifications**
- Modifications are submitted at any time that you make changes in your study. It is VERY important to complete the electronic IRB submission 10 days (NO EXCEPTIONS) before the scheduled meeting.

**Reports**
- Each year anniversary of your study project approval, UMSLs eIRB will notify you that you must complete the Human Subjects Annual Report/Modification or Final Report form.
- Annual report is submitted each year.
- Final report is submitted when the research project is completed.

**National Guidelines for Quality in PhD Education**

PhD programs are not accredited in nursing, however there are guidelines for quality that guide our curriculum and inform the learning activities woven in to the program of study. Some of the relevant documents are listed, below.


**Research Statement**

Any research conducted as part of the student's formal studies at the University must be reviewed and approved prior to initiation of recruitment and data collection by the College of Nursing and the University's Institutional Review Board. Specific information may be obtained from the IRB and/or the office of the Associate Dean for Research.

**Office of Student Services**

The Office of Student Services can assist you in a variety of ways, such as advising, registration, and referrals to University services. Questions about the curriculum, prerequisites, and course requirements should always be directed to an Academic Advisor in the College of Nursing. Academic support services, such as tutoring, study groups, workshops, etc. are coordinated by the college's Student Success & Retention Coordinator.

The Office of Student Services is located on the 1st floor of the Nursing Administration Building on South
Campus. You may schedule an appointment by calling the front desk during normal business hours (Monday-
Friday, 8:00am-5:00pm) at 314-516-6066. Direct contact information for each of our staff members can be found on our website by clicking here.

**Current Students**

We hope to make the registration process as easy as possible for you. Shortly before registration time, you will receive two emails; one from the Office of the Registrar and one from the College of Nursing, both sent to your UMSL email address.

The email from the Office of the Registrar will include your registration date, which is assigned by class standing: graduate students and seniors first, juniors next, etc. **Be aware that it is not an appointment.** It is simply the first day that you will be eligible to register for courses.

All PhD students must meet with their Academic or Faculty Advisor to plan their course schedule. Meetings can be scheduled via email or phone.

**Adding and/or Dropping Course(s)**

To add or drop a course after you initially register for courses, you must still contact an Academic Advisor in the College of Nursing (the Advising Hold is not removed after your initial advising/registration meeting). Students may call the front desk to schedule a follow-up appointment to make changes to their schedule, or they may contact their Advisor directly (if it is a minor change). Your Advisor will discuss how dropping a course may impact your progression in the PhD program.

Students must be aware of the **add/drop deadlines** set forth by the Office of the Registrar, as well as the **reassessment schedule** set forth by the Cashier’s Office.

**Student Academic Policies**

**Probation**

Failure to make adequate progress jeopardizes students’ potential to complete the PhD degree and puts their financial aid at risk. Students with a cumulative GPA below 3.0 will be notified by the Graduate School at the end of a semester and will be placed on probation. The probation will be in effect for the next regular semester. The student must raise his/her cumulative GPA during that next semester for the probation to be removed.

The CON may also recommend placing a student on probation if faculties regard the student’s progress as unsatisfactory. The Graduate School shall inform students of their probation by letter, with copies sent to the director of the PhD program, the Graduate Admissions Office, and the Financial Aid Office.

**Dismissal**

A student who is on probation for two consecutive semesters during his/her program of study will be dismissed, unless the dean of the Graduate School approves an exceptional request for continuation from the advisor/chair and the PhD Program Director. Upon recommendation of the CON, the Graduate School may dismiss any student who does not make adequate progress. The Graduate School is responsible for sending dismissal letters to students, with copies to the graduate advisor, the graduate director of the program, the Graduate Admissions Office, and the Financial Aid Office.
Grade Appeal Procedure

On each campus of the University of Missouri, it is the Chancellor who is ultimately responsible to the President and the Board of Curators for all campus programs, policies, and activities. On the University of Missouri - St. Louis campus the Chancellor has delegated responsibility for the overseeing the grade appeal process to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. The Vice Chancellor is therefore responsible for assuring that grade appeals are handled in a fair and timely manner.

More specifically, that officer is responsible for seeing that the procedures are appropriately followed. The College of Nursing endorses the grade appeal procedures of University of Missouri - St. Louis and has only changed terminology to reflect the administrative positions and faculty committees of the College of Nursing.

Leave of Absence

Graduate students who are forced to interrupt their studies for a period of one or more years should request a leave of absence from the university. In consultation with their advisors or chairs, students will describe the program modifications that the leave of absence requires. Requests shall indicate the reason for leaving and the expected date of return to the university. Approval of the PhD Program Director and the Dean of the Graduate School are required.

The leave of absence is designed to suspend the requirement for continuous enrollment. It does not affect the maximum time limitation set for a degree program unless a specific exception is approved.

Student Responsibilities

Student Organizations

*Sigma Theta Tau International*: The Nu Chi Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau was officially established in April 1984. Membership is offered by invitation to current students who are excelling in their programs of study, students graduating in the upper third of their class, and to individuals who are recognized as outstanding community nursing leaders. Professional presentations are held twice each year and feature leaders in the nursing profession. Sigma Theta Tau International is a funder of dissertation research. The Nu Chi Chapter is a resource for its support of PhD students’ research, professional development, and professional presentations.

Code for Academic and Professional Conduct

Every student has unique talents and experiences that enrich the culture of learning in the University of Missouri - St. Louis College of Nursing. Faculty and students share the responsibility for effective teaching and learning. This relationship thus becomes a commitment to ethical principles in achieving academic and professional goals within the classroom and clinical settings.

Civility

Civility is defined as treating others, as well as ourselves, with respect, dignity, and care. Civility is apparent when we are sensitive to the impact that our communication, practices and behaviors have on others, and when we acknowledge each person’s self-worth and unique contributions to the community as a whole. Students are
expected to:

- Address health care professionals, participants in research studies, patients and hospital staff appropriately; for example Dr., Mr., Ms. and their last name. Addressing a person by the first name can be disrespectful in some cultures.
- Treat faculty, staff, peers, and others with respect and courtesy.
- Maintain an attitude of shared goals and intellectual openness with other students.
- Be intolerant of injustice or bigotry of any kind, and strive to correct these issues on behalf of classmates, the UMSL community, and the St Louis region.
- Speak the truth in all matters; do not propagate rumors or prematurely judge people or situations.
- Conduct oneself appropriately when representing the University or CON.
- Exercise good judgment and adhere to HIPPA laws when posting information on e-mail and social media, including, but not limited to Facebook, Twitter and Google.

**UMSL Student Conduct Code and Discipline**

Apart from and in addition to these professional standards and requirement by which Nursing students will be graded and evaluated academically, all University of Missouri students are subject to the Standard of Conduct for students which appears in Section 200.010 of the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University of Missouri and for which they may be disciplined in accordance with the procedures in Section 200.020.

*Reviewed and approved by CON Faculty 12/13/2013*

**Integrity and Respect**

The University of Missouri - St. Louis encourages students to pursue excellence within a respectful and collegial environment and to assume responsibility for the consequences of personal actions. For that reason the University requires students to reject any type of dishonest behavior. Conduct for which students are subject to sanctions falls into multiple categories and can be viewed in Section 200.010 Standard of Conduct. By registering for classes at UMSL, students agree to follow this standard of integrity.

**College of Nursing Statement of Academic Integrity**

Strict adherence to the principles of intellectual honesty is expected from all students in the completion of assigned work in nursing courses. Failure to do so will result in:

- An academic assessment by course faculty of a 0% grade for the work in question (test or assignment), and
- Submission of relevant information to the UMSL Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, who may apply sanctions such as probation, suspension, or dismissal.

**Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Copying the work of another student;
- Copying material verbatim from a published source without placing it in quotation marks and citing the source;
- Failing to cite the source of material paraphrased from a published source;
- Cheating of any kind during a quiz or exam;
• Copying exam questions during test reviews and/or distributing or sharing exam questions with other students in any form;
• Using non-faculty approved electronic or communication devices during examinations or class assignments.

PhD faculties reserve the right to use software for assistance with plagiarism detection. In addition, students should not submit the same paper, or one that is modestly revised, as an assignment in two or more classes. Assignments submitted should be substantively different from each other. Please consult with your course faculty if you have questions.

**Statement of Scholarly Work**

All formal papers required in the PhD program are to be written in a scholarly manner using the following technical standards:

All work is to be properly documented within the body of the paper as well as reflected in a complete reference list. Correct composition and grammar must be followed throughout the paper. This includes the use of correct sentence and paragraph structure, spelling, and punctuation.

Guidelines as listed in the latest edition of the publication manual of the *American Psychological Association (APA)* are to be followed for all formal papers. Students are required to purchase the manual prior to their enrollment in the program.

**General Information**

**Computer Proficiency Requirement**

The College of Nursing requires all students to be computer proficient prior to entering any nursing courses. **Students must indicate proficiency in the following skills:**

**Required skills:**

- Logging on to UMSL’s Online Course Management System *MyGateway*(Blackboard)
- Logging on to UMSL’s Student Information Management System *MyView*
- Send, receive, and respond to web-based email on and off campus
- Attach a document/file to an email message
- Familiar with using a graphical interface to access programs (use of icons on the Desktop)
- Start up and switch between multiple programs/windows
- Copy, move, rename and delete files
- Create, move, rename and delete folders
- Able to use a web browser to access the Internet
- Able to create and organize bookmarks in web browser
- Be familiar with several different search engines to find information
- Use the Internet to collect and print information
- Able to download programs from the Internet to their computer (e.g. Adobe Reader, Adobe Flash)
- Able to save, copy, and incorporate Internet information into a word processor
- Create a document using a word processor
- Able to save, edit, and print a document in a word processor

**Preferred, but not required, skills:**
- Able to create, edit, enter formulae for calculations, and create graphs using a spreadsheet
- Able to create PowerPoint presentations (including adding video clips, sounds, and links to other presentations)

The College of Nursing has adopted:
- Windows as its operating system
- Microsoft Office products (Word, Excel & PowerPoint) as its primary application software
- APA, the latest edition, as the standard manuscript style (the University bookstore has APA disks available for Word)

The University has adopted:
- Blackboard and/or Canvas as its course management software in transition during Fall 2017.
- Canvas as its course management software effective Spring 2018.

**Resources for Computer Literacy Learning:**
- Computer course
- Computer lab training

**Computer Technology & Student Laboratories**

The College of Nursing is committed to integrating technology into your academic experience. All information relative to the use of MyGateway, a course management package, and your student emails will be outlined in Student Technology Guides prepared each Fall by Information Technology Services (see link for more information – available at [http://www.umsl.edu/technology/](http://www.umsl.edu/technology/)).

You can contact the computer help desk at 314-516-6034. The hours of operation for the help desk are Monday – Thursday 7:30 am - 7:00 pm and Friday 7:30 am - 5:00 pm. The help desk is closed weekends and holidays. If the help desk is unable to resolve your problem, please call the Software Support Specialist for the College of Nursing at (314) 516-6755.

A number of student computer laboratories are available on campus. See the [Triton Manual](#) for further information.

**Communication**

The College of Nursing’s faculties and staff communicate with students in a variety of ways, including the use of MyGateway bulletin boards and university email. Students are responsible for all communication regarding program information/changes relayed through such campus communication systems. Students are responsible for reading their UMSL email or for taking appropriate steps to forward that email to another account. Faculty and staff will only use the UMSL email address for the student.

**Faculty and Staff Offices and Mailboxes**

Nursing faculty and staff offices and mailboxes are located in Seton Hall and the Nursing Administrative Building. The Nursing Administration Building is open Monday - Friday 8:00 am - 5:00 pm while Seton Hall is open longer with hours including evenings and Saturdays. Your student ID should allow you to gain access to the buildings.

**Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness**

The University of Missouri-St. Louis has implemented a continuing program to assess institutional effectiveness.
A vital part of that effort is the component dealing with student learning outcomes. During the time students are enrolled at the College and later, as alumni, they will be asked to participate in various activities designed to determine how well the College and the University are meeting the stated purposes to provide a positive learning environment where students can create enriched and meaningful lives for themselves. A number of methods are employed in a variety of settings.
Appendices

1. Plans of Study for Full and Part-time BSN-PhD and MSN-PhD Students:
   - Full-time BSN-PhD
   - Part-time BSN-PhD
   - Full-time MSN-PhD
   - Part-time MSN-PhD

2. Independent Study Form

   - Traditional Dissertation Proposal
   - Alternative Dissertation Proposal

4. Suggested Formats for Final Dissertations at Completion of Program
   - Traditional Dissertation Format
   - Alternative Dissertation Format
**Recommended Part Time Plan of Study for BS to PhD Students**

**Student: ___________________________  Advisor: ______________**

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**Recommended Full Time Plan of Study for BS to PhD Students**

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### Recommended Part Time Plan of Study for MSN to PhD Students

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*Note. *Can take cognates at other times to keep summer free. **Can spread out dissertation hours across more semesters. To obtain full time credit, must enroll in 1 credit of dissertation research and can supplement with up to 8 hours of doctoral candidacy credit hours for up to 8 years. Additional Note: Check with International Studies for advising international students as full time status will vary with each visa.
Independent Study Approval Form

Student: _______________________________  Date: ______________
Faculty: _______________________________  Semester: _________
Course Title and Number and Credits: ______________________________________

Topical Focus of Requested Hours:

Rationale for Requested Hours:

Learning Objectives:

Learning Activities to be completed during the course:

Evaluation: What will be graded? Describe product(s) expected and the due date for submission. What will be used as the grading Scale (e.g., letter grades, letter grades with +/-, percentage grades, or pass/fail):  

Note: Consider the workload effort for these credits to have two components. First, there is the workload equivalent that you would have for the 'in class' time, calculated as approximately 1 hour of time for every 1 credit of class per week. In addition, at the graduate level we aim for 3 hours of homework for every 1 credit hour of class for the average student. In this doctoral level independent study class, that equates to 9 hours of reading, writing, thinking and interacting per week. In total, the average student will need to plan to spend approximately 11.5 to 12 hours every week on activities related to this course.

Signature of Faculty Accepting Responsibility: _________________________________

Signature of Student Agreeing to Stipulations Specified: _________________________________
Suggested Format for a Traditional Dissertation Proposal

Chapter 1:

A. Introduction
   - Background (background to the problem)
   - The study (briefly introducing the study and research questions)
   - Significance (briefly explaining who your study will be of value to and why)

Chapter 2:

B. Literature Review (Situates your work within the body of literature for your topic, including describing the conceptual framework that will guide your work, defining key constructs, introducing or clarifying any contemporary disagreements in the literature. Begin with an introductory paragraph introducing the major topic, include scientific underpinnings from relevant empirical and theoretical literature, describe the conceptual framework that will guide your study, and conclude with research questions/hypotheses. End the chapter with a summation that helps review the need for your study and thus transitions to the methodology)

Chapter 3-5:

C. Methodology
   - Overall Research Approach (with justification and citations of other research using that approach or to theorists of that approach) [usually needed for qualitative, possibly for quantitative]
   - Research Sites/Population/Sampling/Subjects/Participants
   - Instruments/Measures/Sources of Data
   - Procedures
   - Data Analysis
   - Trustworthiness and Credibility [usually needed for qualitative, not quantitative]

D. Timeline (for proposal defense, completion of the dissertation, and dissertation defense)
E. References
Suggested Format for Alternative Dissertation Proposal

Chapter 1:

A. Introduction
   • Background (background to the problem)
   • The studies (briefly introducing the collection of studies and your overall research questions)
   • Significance (briefly explaining who your dissertation will be of value to and why)

B. Literature Review
   • Scientific underpinnings from relevant empirical and theoretical literature
   • Conceptual framework that will guide your study,
   • Research questions/hypotheses.

C. Methodology
   • Design
   • Overall Research Site, Population, Sampling, Subjects/Participants
   • Instruments/Measures/Sources of Data
   • Procedures
   • Data Analysis
   • Trustworthiness and credibility (for qualitative data)

Chapter 2:

A. Manuscript 1 (Recommend an integrative review of the literature)
   • One sentence describing the topic for this future manuscript
   • Research Question(s)
   • Method (1 or 2 sentences if it differs from III, above)
   • Targeted Journal – where will you submit first?
   • Proposed Authorship order for yourself and your committee members
   • Timeline for submission – when do you anticipate it will be submitted

Chapter 3:

A. Manuscript 2 (May be data-based or non-data-based such as: policy paper, theory, measurement, historical development of the concept)
   • One sentence describing the topic for this future manuscript
   • Research Question(s)
   • Method (1 or 2 sentences if it differs from III, above)
   • Targeted Journal – where will you submit first?
   • Proposed Authorship order for yourself and your committee members
   • Timeline for submission – when do you anticipate it will be submitted

Chapter 4:

A. Manuscript 3 (Must be data-based findings from the dissertation study)
   • One sentence describing the topic for this future manuscript
   • Research Question(s)
   • Method (1 or 2 sentences if it differs from III, above)
   • Targeted Journal – where will you submit first?
   • Proposed Authorship order for yourself and your committee members
   • Timeline for submission – when do you anticipate it will be submitted

Chapter 5:
A. Timeline (for proposal defense, completion of the dissertation, and dissertation defense)
B. References
Traditional Dissertation Format

The traditional dissertation format consists of 5 chapters.

**Chapter 1: Introduction**

A. General description of the area of concern
   - It is suggested that this section be brief, three to four paragraphs maximum. Draw ideas together to result in a purpose statement.

B. Problem to be Studied/Purpose of the Proposed Research Project.
   - State explicitly and succinctly.
   - Introduction should lead up to and provide support for the problem statement.

C. Formulation of the scientific problem is a creative endeavor.
   - Merely replicating the identical procedure of an earlier research study (i.e., direct replication) is not sufficient for a doctoral dissertation. A replication involving substantive variation from previous work (i.e., systematic replication or replication "with cause") is appropriate as dissertation research (see Johnston & Pennypacker, 1993).

D. Major Research Questions and/or Research Hypotheses.
   - Some committee/chairs prefer either research questions or hypotheses. Some may wish for you to include both.
   - Hypotheses and research questions should be written using constructs (not tests/measurements--indicators or definitions of variables [see Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 1991]).
   - Hypothesis statements and research questions do not include reference to statistical significance. "A statistical test of significance is used for the purpose of determining whether or not to reject a null hypothesis at a given probability level, reference to the test does not belong in the hypothesis" (Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 1991, p. 195).

E. Definition of Important Terms.
   - May include theoretical as well as operational definitions of important terms. (Operational definitions may also appear in the methods section.) Operational definitions of all important variables must be provided.
   - Always include definitions for terms or uses of terms not generally found in this type of research, as well as those for which confusion may arise.

F. Significance of the Problem and Justification for Investigating It.
   - This section will probably not be long, but should be very powerful!
   - What theoretical/practical reasons are there for wanting to know the answers to your questions?
   - Why is it important to conduct the study?
   - Include explicit statement of significance specific to the topic studied.

G. Basic Assumptions.
   - An assumption is something that is taken to be true even though the direct evidence of its truth is either absent or very limited (Pyrczak & Bruce, 1992).
   - Include descriptions of information that are not available to you, but that are important in explaining the outcome of the study.
   - For example, must you assume that tests were administered in standardized fashion? If you are doing this yourself or have control over the examiners, then you DO NOT have to make this assumption. You write this into your procedure.

H. Basic Limitations.
   - A weakness or handicap that potentially limits the validity of the results.
   - A boundary to which the study is confined (often called a delimitation) (Pyrczak & Bruce, 1992).
   - Often limitations include a statement about generalizability of results or other controls, etc., that may be impossible to meet. For example, if you must use intact groups rather than randomized
selection, what impact is this likely to have on your results?

I. Summary and Transition to Chapter 2

**Chapter 2: Literature Review**

A. Historical Background
   - What are the major issues, controversies, etc., that impact on your study?
   - Include background on all relevant variables. This background can be brief or longer depending on your study and the wishes of your committee.

B. Theory or Discipline Relevant to Research Questions and Hypotheses
   - What theory or discipline forms the basis for your problem?

C. Current Literature Relevant to Research Questions and Hypotheses
   - Literature relating to specific variables
   - Literature relating to your combination of variables
   - What common thread holds these studies together?
   - Incorporate discussion of strengths/weaknesses of methodology in previous studies which you are building on/hoping to avoid in your study.

D. Summary and Transition to Chapter 3

**Chapter 3: Methodology**

A. Restatement of Purpose
B. Design
   - Include general description, along with possible threats to internal/external validity
   - Include operational definitions of all variables -- independent and dependent
   - It is often useful to include a diagram/figure of the design (especially for experimental studies).

C. Setting
D. Sample
   - Power analysis
   - Inclusion and exclusion criteria
   - Recruitment and sampling strategy
   - Human subjects
   - Attrition (number who dropped out, reasons for drop outs, description of drop out group)

E. Measurement
   - Instruments used
   - Traits measured, format, scores, administration
   - Evidence of reliability and for indirect measures, validity should be stated explicitly. For direct measures, describe the reliability and accuracy of the measurements. If this information is not available from prior studies, piloting of the instrument/procedure should be conducted
   - If a survey is used, the rate of the return should be stated along with a description of procedures used to follow-up and a description of nonresponders

F. Description of Procedures.
   - Procedures should be described in complete detail so they may be replicated by any future researcher.

G. Data Analysis and Display Procedure
   - Including (where appropriate) Choice of Analysis and Computer Program(s)
   - Rationale should be provided for choice of statistical/other analysis
   - State alpha level(s) chosen for statistical comparisons
   - Describe analyses for each of your research questions/hypotheses

**Chapter 4: Results and Discussion**
A. Restatement of research questions (hypotheses)
B. Each question/hypothesis is restated in BOLD followed by the results of the data analysis(es) which provide(s) answers to that question/hypothesis.
C. Suggested order of presentation of results (may vary depending on nature of analyses):
   • Descriptive statistics (includes means, standard deviations, etc.)
   • Where appropriate, primary statistical analyses (includes correlation matrix, t tests, Summary of ANOVA, MANOVA, results of factor analyses, etc., see specific technique for examples)
   • Post hoc and other secondary analyses
D. Organize data into tables or graphs (see APA Manual for examples) where appropriate. Each table/graph must be referenced in the text. All tables should be complete, that is, self-explanatory.
E. Discussion (May be done as separate section or for each question/hypothesis).
F. Summarize results briefly
G. Discuss the results in non-statistical terms. Answer the question. If a hypothesis was stated, was the hypothesis rejected?
H. Integrate your results with the literature reviewed in chapter 2

**Chapter 5: Summary and Conclusions**

A. Summarize the study succinctly
B. Report the results briefly
C. Explicitly discuss the implications for the results
D. Relate the study findings to the literature review and point out consistencies and inconsistencies with those reported in the literature cited earlier
E. It is appropriate to speculate on the meaning of the results; however, care must be taken not to go outside the parameters established in the first four chapters.
F. Recommendations for future research
   • Provide specific guidance - Why is the proposed research needed and what form should such research take?

**References and Appendices**
Alternative Dissertation Format

The alternative (manuscript) dissertation consists of 5 chapters.

**Chapter 1: Introduction**

A. Introduces the dissertation study
B. Includes:
   - Aims
   - Methods
   - Logical connections between the 3 manuscripts
   - Overview of the 3 manuscripts

**Chapter 2 is the first manuscript**

A. This can be a non-data-based manuscript such as an integrative review of the literature
   - State of the Science examination of the topic

**Chapter 3 is the second manuscript**

A. Choice of a data-based OR a non-databased manuscript
   - Data-based would be from the dissertation findings
   - Non-data-based manuscript must be related to the dissertation topic, to include, but not limited to these examples:
     - Policy paper
     - Theory paper
     - Methods paper
     - Historical development of the concept

**Chapter 4 is the third manuscript**

- This manuscript must be data-based from the dissertation study

**Chapter 5: Summary**

A. Summarizes the conclusions and implications of the dissertation research
B. Provide a broader summary than is presented in each article
C. Should discuss what has been learned as a result of this body of work
D. Include the implications for nursing education, research, practice, and/or policy, as relevant.
E. The overall contribution to science should be discussed.

**Additional References and Appendices as appropriate from Chapters 1 & 5**