August 2015

Dear Students:

On behalf of the faculty and staff at Vanderbilt University School of Nursing, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the Ph.D. in Nursing Science Program. We are looking forward to an exciting year filled with many opportunities and challenges. Since its inception, we have taken great pride in the accomplishments of our students who have graduated from the Ph.D. in Nursing Science Program.

We hope you find this handbook a valuable and useful resource in addressing your questions about the program. Familiarizing yourself with the contents of this handbook will help you meet program requirements, follow our policies and procedures, and provide for a more positive student experience. It is our goal to create an environment that will contribute to both your professional and personal growth.

We look forward to working with you. Best wishes for a successful year!

Sincerely,

Ann F. Minnick, PhD, RN, FAAN
Julia Eleanor Chenault Professor of Nursing
Senior Associate Dean for Research
Director, Ph.D. in Nursing Science Program
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GENERAL INFORMATION

This handbook is designed to supplement the Vanderbilt University Graduate School Catalog located at: [http://www.vanderbilt.edu/catalogs/grad/Grad01.html](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/catalogs/grad/Grad01.html) and the Vanderbilt University Student Handbook located at: [http://www.vanderbilt.edu/student_handbook/](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/student_handbook/). Students are expected to familiarize themselves with the information contained in each of these resources.

IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT FORMS

ALL COMPLETED FORMS (BOTH VU GRADUATE SCHOOL FORMS AND VUSN FORMS) MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE Ph.D. PROGRAM OFFICE. YOU MUST SUBMIT THE ORIGINAL FORM(S) TO THE Ph.D. OFFICE AND A COPY WILL BE RETAINED IN YOUR STUDENT FILE. THE Ph.D. OFFICE WILL DELIVER FORMS FOR ALL STUDENTS TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL. THE Ph.D OFFICE WILL ALSO OBTAIN THE SIGNATURE OF THE DIRECTOR IF REQUIRED ON A FORM. STUDENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR OBTAINING ANY OTHER REQUIRED SIGNATURES (E.G., FACULTY ADVISER) PRIOR TO SUBMITTING TO THE Ph.D. OFFICE FOR DIRECTOR APPROVAL/SIGNATURE.

STUDENTS AND FACULTY ADVISERS ARE ALSO STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO RETAIN FILE COPIES
# Ph.D. in Nursing Science Program: Academic Calendar 2015-2016

Note: PhD class schedules are **not** included on this calendar.

The Graduate School online calendar is updated throughout the year:
[http://www.vanderbilt.edu/gradschool/important_dates/](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/gradschool/important_dates/)

*Students and faculty are responsible for checking the Graduate School calendar for key dates and deadlines that may not be included on the calendar below.*

## Fall Semester 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 24</td>
<td>Orientation for new Graduate School students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 24-28</td>
<td>PhD 1\textsuperscript{st} Block Year 1 and Year 2 Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 26</td>
<td>Fall 2015 classes begin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 2</td>
<td>Fall registration ends at 11:59 P.M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 7</td>
<td>Last day to add a class, drop a class with no entry on the record, or register</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 12</td>
<td>Spring 2016 registration opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 15-16</td>
<td>Fall break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 26</td>
<td>Deadline to submit Intent to Graduate form for December graduation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 20</td>
<td>Dissertation submission deadline for December graduation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 20</td>
<td>Registration ends for Spring 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 21-29</td>
<td>Thanksgiving holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 10</td>
<td>Fall classes end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 14</td>
<td>Open enrollment for Spring 2016 begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 19</td>
<td>Fall 2015 semester ends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 19</td>
<td>Degree conferral date for December graduates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Spring Semester 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 1</td>
<td>Deadline to submit recreation fee waiver request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 4</td>
<td>Deadline for students to pay Spring tuition and fee charges or make payment arrangements with the Office of Student Accounts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 11</td>
<td>First day of Spring classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 11-14</td>
<td>PhD 2\textsuperscript{nd} Block Year 1 and Year 2 Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 18</td>
<td>No class in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 18</td>
<td>Spring 2016 open enrollment period ends at 11:59 P.M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 25</td>
<td>Last day to add a class, drop a class with no entry on the record, or register for pass/fail status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 5-13</td>
<td>Spring holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 25</td>
<td>Spring classes end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 13</td>
<td>Commencement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Summer Semester 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 9-12</td>
<td>PhD 3\textsuperscript{rd} Block Session Year 1 and Year 2 Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 9</td>
<td>Summer classes begin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 12</td>
<td>Summer classes end</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Ph.D. Program Office**

Administrative offices for the Ph.D. in Nursing Science Program are located within the School of Nursing at:

Vanderbilt University School of Nursing
604 Godchaux Hall
461 21st Avenue South
Nashville, TN 37240
Telephone: (615) 322-7410
Fax: (615) 322-7505
[www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu](http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu)

The following faculty and staff are responsible for the management and administration of the program:

**Program Director**
Ann F. Minnick, PhD, RN, FAAN

**Program Manager**
Irene McKirgan, MSM, CHES

**Vanderbilt University Graduate School**
The Ph.D. in Nursing Science Program is an academic program conferred by the Vanderbilt University Graduate School and is governed by the academic requirements established by the Graduate School located at:

411 Kirkland Hall
2101 West End Ave.
Nashville, Tennessee 37240
Telephone: (615) 343-2727
Fax: (615) 343-9936
[www.vanderbilt.edu/gradschool](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/gradschool)

**Vanderbilt University School of Nursing (VUSN)**
Within the VUSN organizational structure, the Ph.D. in Nursing Science Program is in the portfolio of the Senior Associate Dean for Research, Dr. Ann Minnick, located at:

Godchaux Hall – 4th floor
Office of the Senior Associate Dean for Research
461 21st Avenue South
Nashville, TN 37240
Telephone: (615) 343-7618
Toll Free: 1.855.868.7410
[www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu](http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu)
Graduate Faculty

Dean
Linda D. Norman, DSN, RN, FAAN

Professors
Susan M. Adams, PhD, RN, PMHNP, FAANP
Karen C. D’Apolito, PhD, RN, NNP-BC, FAAN
Mary Jo Gilmer, PhD, MBA, RN-BC, FAAN
Jeffry S. Gordon, PhD
Ann F. Minnick (Director), PhD, RN, FAAN
Lorraine C. Mion, PhD, RN, FAAN
Sheila H. Ridner, PhD, RN, FAAN
Vaughn G. Sinclair, PhD, PMHCNS, BC
Patricia A. Trangenstein, PhD, RN, BC
Kenneth A. Wallston, PhD, FABMR
Elizabeth E. Weiner, PhD, RN-BC, FACMI, FAAN

Research Professors of Nursing
Nancy L. Wells, DNSc, RN, FAAN

Associate Professors
Sarah C. Fogel, PhD, RN
Jana L. Lauderdale, PhD, RN
Melanie Lutenbacher, PhD, MSN, FAAN
Elizabeth R. Moore, PhD, RN, IBCLC
Shelagh A. Mulvaney, PhD

Research Professors
Mary S. Dietrich, PhD

Assistant Professors
Terrah L. Akard, PhD, RN, CPNP
Thomas L. Christenbery, PhD, RN, CNE
Jie Deng, PhD, RN, ONC
Catherine H. Ivory, PhD, RN-BC, RNC-OB
Sharon M. Karp, PhD, RN, CPNP
Cathy A. Maxwell, PhD, RN
Todd B. Monroe, PhD, RN-BC
Jeremy L. Neal, PhD, CNM, RN
Julia C. Phillippi, PhD, CNM, APN, FACNM
Bethany A. Rhoten, PhD, RN
Deonni Stolldorf, PhD, RN
PROGRAM INFORMATION:
ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS AND REGULATIONS

Program and Curriculum

Purpose
The purpose of the Ph.D. in Nursing Science Program at Vanderbilt University is to prepare scholars for research and academic careers in public or private sectors of health care. Graduates of the program conduct and disseminate research that responds to regional, national and international priorities and extends the knowledge base in the discipline of nursing.

Philosophy
Nursing is a professional discipline that seeks to understand phenomena and predict circumstances that affect the health of individuals, families, groups, and communities. The discipline of nursing encompasses science, ethics, politics, practice, and the heritage of nursing. The central focus of the discipline is the diagnosis and treatment of individuals, families, and groups as they respond to actual or potential health problems. The practice of nursing is an art and a science used to help individuals improve their health potential.

The ultimate goal of nursing science is the improvement of nursing practice through the generation of knowledge related to promoting recovery from illness and medical procedures, preventing disease and disability, and preserving and maximizing health and well-being. In light of this, nursing has identified the concepts of person, health, environment, and nursing therapeutics as integrative foci that define nursing science as a discipline. It relies on a specific domain of knowledge that resides within practical and theoretical boundaries.

The faculty of Vanderbilt University School of Nursing (VUSN) believes that students in undergraduate and master’s level of study should become critical consumers and disseminators of nursing knowledge and research. Nurses at these levels are expected to incorporate a scientific approach and the use of critical inquiry and logical thought processes in the evaluation and resolution of clinical situations. Students in graduate programs identify and hypothesize about phenomena, techniques, and problems of nursing.

Ph.D. programs seek to extend the student’s understanding of research and its relevance to practice while enhancing precision in the use of a scientific approach to address nursing and health care issues. In addition, Ph.D. education promotes the development of a cognitive style that emphasizes abstract thinking and critical analysis. The faculty of VUSN is committed to the educational preparation of a group of nurse scholars who can lead the nation in demonstrating how well-conceived, theory-based nursing research verifies and extends the body of nursing knowledge.
Overview
The Ph.D. in Nursing Science Program prepares scholars for research and academic careers in major universities and for research positions in public or private sectors of health care. Two tracks of study are available: Clinical Research and Health Services Research.

The Clinical Research Track
The ultimate goal of clinical research is to identify treatments that protect or improve health. These treatments may involve physical (e.g., chemical agents, surgery, body part manipulation), psychological (e.g., behavior therapy, Internet supported reminders) and/or educational therapies. Questions are built around describing the nature and extent of the clinical problem, understanding its cause and testing alternative treatments. Investigations may include research about psychological, physiological and genetic determinants. Clinical research ultimately leads to improvements in outcomes such as morbidity, mortality, symptom management, self-care and life adjustments. The clinical research track curriculum emphasizes (1) the measurement of physiological and psychological variables (2) application and development of physiological and psychological theories and models (3) the execution of rigorous clinical designs.

The Health Services Research Track
Health services research concerns the design of systems to deliver treatments that clinical research has identified to maximize access, minimize costs and achieve patient-centeredness. Questions revolve around the effects of where, when, who and how health services are delivered on outcomes which extend beyond the clinical to the economic (e.g. cost of care, societal costs) and/or consumer centeredness (e.g. patient satisfaction). This research endeavors to answer questions regarding the effects current and proposed legal, social and economic policies may have on delivery systems. The curriculum emphasizes grounding in (1) the measurement of work force, work processes, organizational variables, economic indicators and consumer preferences (2) organizational, economic and social models (3) the execution of rigorous designs that may entail using existing big data, accounting for leveling issues and determining complex treatment fidelity and risk adjustment strategies and (4) issues in policymaking. This track emphasizes the discovery of health services interventions rather than the application of known interventions.

The program requires 72 credit hours of study of which 16 may be transferred from master’s course work, pending review and approval by the director of the Ph.D. program and the Graduate School. Fellowship and Nurse Faculty Loan recipients may be required to take additional credit hours. The core curriculum of the program includes 31 credit hours of required course work for all Ph.D. students, 15 credit hours of required course work specific to the selected track of study, and 10 credit hours of course work that supports the student’s focus of research (4 research practica and 6 dissertation research credits). Course work is delivered using Internet supported technology with limited on-campus visits. Students work with faculty mentors who guide and oversee their educational program from admission through completion of degree requirements. Students participate in intensive research experiences connected with faculty research projects and are exposed to a variety of research designs and analysis techniques. Requirements for the degree include successful completion of advanced course work, a qualifying examination paper, an oral qualifying examination, and a dissertation (including an oral defense of the proposal and findings). Full-time and part-time options are available.

Regardless of the study track, Clinical Research or Health Services Research, the total credits required for graduation remain the same.

VUSN PhD Student Handbook 2015-2016
The Ph.D. in Nursing Science Program at VUSN lays the foundation for the development of nurse scientists who:

1. Integrate in-depth knowledge of theory and research related to a substantive field of study;
2. Demonstrate a well-articulated vision for a program of research;
3. Develop and disseminate knowledge to enhance the discipline and practice of nursing;
4. Evaluate and seek out new opportunities for exploring phenomena of concern to nursing and health care;
5. Serve as leaders in advancing the discipline and practice of nursing through research, education and health policy.
Core Competencies
Students are expected to master the following core competencies designed to prepare them for meeting the terminal objectives of the program:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Develop the Science</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Possess in-depth knowledge in a substantive area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Demonstrate a knowledge of the history and philosophy of science.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Understand the evolving nature of the nursing discipline and its relationship to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>emerging science.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Critically integrate multiple perspectives in the conduct of research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use critical evaluation of existing knowledge as an underpinning to identify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>innovative and novel ideas for knowledge development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Possess in-depth knowledge of research design, methods and analytics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Conduct original research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use professional and research ethics and judgment in the responsible conduct of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Assume leadership in the conduct of research to improve nursing practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Assume leadership in the conduct of culturally competent scholarship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Disseminate research findings to lay and professional audiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply research findings to nursing practice, policy and the profession.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Integrate the components of scholarship: research, teaching, mentoring, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>service to the profession.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Participate in scholarly endeavors within and outside the profession.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Contribute to the evolving roles and responsibilities of a scholar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lead in advancing the discipline of nursing science.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Educate current and future nurses and scientists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide professional and research mentorship within and outside the nursing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>profession.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Contribute to a global community of scholars.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Residency and Requirements
The Ph.D. in Nursing Science degree is conferred by the Graduate School of Vanderbilt University. The Ph.D. degree requires at least three academic years of graduate study (usually four years). A total of 72 credits are required for graduation. Most students are able to transfer 16 credit hours from their master’s degree. The remaining 56 credit hours of work required for graduation are detailed below. Fellowship and Nurse Faculty Loan recipients may be required to take additional credit hours.

Regardless of which track a student is in, Clinical Research Track or Health Services Research Track, the Ph.D. in Nursing Science Program requires the following steps to receive the Ph.D. degree:

1. Successful completion* of 31 credit hours of core course work required for all Ph.D. students, 15 credit hours of course work specific to the selected track of study, and 10 credit hours of course work that supports the student’s focus of research (4 research practica and 6 dissertation)
2. Successful completion* of the written and oral components of the qualifying examination process
3. Successful completion* of a dissertation, including a public oral defense

*Students in the Ph.D. program at VUSN are required to achieve a grade of B- or better for each course counting toward the Ph.D. degree. Academic probation occurs whenever (1) a student earns a grade of less than B- in a course or (2) attains a grade point average of less than B.

A student who earns a course grade of less than B- will be placed on probation until a grade of B- or better is achieved in that course. A student may only repeat a course once. Two grades of less than B- either in the same course or two courses will result in dismissal.

Students who fall below a grade point average of 3.0 are placed on probation for one semester. If the student’s performance does not improve during that semester, the Graduate School and the appropriate Ph.D. program director will decide whether to dismiss the student or to allow the continuation of probation. If at the end of the second semester the grade point average is still below 3.0, the student may be advised to withdraw or face dismissal. Students who earn a grade point average of 2.0 or less during their first semester will be dismissed at the end of the semester.

A grade point average of 3.0 is necessary for graduation.
Curriculum Overview
The program requires 72 credit hours of study of which 16 may be transferred from master’s course work (pending review and approval by the Graduate Faculty). The remaining 56 credit hours required for graduation are detailed below. Fellowship and Nurse Faculty Loan recipients may be required to take additional credit hours.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOTAL CREDITS REQUIRED FOR GRADUATION</th>
<th>72</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TRANSFER CREDITS (FROM MASTER’S)</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORE COURSE WORK</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRACK SPECIFIC COURSE WORK</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESEARCH PRACTICA AND DISSERTATION</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: If a student receives Nurse Faculty Loan monies, two (2) educational courses are required. These courses can count as the required electives with the approval of their adviser.

Transfer Credits
Graduate credit may be transferred from graduate schools in accredited institutions. Only those hours in which the student has achieved a grade of B or its equivalent will be considered for transfer. Clinical course work and master’s thesis credit may not be transferred for credit toward the Ph.D. degree. Academic advisers are responsible for reviewing the advisee’s previous graduate work during the first semester of enrollment and making a recommendation about transfer of credit to the director of the Ph.D. program by completing the Request for Transfer Credits Form. The director will review and forward a final recommendation to the Graduate School. Final approval is made by the Graduate School (See the Graduate School Catalog for more details). Students may not transfer more than 16 credit hours.

A Request for Transfer Credits Form must be filled out, signed by the student and student’s academic adviser, and submitted to the Ph.D. Program Office during the first semester of enrollment.

The Request for Transfer Credits Form is available online at:

http://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/

Track Specific Course Work (Total of 15 credits)

- Total of 9 credits of track related courses
- Total of 6 credits (electives) that support area of research

Students may choose either the Clinical Research Track or Health Services Research Track
Research Practicum (NRSC 8395)
Research practica is required as part of the curriculum during the 2nd year of course work for both full and part-time students. A total of four [4] credit hours is required which can be spread out among several semesters. In addition, the research practicum course may be used as an elective (see Electives for further details). Students must complete the Graduate School form, Request for Independent Study/Directed Studies/Readings & Research, and submit to the PhD Office in order to register for a research practicum.

Independent Study (NRSC 8390)
An Independent Study [NRSC 8390] may qualify as an elective course (see Electives for further details). Students must complete the Graduate School form, Request for Independent Study/Directed Studies/Readings & Research, and submit to the PhD Office in order to register for an independent study.

A Request for Independent Study/Directed Studies/Readings & Research Form must be filled out by the student, signed by the proposed instructor, and submitted to the Ph.D. Program Office. The Request for Independent Study Form is available at:
http://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/

Electives
Students are required to take six credits of elective courses either at Vanderbilt University or an outside institution. Approved independent studies (NRSC 8390) with a VUSN or VU professor, Special Topics in Nursing Science (NRSC 8377) and research practicum (NRSC 8395) qualify as elective courses. The research practicum course (NRSC 8395) can only be used as an elective course after the student has completed the four [4] required NRSC 8395 credits and completed year one course work. Students who receive a nurse faculty loan can count the two required educational courses (NRSC 8366 and 8367) as their six required elective credits. All elective courses (either taken outside or at Vanderbilt) must be at the graduate level.

Courses Taken Outside Vanderbilt University
Courses taken outside VU will not be covered by the VUSN tuition scholarship. Students must secure permission from their faculty adviser and a director of the program prior to enrolling in a course outside of VU by completing the form, Request for Electives outside Vanderbilt. A course description must be attached to this form. Upon completion of a course outside VU, students must submit a transcript that includes the course grade and the form, Request to Transfer Credits, to the PhD Program Office in order to allow official credit transfer by the Graduate School.

The Request for Electives outside Vanderbilt Form is available online at:
http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/pdf/requelectivesoutsidevu.pdf

Courses Taken at Vanderbilt University
If you choose to take an independent study with VUSN (NRSC 8390) or a VU professor, you must submit the form, Request for Independent Study.
NRSC 8302. Advanced Doctoral Seminar I. This course consists of a series of seminars focusing on issues related to qualifying examinations, the dissertation and continued development of a program of research. The topics are selected by course faculty and the students who plan to take the comprehensive examinations within the next 9-12 months. Topics and experiences may include proposal development, grant applications, mock proposal reviews, qualifying examination situations and dissemination of research findings. The seminar is required for two consecutive semesters. Prerequisite: Core PhD course completion consistent with ability to complete the qualifying examination within 9-12 months after registration. [1 credit] SPRING

NRSC 8303. Advanced Doctoral Seminar II. This is the second seminar course in this series. Prerequisite: Completion of NRSC 8302: Advanced Doctoral Seminar I. [1 credit] SUMMER

NRSC 8304. Ethical and Legal Issues in Research. This course provides an overview of issues related to the responsible conduct of research, including data management, vulnerable populations, authorship and publication, conflicts of interest and collaboration. Federal and institutional guidelines are included. Prerequisite: enrollment in the PhD program or consent of faculty. [1 credit] SPRING

NRSC 8305. Informatics and Scholarly Inquiry. This course provides an overview of informatics, the transformation of data into information, knowledge, decisions and actions to improve outcomes. To take advantage of electronic data mines, scholars of the future will need to understand the basics of databases and the structure of nursing vocabularies. Knowledge management to support evidence-based practice in nursing will be a critical skill. In addition, this course prepares the student to use available technology tools to present, interpret, and organize data. Prerequisite: enrollment in the PhD program or consent of faculty. [2 credits] FALL

NRSC 8306. Research Design and Statistics I. This course focuses on understanding and applying the basic concepts of descriptive and relational research design and statistics. Students will be introduced to the full range of designs available to address research aims, moving from descriptive to experimental and quasi-experimental. After examining the relationship of research aims to research design, the nature of measurement and causal of inference, relevant statistical methods for visualizing, describing and making inferences from data will be introduced. The focus will be on univariate and bivariate descriptive methods. Statistical computing packages will be used. Published research will be used to develop the student's ability to evaluate the design and statistical methods used to describe health care phenomena as well relationships among them. Prerequisite: enrollment in the PhD program or consent of faculty. [3 credits] FALL

NRSC 8307. Research Design and Statistics II. The course expands the concepts and applications of RD&S I including an introduction to longitudinal and randomized control design issues. Topics related to internal validity, experimental designs and issues in comparing individuals and groups cross sectionally and longitudinally will be detailed. Students will be introduced to issues in external validity and the relationships between internal and external validities. Parametric and non-parametric univariate comparative statistical methods used to analyze data resulting from cross sectional and randomized controlled designs will be included. Students will be expected to generate and interpret results from statistical software and present relevant information in figures, tables and text. Concepts will be studied within the context of evaluating published research. Prerequisite: completion of Research Design and Statistics I or consent of faculty. [3 credits] SPRING

NRSC 8308. Research Design and Statistics III. This course is focused on advanced designs and
multivariate statistical techniques. Design topics include advanced issues in external validity, field experimentation versus laboratory experiments, quasi-experimental and blended designs as well as special considerations for nested and complex longitudinal designs. Related statistical topics include advanced multiple linear regression methods (e.g. path and structural equation modeling), log-linear models and advanced techniques in survival and longitudinal data analysis. These methods and concepts will be discussed and evaluated through educational resources and published research using them. Students will have the opportunity to develop advanced skills in statistical applications most commonly used in their respective areas of interest. Prerequisite: completion of Research Design and Statistics II or consent of faculty. [3 credits]

SUMMER

NRSC 8309. Special Topics in Quantitative Methods. This course provides an overview of varied and timely topics in the field of quantitative methods. Exemplar topics may include issues in data collection methods such as using online or other resources, an examination of how quantitative data collection methods influences data management and analytic approaches, collection methods for physiological or psycho-social outcomes, the benefits and drawbacks of using public data sets, conventional and new analytic techniques, as well as broader issues in the evolution of quantitative methods. Prerequisites: NRSC 8308; NRSC 8313; NRSC 8352 or NRSC 8382; or with permission from instructor(s). [2 credits] FALL

NRSC 8310. Health, Healthcare, Research & Public Policy. This course explores and critically analyzes theoretical and empirical approaches to understanding dynamic synergies between research, nursing practice, healthcare organization, and public policy and their impact on health. Strategies for dissemination, translation, and evaluation of evidence-based research findings to support healthcare practices and public policies to measurably improve health outcomes for selected populations and the student's phenomenon of interest will be discussed. Local, national, and global implications will be explored. Prerequisite: enrollment in the PhD program or consent of faculty. [2 credits] SPRING

NRSC 8311. Role of Scientist in Academe, Community and World. This seminar course assists the student to develop a personal framework for behavior within academe, the scientific community and the world beyond. Through readings and discussions, the student will explore a variety of viewpoints about the duties and responsibilities of an educated citizen scientist in an interdependent world. Prerequisite: enrollment in the PhD program or consent of faculty. [1 credit] SPRING

NRSC 8312. Programs of Research and Grantsmanship. This course provides the foundational information necessary for developing a program of research. Focus is placed on acquiring practical skills necessary to develop a program of research, narrowing the focus of student's area of research, and for basic grantsmanship. Focus is placed upon developing the knowledge and practical skills necessary to investigate an area of research interest and draft a research grant proposal appropriate to current level of career development needs and/or phenomenon of interest. Prerequisite: enrollment in the PhD program or consent of faculty. [2 credits] FALL

NRSC 8313. Theories of Science. This course provides students with an introduction to the central theoretical and philosophical issues concerning the nature of science, the patterns of knowing and knowledge development, criteria for evaluating knowledge claims and philosophy of science. The course will enable students to become knowledgeable about the forces affecting the development of knowledge and critical analyses of theories commonly used in nursing research. Prerequisite: enrollment in the PhD program or consent of faculty. [2 credits] FALL

NRSC 8368. Contextual Nature of Health and Health Behaviors. This course explores and critically analyzes theoretical and empirical approaches to understanding the interaction of health and environment in affecting health by examining contextual factors that impact health and health behaviors of various system levels.
Examines disparity (e.g., social and economic) as a determinant of health among individuals and sub-populations. Critique selected models of health, health behavior, community organization, and health care delivery and their usefulness to understand and impact selected health phenomena and various ethnocultural populations and communities. Students critically analyze and synthesize the literature related to a selected phenomenon of interest. Prerequisite: enrollment in the PhD program or consent of faculty. [2 credits] FALL

**NRSC 8380. Knowledge Synthesis in Nursing Science.** This course provides a critical appraisal of the theoretical and empirical basis of nursing science. Theories and research generated to study phenomena related to nursing are evaluated and synthesized. Strategies for synthesizing extant knowledge in nursing are discussed. Prerequisite: enrollment in the PhD program or consent of faculty. [3 credits] SPRING

**NRSC 8394. Qualitative Research Methods.** This course introduces and explores qualitative research methods, including their theoretical and methodological foundations, and practical applications. Course participants will explore and pilot test one method in the context of their topic of interest. Prerequisite: enrollment in the PhD program or consent of faculty. [3 credits] SUMMER

**NRSC 8395. Research Practicum.** This course provides students with exposure to and involvement in the research process. Learning activities are based on student need and interest and determined according to best fit with available faculty research programs. Research practicum may also be used as elective courses after the student has completed the four [4] required NRSC 8395 credits and completed year one course work. Prerequisite: enrollment in the PhD program, completion of year one course work or consent of faculty. [Variable credit: 1-3]

**NRSC 8999. Non-candidate Research.** This course deals with research prior to entry into candidacy (completion of qualifying examination) and for special non-degree students. Prerequisite: enrollment in the PhD program or consent of faculty. [Variable credit: 0-6]

**NRSC 9999. Ph.D. Dissertation Research.** Prerequisite: enrollment in the PhD program and consent of faculty. [Variable credit: 0-6]
NRSC 8350. Conceptual Foundations for Clinical Research. Critical analysis of theories, concepts and research related to the promotion, protection and restoration of health across the lifespan at individual, family and community levels. Emphasis will be on the individual level. Students conduct a critical analysis of existing and emerging scientific knowledge in a chosen field of study. Prerequisite: enrollment in the PhD program or consent of faculty. [3 credits] SPRING

NRSC 8352. Measurement in Clinical Research. This course examines the principles of measurement, sources of measurement error, and procedures used for critical evaluation of the psychometric properties of clinical measures including techniques for assessing validity and reliability. Selected measures, commonly used in clinical research and specific to student research interests, will be evaluated for psychometric properties and fit with a proposed focus of study. Prerequisites: Enrollment in the PhD Program and completion of NRSC 8307 and NRSC 8350; or, consent of instructor. [3 credits] SUMMER

NRSC 8353. Designing and Testing Clinical Interventions. Analysis of methodological, ethical, and practical issues related to the design and implementation of theory-based intervention studies. Students conduct a critical analysis of existing and emerging interventions related to their chosen field of study. Prerequisite: enrollment in the PhD program or consent of faculty. [3 credits] FALL

**Additional required courses for Clinical Research Track**

*6 credits – content related to phenomenon of interest (electives)*

These courses will be determined based on the student’s specific research area. Approval by the faculty adviser is required.

**Advanced methodological skills**

This elective would be concentrated work in developing the student’s expertise in the method(s) most needed in their particular area. Although these topics may be touched upon in the general methods courses, mastery of a particular technique requires specialization. Survey development/writing, secondary data analysis, special interviewing skills and cost effectiveness are examples of courses that might be applicable.

**Topic Specific**

Electives are selected that will support the student’s knowledge development in their specific clinical research topical area. These electives may be found in other disciplines such as psychology, women’s studies, human organization and development, sociology and economics.
NRSC 8381. Current Topics in Health Services Research. This course is designed to assist the student to develop expertise concerning the objectives, support mechanisms, limitations and controversies of current HSR research initiatives and HSR organizations. Examples of initiatives include (but are not limited to) those of the IOM, governmental and private safety studies, QI/QA consortia, JCAHO, IHI, and other projects. The student will be expected to assess the relative place of her/his research interest in the current HSR environment and to begin to function within the professional role of a health services researcher. Prerequisite: enrollment in the PhD program or consent of faculty. [3 credits] SPRING

NRSC 8382. Measuring Outcomes: Issues in Health Services Research Designs. In this course, the student will develop expertise in the design, measurement and analysis of studies employing the five generic outcomes of greatest interest in outcomes studies: satisfaction, cost-effectiveness, mortality, health related quality of life, and morbidity. The student will also be expected to develop an overview including measurement and analysis plans for a condition-specific outcome. The impact of the researcher’s decisions regarding conceptual models, treatment definition, risk adjustment strategies and the application of statistical techniques will be explored. At least one controversy attendant to each of the five generic outcomes will be debated in class. Prerequisites: completion of Research Design and Statistics I and II. [3 credits] SUMMER

NRSC 8383. Issues in Health Services Research Intervention Studies. The student will develop expertise in the design and execution of intervention studies in health services research. Emphasis will be placed on the selection of interventions and the valid and reliable execution of the interventions through examination of issues such as treatment fidelity, intervention duration, location and interventionist expertise. The intervention categories studied include: labor, capital and processes (e.g., working conditions and work design). Strategies of attending to the execution and analysis of multilevel, multi-organizational studies will be addressed. [3 credits] FALL

**Additional required courses for Health Services Research Track**

6 credits – content related to phenomenon of interest (electives)

These will be determined based on the student’s specific research area. Approval by the faculty is required.

Advanced methodological skills
This elective would be concentrated work in developing the student’s expertise in the method(s) most needed in their particular area. Although these topics may be touched upon in the general methods courses, mastery of a particular technique requires specialization. Survey development/writing, secondary data analysis, special interviewing skills and cost effectiveness are examples of courses that might be applicable.

Topic Specific
Examples of these types of electives are those in economics, sociology and social psychology.
NRSC 8366. Curriculum Strategies for Health Professional Education. *(Required course for students who have received a Nurse Faculty Loan).* This course introduces the student to the foundations of learning theory and learning styles. The impact of technology on learning practices and the appropriate use of technology to facilitate learning is emphasized. Students will create electronic elements for effective learning and use a course management system. Copyright and fair use issues are discussed. Overall curriculum strategies that integrate content, organization, informatics, and sequencing of courses are discussed. Students will design a learning program that integrates learning styles, technology use, and a course management system. Prerequisite: enrollment in the PhD program or consent of faculty. [3 credits] SPRING

NRSC 8367. Educational Evaluation for Learning in the Health Professions. *(Required course for students who have received a Nurse Faculty Loan).* This course is designed to facilitate expertise in the application of fundamental educational concepts, principles, and theories to techniques of educational measurement and evaluation. The underlying premise for the value of such knowledge is that evaluation provides evidence for sound decision-making in programs of higher education. Moreover, students will acquire competence in the planning and development of classroom and clinical performance evaluation tools, as well as analyzing and interpreting test results within the context of current ethical, legal, and social educational guidelines. Prerequisite: enrollment in the PhD program or consent of faculty. [3 credits] SUMMER

NRSC 8371. Advanced Concepts in Nursing Education. This course is designed to facilitate expertise in the application of advanced educational concepts, principles, and theories related to nursing education in the academic setting. The underlying premise for the value of such knowledge is that nurse educators encounter situations and issues that warrant systematic consideration, and reflection. Moreover, students will acquire competence in facilitating learner development and role socialization, review accreditation parameters for nursing programs, and explore various aspects and topics such as legal, ethical and socio-cultural factors related to the role of the nurse educator. Prerequisites: 8366, 8367. [3] FALL

NRSC 8377. Special Topics in Nursing Science. Students will discuss research and current developments of special interest to faculty and students (may be repeated for credit). Prerequisite: enrollment in the PhD program or consent of faculty. [Variable credit 1-3] FALL

NRSC 8390. Independent Study in Nursing Science. Individualized study and reading in areas of mutual interest to the student and faculty member. Prerequisite: enrollment in the PhD program or consent of faculty. [Variable credit: 1–3]
Note:
✓ Your adviser must approve registration as applicable to your course of study.
✓ Not all courses listed may have a ‘distance’ option. Check before registering.
✓ To verify these electives, consult the catalogue or course faculty.


NURS 6711 Technology Components of Informatics. This course explores the structure and function of networks and network based applications as they relate to their use within healthcare and healthcare education. Topics covered include basic concepts of infrastructure (IP addressing, routing and networks), the basic technology behind medical recording, BYOD (bring your own device) such as Cell Phones and Tablets, data collection and analysis tools, social networking including synchronous communication applications, and educational applications including asynchronous screen narration applications and Learning Management Systems. [2] FALL

Nursing 6722. Consumer Health Care Informatics. This course addresses the consumer's use of electronic information systems and applications to improve their medical outcomes and their health care decisions. How informatics solutions impact the health care partnership of provider and patient is explored. Various technology and applications that empower consumers are reviewed. Studies that evaluate the effectiveness of health care informatics in patient outcomes are included. [2] SPRING

Nursing 8060. Obesity and Weight Control Part 1: Biology, Physiology and Epidemiology. Nationwide and worldwide the obesity epidemic is growing and this has led to a significant number of adults and children with obesity-related comorbidities such as hypertension, dyslipidemia, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Awareness of this trend necessitates greater understanding of the link between adiposity and metabolic disease. This course will review the biological and physiological control of food intake and energy balance. The course will evaluate the metabolic pathways in which food and macronutrient intakes are utilized to provide energy and mechanisms by which body weight and health are influenced. Public health issues associated with obesity, energy and macronutrient intakes will be discussed as well as the adequacy of intakes in meeting recommended requirements at various life stages. Critical evaluation of peer-reviewed literature will be used to study prevention and risk factors of overweight and obesity, consequences with regard to metabolic syndrome and other chronic disease states, and public health issues. This course builds on undergraduate/graduate preparation in anatomy, physiology and biochemistry. [2] FALL AND SPRING
N8070. Obesity & Weight Control Part II: Management & Practice. Weight management and treatment of overweight, obesity, metabolic syndrome and other obesity related comorbidities requires multidisciplinary efforts. This course will build on the knowledge obtained in part 1 to provide the student with a comprehensive understanding of national and organizational guidelines as well as current evidence based standards of care. The course will review the role of various health care providers in screening and assessment of body weight and energy balance. Patient management issues specific to age groups across the life cycle will be discussed as well as differences in practice and management by health care setting. The course content will include use of the scientific evidence to evaluate current dietary, pharmaceutical and surgical treatment models, strategies to optimize outcomes as well as identification and management of adverse outcomes. Prerequisite: see instructor.

N8062. Management of Psychiatric Issues for Non-Mental Health Clinical Providers. Expand clinical competencies of Non-Psychiatric Mental Health Advanced Practice Nurses in assessing, evaluating, diagnosing, and treating mental health problems. This course will identify common mental health disorders seen in the primary and acute care settings including the epidemiology, etiology, risk factors and diagnostic signs/symptoms of these disorders. It will also provide clinical practice guidelines, screening tools and evidenced based treatment approaches to provide a foundation for the clinician to identify and manage common disorders within their scope of practice and setting. Students will also recognize when psychiatric consultation or specialty care is indicated. The course is designed for the non-mental health provider and builds on undergraduate/graduate preparation in anatomy, physiology, biochemistry within a cultural context. Prerequisite: specialization in a non-psychiatric-mental health advanced practice nurse role.

N8063. Scholarly Writing I. This elective is designed to provide graduate-level nurses with the knowledge and skills to be successful in articulating concepts and ideas in a logical and scholarly manner throughout their doctoral studies. This course begins by providing some general principles of expository writing, ensuring each student has a clear understanding of APA formatting. Development of strategies to use in achieving professional and effective communication through the written word will be stressed. Learning activities assist students to (a) write from an outline; (b) critique their own work; and (c) review and critique drafts from a colleague.

Nursing 8090. Palliative Care I: Overview of Palliative Care and Physical Suffering: Adv. Pain and Symptom Management. This is the first of 3 didactic palliative care courses to be taken sequentially unless arrangements have been made with faculty. This course is designed to provide graduate level nurses with the knowledge and skills important to provide excellent symptom management for clients of all ages living with advanced complex illness and their families. Paradigms are explored which link traditional models of symptom management to the broader and deeper context of advanced illness in palliative and hospice care in all developmental stages of life. This course seeks to engage the student in an inter-professional understanding of the history of death and dying and how this impacts the care of individuals and families with complex medical conditions. Learning activities concentrate on the complexity of chronic disease and emphasize evidence-based pain and symptom management for the advanced practice nurse. Critically important constructs, such as transitional care and therapeutic communication will be deliberated. Prerequisite: Admission to the DNP program or consent of faculty.

N8091. Palliative Care II: Multidisciplinary Roles in Palliative Care; Aspects of Loss, Grief, Death, Bereavement, Spirituality, Cultural, and Ethical Issues in Palliative and Hospice Care; Family & Professional Caregivers. This is the second of 3 didactic palliative care courses to be taken sequentially unless arrangements have been made with faculty. This course is designed to provide graduate level nurses with the knowledge and skills important to provide palliative and end-of-life care for clients of all ages living with advanced complex illness and their families. In particular, this course presents selected theory and practice components of loss, grief, death and bereavement for patients, families, and professional caregivers. The course builds upon the philosophy that individuals and groups have diverse spiritual and cultural needs and is designed
to develop the knowledge and skills necessary for therapeutic and compassionate interactions with those facing serious illness and death. Learning activities assist students to identify and recognize their own feelings, needs, and issues regarding palliative and end-of-life care so they can effectively serve the multicultural needs of clients and families in a variety of serious illness and palliative care contexts. Clinical hours will emphasize a variety of learning activities engaging inter-professional learning in the care of the palliative care patient and family. Pre-requisite: N8090 or permission of faculty. [2] SPRING

N8069. Lean Methodology in Healthcare. This course focuses on the analysis and application of Lean principles to improve a process or system. This course builds on the quality improvement principles learned in NURS 442 (Quality Improvement and Patient Safety). Topics include a history of the Toyota production system including how to identify the eight wastes in healthcare, how to implement 5S, A3 concepts, data collection, and value stream mapping of current state and future state processes. Prerequisite: see instructor. [2] FALL and SPRING

N8072. Global Health Engagement in Advanced Practice Nursing
This is a 2 credit hour elective course designed for doctoral students interested in global health. This course will consist of 6 units focusing on key aspects related to nursing in the global health arena: Global disease burden associated with chronic and non-chronic illness, health disparities, health care workforce issues, evidence-based practice and effective program design and resource allocation. The course will focus on best practices for engaging in global health work with diverse communities from a cultural, ethical and clinical perspective. Students will engage in learning through readings, synchronous and asynchronous discussions, case studies and written assignments as well as AV presentations. This course is designed for students interested in caring for underserved populations locally and abroad and builds on undergraduate and graduate preparation in pathophysiology, health assessment, adult and pediatric primary care within a cultural context and the role of the advanced practice nurse. [2] SPRING

N8071. Leadership in Interprofessional Practice: Critical Issues for Promoting a Culture of Safety
This course is designed to enhance students' understanding of the management of unprofessional behavior, difficult interpersonal interactions, disclosure of medical errors and the role of each in building a culture of safety in the clinical practice environment. Using a case-based format, students will explore critical incidents, gain expertise in recognizing impediments to patient safety, and develop skills to rectify situations resulting in poor clinical outcomes. Students participate in faculty-guided, case-based group exercises emphasizing interprofessional team dynamics and emerge prepared to serve in leadership roles to create safer practice environments. [2] SUMMER
### PhD in Nursing Science Curriculum

**Program of Study for Clinical Research Track**

**(Full-time)**

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<td>NRSC 8999 Non-Candidate Research [Variable 0-6 credits]</td>
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**Note:**

- All students must take 6 credits related to phenomenon of interest (part of the track specific course work)
  - Summer semester is based on 14 weeks
  - Research practica (4 hours) is required during Year 2
## PhD in Nursing Science Curriculum
### Program of Study for Health Services Research Track
**(Full-time)**

**bold** = core course required for **all** Ph.D. students  
**italics** = core course required for track students

### Year 1

#### Fall
- **NRSC 8313** Theories of Science [2 credits]
- **NRSC 8305** Informatics and Scholarly Inquiry [2 credits]
- **NRSC 8368** Contextual Nature of Health and Health Behaviors [2 credits]
- **NRSC 8306** Research Design and Statistics I [3 credits]

#### Spring
- **NRSC 8380** Knowledge Synthesis in Nursing Science [3 credits]
- **NRSC 8304** Ethical and Legal Issues in Research [1 credit]
- **NRSC 8307** Research Design and Statistics II [3 credits]
- **NRSC 8381** Current Topics in Health Services Research [3 credits]

#### Summer
- **NRSC 8394** Qualitative Research Methods [3 credits]
- **NRSC 8308** Research Design and Statistics III [3 credits]
- **NRSC 8382** Measuring Outcomes: Issues in Health Services Research Designs [3 credits]

### Year 2

#### Fall
- **NRSC 8312** Programs of Research and Grantsmanship [2 credits]
- **NRSC 8309** Special Topics in Quantitative Methods [2 credits]
- **NRSC 8383** Issues in Health Services Research Intervention Studies [3 credits]
- **NRSC 8395** Research Practicum [2 credits]

#### Spring
- **NRSC 8302** Advanced Doctoral Seminar I [1 credit]
- **NRSC 8311** Role of Scientist in Academe, Community and World [1 credit]
- **NRSC 8310** Health, Healthcare, Research & Public Policy [2 credits]
- **NRSC 8366** Curriculum Strategies for Health Professional Education [3 credits] **Required for Nurse Faculty Loan recipients**
  - OR Elective course [3 credits]
- **NRSC 8395** Research Practicum [2 credits]

#### Summer
- **NRSC 8303** Advanced Doctoral Seminar II [1 credit]
- **NRSC 8367** Educational Evaluation for Learning in the Health Professions [3 credits] **Required for Nurse Faculty Loan recipients**
  - OR Elective course [3 credits]
- **NRSC 8999** Non-Candidate Research [Variable 0-6 credits]

### Note:
- All students must take 6 credits related to phenomenon of interest (part of the track specific course work)
- Summer semester is based on 14 weeks
- Research practica (minimum of 4 hours) is required during Year 2
### PhD in Nursing Science Curriculum

#### Program of Study for Both Tracks (Half-time)*

*Graduate School defines 6-8 didactic hours as half-time and less than 6 hours per semester as part-time

**bold** = core course required for all PhD students  
**italics** = core course required for track

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<td><strong>NRSC 9999</strong> Dissertation Research [Variable credit: 0-6]</td>
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VUSN PhD Student Handbook 2015-2016
**Academic Advisers**
The director of the Ph.D. program assigns faculty advisers. All advisers hold Graduate Faculty status and report to the director of the Ph.D. program. The academic adviser is responsible for assisting the student in developing an appropriate plan of study, recommending courses acceptable for transfer, assisting the student in the identification of committee members for the qualifying examination and dissertation committees, and general mentoring of the student throughout their educational experience. At a minimum, the adviser meets twice a semester (face-to-face during a block session and via conference call) with the student for the purposes of academic and professional mentoring and to determine student progress according to program and Graduate School requirements.

Students and academic advisers are expected to work closely to resolve academic issues or problems and communicate regularly with the Ph.D. Program Office. If an issue cannot be resolved, students and faculty should direct the issue to the director of the Ph.D. program. If the matter is still not resolved satisfactorily either the student, the faculty adviser, or the director of the Ph.D. program can forward the issue to the Dean of the School of Nursing and/or the Graduate School.

**Beginning of student’s 1st semester**, students and academic advisers together complete the *Request for Transfer Credits Form* and the *Academic Plan of Study Form*. Originals are submitted to the Ph.D. Program Office. Both the academic adviser and the student should retain a copy for their files.

**Each semester**, academic advisers review progress, make recommendations for modifications to the plan of study (forwarding any changes to Ph.D. Office), and discuss the student’s self-assessment.

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**A Request for Transfer Credits Form must be filled out, signed by the student and student’s academic adviser, and submitted to the Ph.D. Program Office during the first semester of enrollment.**

The Request for Transfer Credits Form can be found at:

http://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/

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**An Academic Plan of Study Form must be developed by each student with his or her academic adviser and submitted to the Ph.D. Program Office during the first semester. The Academic Plan of Study should be revised at the end of each semester of course work. Any modifications to the original plan must be submitted to the Ph.D. Program Office.**

The Academic Plan of Study Form may be found online at:

http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/pdf/acadplanstudy.pdf
At the end of each academic year, the student completes a self-assessment designed to evaluate progress toward achievement of Ph.D. program expected competencies. The student completes a self-assessment form and then meets with his or her academic adviser to review progress and to discuss goals for the upcoming year. The original, signed self-assessment form is placed in the student’s Ph.D. program record and copies are returned to the student and the academic adviser.

An Annual Student Self-Assessment Form must be filled out by each student with his or her adviser and submitted to the PhD Program Office. The Annual Student Self-Assessment Form is available at:
http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/pdf/stuselfassess.pdf

Towards the end of completion of required course work, the academic adviser counsels the student on the selection of chair and committee members for their qualifying examination. Often, the committee structure continues through the dissertation process. Until such time as the qualifying examination committee is selected, the student or academic adviser may request a change in academic adviser by petitioning the director of the Ph.D. program. The academic adviser may become the chair of the student’s qualifying examination and dissertation committees, if this is mutually agreed.

√ Notify the Ph.D. Program Office at the onset of the qualifying examination process by completing the form, Qualifying Examination: Committee Formation Request. See the qualifying examination section for more detailed information.

The qualifying examination committee is formally appointed by the Graduate School upon recommendation of the director of the Ph.D. program. Upon appointment of the student’s qualifying examination committee, advisement responsibility shifts to the chair of the committee where it continues for the remainder of the qualifying examination process. Often, the chair of the qualifying examination committee becomes the chair of the dissertation committee.

Prior to graduation
The dissertation chair is expected to meet with student(s) to ensure that all necessary requirements have been met in order to graduate. The Ph.D. Program Office can provide consultation and assistance. Students need to complete the following in order to graduate:

√ Successful completion of all required course work, qualifying examination (written and oral), and a dissertation (including a public defense)
√ Intent to Graduate Form
√ Results of Qualifying Exam Form
√ Dissertation Proposal Acceptance Form
√ Request to Schedule Final Defense Form
√ Results of Final Dissertation Form
√ Signed Dissertation Title Page
√ Signed Dissertation Abstract Form
√ Dissertation formatted, approved and uploaded
√ Payments made/Graduate School Pay Form
All students must complete the following:

√ **Annual Student Self-Assessment** – must be completed at the end of each academic year (end of summer semester) by each student with his or her academic adviser and submitted to the Ph.D. Program Office.

The Annual Student Self-Assessment Form may be found online at:
http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/pdf/stuselfassess.pdf

√ **Academic Plan of Study** - must be developed by each student with his or her faculty adviser and submitted to the Ph.D. Program Office during the first semester. The Academic Plan of Study should be revised at the end of each semester of course work. Any modifications to the original plan must be submitted to the Ph.D. Program Office.

The Academic Plan of Study Form may be found at:
http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/pdf/acadplanstudy.pdf

√ **Annual Institutional Review Board (IRB) Training**

First year students are required to complete Vanderbilt’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) training and submit a certificate of completion to the Ph.D. Program Office during the first semester by completing the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Course in the Protection of Human Research Subjects by going to: https://www.citiprogram.org.

After the first year, all students are required to maintain current IRB certification by completing an annual refresher course and submitting evidence of completion to the Ph.D. Program Office.

Students may choose from one of the following:

- Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Course in the Protection of Human Research Subjects by going to: https://www.citiprogram.org

In addition, student research projects (e.g., dissertations) must have IRB approval. The faculty adviser and/or dissertation chair will assist you in the application and approval process.

√ **Student Handbook Agreement** – First year students only are required to complete the Student Handbook Agreement Form by September 30th of the first semester.

The Student Handbook Agreement Form must be completed and submitted to the Ph.D. Program Office and is available at:
http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/pdf/stuhandagree.pdf
### Summary of Annual Requirements for All Students

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<th>Document</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1ST YEAR STUDENTS (NEWLY ADMITTED STUDENTS)</strong> Below is a summary of YR 1 academic annual requirements covered on the preceding pages. Students are expected to review additional requirements (e.g., computer/technology, medical/health) by going to our website, Admitted PhD Students, located at: <a href="http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/newstudents/newstudents_phd.html">http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/newstudents/newstudents_phd.html</a>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Request for Transfer Credits <a href="http://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/">http://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/</a></td>
<td>End of fall semester/YR 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Plan of Study <a href="http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/pdf/acadplanstudy.pdf">http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/pdf/acadplanstudy.pdf</a></td>
<td>End of fall semester/YR 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanderbilt IRB Training <a href="https://www.citiprogram.org">https://www.citiprogram.org</a>. First year students are required to complete Vanderbilt’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) training and submit a certificate of completion to the Ph.D. Program Office during the first semester by completing the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Course in the Protection of Human Research Subjects.</td>
<td>End of fall semester/YR 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Self-Assessment <a href="http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/pdf/stuselfassess.pdf">http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/pdf/stuselfassess.pdf</a></td>
<td>End of academic year (end of summer semester)</td>
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<td><strong>STUDENTS WHO COMPLETED YR 1 (CURRENT STUDENTS)</strong> Below is a summary of academic annual requirements covered on the preceding pages for all current students (after YR 1). Students are expected to review additional requirements (e.g., computer/technology, medical/health) by going to our website, PhD Current Students Requirements and Checklist, located at: <a href="http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/requirements.html">http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/requirements.html</a>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Self-Assessment <a href="http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/pdf/StuSelfAssess.pdf">http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/pdf/StuSelfAssess.pdf</a></td>
<td>End of academic year (end of summer semester)</td>
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<td>Academic Plan of Study <a href="http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/pdf/AcadPlanStudy.pdf">http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/pdf/AcadPlanStudy.pdf</a></td>
<td>Revise end of each semester</td>
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<tr>
<td>IRB Certification Refresher Course Maintain current IRB certification by completing an annual refresher course and submitting evidence of completion to the Ph.D. Program Office. Students may choose from one of the following: ✓ Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Course in the Protection of Human Research Subjects by going to: <a href="https://www.citiprogram.org">https://www.citiprogram.org</a> ✓ NIH Office of Human Subjects Research course by going to: <a href="http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php">http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php</a> In addition, student research projects (e.g., dissertations) must have IRB approval. The faculty adviser and/or dissertation chair will assist you in the application and approval process.</td>
<td>End of fall semester until student is in the dissertation phase of the program (IRB Office will automatically require for active IRB protocols).</td>
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VUSN PhD Student Handbook 2015-2016
**Grading System**
The grading system in the Graduate School includes the letter grades *A, B, C,* and *F.* The letter *I* may be used at the discretion of the instructor in those cases in which the student is not able to complete work in the normal time. An *I* that is not replaced by a letter grade within one year will be changed to the grade *F.* The notation *W* is entered onto the transcript when a student withdraws from a course or from the Graduate School. A grade point average of 3.0 is required for graduation. Letter grades are assigned grade point values as follows:

- **A+** = 4.0
- **A** = 4.0
- **A–** = 3.7
- **B+** = 3.3
- **B** = 3.0
- **B–** = 2.7
- **C+** = 2.3
- **C** = 2.0
- **C–** = 1.7
- **F** = 0.0

Students receive grades in all courses except those approved for credit/non-credit, audits, and some seminars. Certain courses approved by the graduate faculty for credit/non-credit or Pass/Fail count toward total hours. Courses that are strictly no-credit, however, do not count toward total hours or in calculating grade point average, although grades for such courses are entered on the student’s record.

**Incomplete Grades**
The Incomplete Grade Contract Form must be completed between the student and the faculty of record for which the student received an incomplete grade. The original form, signed by both the student and the faculty of record, must be submitted to the Ph.D. Program Office within one week of submission of an incomplete grade (*I*).

```plaintext
The Incomplete Grade Contract Form must be completed and submitted to the PhD. Program Office by going to:
http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/pdf/incompletegradecontract.pdf
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An *I* that is not replaced by a letter grade within one year will be changed to the grade *F.* Any incomplete grade in any core course counting toward the degree must be removed before the qualifying examination can be taken.

Once the student has received a final grade for an incomplete, the student and faculty of record must complete the Submission of Final Grade for Temporary or Missing Grade Form (not available online). Contact the Ph.D. Program Office for this form and submit the completed, signed form to the Ph.D. Program Office who will retain a copy for your student file and forward to the Graduate School.

**Change Grade Policy**
For a student enrolled in the Graduate School, a grade recorded in the University Registrar’s Office may be changed only upon the written request of the instructor with an endorsement by the appropriate official (usually an associate dean) within the school/college that offered the course, and then the approval of the associate dean of the Graduate School. Changing a recorded grade is a serious matter and, in general, petitions will be approved only upon certification that the original grade was in error or, in the case of an incomplete grade, that the
outstanding requirement(s) have been completed. The form, *Petition for Change of Grade*, must be completed **(not available online)**. Contact the Ph.D. Program Office for this form. The completed, signed form must be submitted to the Ph.D. Program Office who will retain a copy for your student file and forward to the Graduate School.

**Academic Probation**
Academic probation occurs whenever (1) a student earns a grade of less than B- in a course or (2) attains a grade point average of less than B.

A student who earns a course grade of less than B- will be placed on probation until a grade of B- or better is achieved in that course. A student may only repeat a course once. Two grades of less than B- either in the same course or two courses will result in dismissal.

Students who fall below a grade point average of 3.0 are placed on probation for one semester. If the student’s performance does not improve during that semester, the Graduate School and the appropriate Ph.D. program director will decide whether to dismiss the student or to allow the continuation of probation. If at the end of the second semester the grade point average is still below 3.0, the student may be advised to withdraw or face dismissal. Students who earn a grade point average of 2.0 or less during their first semester will be dismissed at the end of the semester.

A grade point average of 3.0 is necessary for graduation.

**Grievances and Appeals**
Faculty members welcome the opportunity to work closely with students to facilitate learning and assist in meeting course objectives. The student should first discuss any concerns regarding an instructor or a course with the instructor involved. If further discussion is needed, the student should make an appointment with Ann Minnick, Ph.D., program director and senior associate dean for research. At the time of the appointment with Dr. Minnick, the student should bring a written statement of the problem or grievance. If the problem is still unresolved, the student should contact Dean Linda Norman for assistance. The student may appeal the outcome of the school-level review to the Graduate School.
Registration:

Requirements and Process

Students enrolled in course work must register each fall, spring and summer semester with no breaks in registration to remain in good standing. In addition, full-time students must be registered for at least nine hours each fall and spring (i.e., full-time) and at least 6 hours each summer semester (i.e., full-time) in which they receive a VUSN tuition scholarship (if a recipient) or any other scholarship, assistantship, fellowship, or traineeship support through the university. In addition, if you are taking an Independent Study, Research Practicum, or elective(s), you must register. Part-time students must register each fall, spring and summer semester with no breaks in registration as well (see sample plan of study for part-time students).

The normal academic, full-time registration for students is 9 to 13 hours per semester (6 to 9 hours in the summer). Students registered for 9 or more didactic hours per semester are defined as full-time. Those registered for 6-8 credit hours are half-time, and those registered for less than 6 hours are part-time.

Students working on the qualifying examination paper and/or preparing for the oral exam following completion of all required course work must maintain continuous enrollment during fall and spring semesters. To do so, students should enroll in NRSC 8999: Non-Candidate Research. This course is only for students who are in the qualifying examination phase of the program. Students should register for zero (0) credits in NRSC 8999. This maintains full-time student status in the program.

When the student has successfully completed the qualifying examination (written and oral) and is approved to begin dissertation research, registration for dissertation research applies. Students working on their dissertation should register for NRSC 9999: Dissertation Research. Students must enroll for a total of 6 dissertation credits which can be spread out among several semesters. When the required 72 hours of course work has been completed, registration for dissertation research (NRSC 9999) without hourly credit applies. This reflects full-time effort on research and confers full-time student status. The minimum tuition of $200 is charged.

Your Enrollment Services (YES)

All students must complete the registration process at the appropriate time using Vanderbilt’s online enrollment system referred to as YES (Your Enrollment Services). In order to register, students must complete the following steps each semester:

a. Consult with your faculty adviser regarding appropriate course work

b. Register for courses by the noted deadline by using YES: 
http://yes.vanderbilt.edu

c. Pay your bill by the noted deadline – please see the student accounts website: 
http://www.vanderbilt.edu/stuaccts/

See Graduate School Web site for registration instructions: http://www.vanderbilt.edu/gradschool/

In addition, if you are registering for an independent study (NRSC 8390) or a research practicum (NRSC 8395), you must submit the required form first (i.e., the Graduate School form, Request for Independent Study/Directed Studies/Readings & Research. Students cannot register for these classes on their own. Once the required form is processed, the Graduate School will enter the course for you in YES.
**Students in core course work**
YES does not allow the nursing science program to enter course information regarding alternative delivery methods. Therefore, class times/locations/days are listed as ‘TBA.’ Students should still register for core courses and other courses in their track – as well as any additional courses discussed with your faculty adviser. All face-to-face classes are held during block sessions. Students will receive in advance a synchronous class schedule each semester.

**Changes in Registration**
Changes in registration may be made through YES during the change period (the first ten class days of the semester) with consent of the Ph.D. Nursing Program and faculty adviser. A student is not permitted to add or drop a course, change the number of hours in a variable-credit course, or change from audit to credit status after the end of the change period. A student may formally withdraw from a course after the end of the change period with the permission of the Ph.D. Program Office, and a grade of W will be given.
The Qualifying Examination and Advancement to Candidacy

Purpose and Overview
The purpose of the qualifying examination is to test the student’s knowledge of the field of specialization, to assess comprehension and synthesis with the published research in the field, and to determine whether the student possesses the critical and analytical skills necessary for a scholarly career as described in The Bulletin of Vanderbilt University Graduate School. VUSN examinations and policies relative to advancement to candidacy comply with those of the Graduate School, including the requirement for a qualifying examination and completion of a dissertation and final dissertation defense. All qualifying examinations must include details of the phenomenon of interest that the student wants to address in their program of research, and how they will design their program of research based on the critical analysis and synthesis of the empirical, theoretical, and methodological literature. In addition, the qualifying exam tests the student’s ability to integrate previous experience, knowledge and skills gained in the Ph.D. program and to balance opposite, yet complementary, characteristics and behaviors; these include the ability to be confident and skeptical, empirical and theoretical, and able to defend his/her own ideas yet open to alternatives.

The qualifying examination includes both written and oral components. The qualifying examination may be administered at any time during the school year. It may be taken any time after completing 46 hours of course work, but must be passed no later than one semester after completion of course work. If a student has incomplete grades, please see the incomplete grade policy to determine how this may impact permission to take the qualifying examination. It is expected that the oral component will be completed within four weeks of the committee’s approval of the written exam. Failure to schedule the oral portion within the time period specified will result in the student being placed on probation and subject to dismissal. A student may be given two opportunities to pass each of the two components. Upon satisfactory completion of the qualifying examination, the student advances to candidacy and proceeds to work on the dissertation proposal.

The faculty adviser must notify the Ph.D. Program Office of the names of the proposed committee members, along with their relevant expertise, at the onset of the qualifying examination process by completing the form, Qualifying Examination: Committee Formation Request. The program director will review the proposed members and discuss any potential conflicts or issues within two weeks with the faculty adviser and/or student. While a Ph.D. committee must be formally appointed by the program director and the Graduate School before the oral portion of the qualifying examination is administered (in accordance with Graduate School policy), the nursing science program requires information about committee members prior to the onset of the qualifying examination process. The committee should consist of not fewer than four members of the Graduate Faculty (three VUSN faculty and one external to VUSN). At least three weeks before the expected oral portion of the qualifying examination, the chair of the Ph.D. committee completes the Request to Appoint PhD Committee Form. This time line permits the VUSN Ph.D. Program Office to ensure that the student has completed the requisite number of hours, is in good academic standing, and that all documents and credentials of the program committee members are in order. Prior notice of the proposed committee and the date of the oral portion of the qualifying examination must be received by the Graduate School from the Ph.D. Program Office at least two weeks before the oral exam. Formal approval by the Graduate School must be received prior to the oral examination.
Qualifying Examination Criteria

The criteria listed below are expected to be met upon completion of the written and oral components of the qualifying examination.

Students must be able to demonstrate competencies in a field of specialization by demonstrating:

- a comprehensive knowledge of the literature related to a selected phenomenon of interest
- a critical, analytic approach to the phenomenon of interest
- knowledge of the relationships among basic and social sciences and the phenomenon of interest
- an ability to synthesize and apply theory and research
- application of synthesized material to research in the student’s phenomenon of interest
- critical thinking skills
- creative responses to questions that includes support from theoretical and empirical literature
- integration of knowledge from various disciplines
- integration of knowledge from various doctoral courses
- his or her own opinion and the ability to support, defend, compare and contrast that opinion with the literature
- an ability to deal with ambiguity in areas that have no clear solutions
- logical organization of material

At the onset of the qualifying examination process, the faculty adviser/student must submit the Qualifying Examination: Committee Formation Request Form to the Ph.D. Program Office

http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/pdf/qecommformationreq.pdf

At least 3 weeks prior to the oral portion of the qualifying examination, the faculty adviser/student must submit the Request to Appoint Ph.D. Committee Form to the Ph.D. Program Office

http://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/
**Enrollment Status and Grading During the Qualifying Examination**

**Enrollment in Non-Candidate Research: NRSC 8999**

A student working on the qualifying examination (written and/or oral) following completion of all required course work must maintain continuous enrollment during fall and spring semesters. To do so, they should enroll in NRSC 899: Non-Candidate Research. This course is only for students who are in the qualifying examination phase of the program. Students should register for zero (0) credits in NRSC 8999. This maintains full-time student status in the program. An overview of the qualifying examination process is provided on the next page.

Note: Students who are not nurse faculty loan recipients (NFLP) will need to register for NRSC 8999: Non-Candidate Research in YR 2 summer semester in addition to NRSC 8303 and a 3 credit elective. This will allow you to maintain full-time student status. Students must also complete the Non-Candidate Research Grading Agreement for NRSC 8999.

**Submission of Grades for Non-Candidate Research: NRSC 8999**

To ensure that performance and progress is documented, a grade of ‘S’ (Satisfactory) or ‘U’ (Unsatisfactory) for each semester in which the student is enrolled in non-candidate research (NRSC 379) will be submitted. A grade of ‘U’ shall result in the student’s placement on probation. A second grade of ‘U’ at any subsequent point in the qualifying examination phase shall result in dismissal.

The following policies will be strictly enforced regarding grading during the qualifying examination phase of the program:

1. At the beginning of each semester in which a student is registered for non-candidate research hours, the student and chair shall complete an agreement about the semester’s objectives, activities and resulting products. It is based on the formats used for independent study and the research practicum. The form, Non-Candidate Research Grading Agreement, is listed below.

2. Failure to fulfill satisfactorily the objectives shall result in a grade of “U”. The qualifying examination chairperson shall have the discretion to determine if some objectives could not be met because of situations outside of the student’s control. In such a case, a grade of “S” should be awarded. When in doubt about a grade, the qualifying examination chair should consult with the PhD program director.

3. A grade of “U” shall result in the candidate’s placement on probation.

4. A second grade of “U” at any subsequent point in the qualifying examination phase shall result in dismissal.

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**At the beginning of each semester, the student and chair must complete the Non-Candidate Research Grading Agreement Form and must submit a copy of the final form to the Ph.D. Program Office at the beginning of the semester**

[http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/pdf/non_candi_research_grad_agre.pdf](http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/pdf/non_candi_research_grad_agre.pdf)
ONSET OF QUALIFYING EXAM PHASE

Faculty adviser discusses possible committee chair and committee members with student. Faculty adviser submits the names of the proposed committee members at the onset of the qualifying exam process by submitting the form, Qualifying Examination: Committee Formation Request to the PhD Program Office who will submit to the program director for review.

* Program director reviews proposed chair and members and discusses any potential conflicts or issues within two weeks with faculty adviser and/or student.

  * If proposed chair and committee members are approved by the program director, the chair informs/notifies the student and committee members.

  * If the proposed chair and/or committee members are not approved by the program director, faculty adviser must re-submit a revised form, Qualifying Examination: Committee Formation Request to the PhD Program Office who will submit it to the program director for review.

  * Committee is now formalized and appointed (within VUSN).

At the onset of the qualifying examination process, the faculty adviser/student must submit the Qualifying Examination: Committee Formation Request Form to the Ph.D. Program Office

http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/pdf/qecommformationreq.pdf
WRITTEN COMPONENT

Student formalizes the phenomenon of interest for written portion of the examination with the committee chair. This phenomenon should be that planned for the dissertation. Any new phenomenon of interest after the completion of the examination will require a second qualifying examination aimed at the new phenomenon.

Student uses the written qualifying component criteria listed in the PhD student manual to develop a detailed outline for the examination. Student forwards the outline to the committee after the chair approves the outline.

Committee agrees to the phenomenon of interest, outline and format via a meeting or e-mail. Once agreement is reached, the chair sends the final outline to all committee members and the student.

The chair meets with the student to confirm the final outline which is based on the committee’s input and clarifies any outline questions.

Consistent with the qualifying exam time frame, the student independently writes the examination. Upon completion, the student simultaneously submits it to the chair and committee.

The student should note all these activities must occur within the time frame specified earlier in this document.

The chair and committee grade the examination as either satisfactory or unsatisfactory within two weeks or the period negotiated with the student.

If a grade of “satisfactory” for the written component is granted by the chair and the majority of the committee, the student sets a time for the oral component consistent with the schedules of the members and works toward the completion of required forms.

Chair submits the Qualifying Examination: Results of Written Examination Form.

If a grade of “unsatisfactory” is granted because the chair and the majority of the committee do not award a satisfactory grade, the chair and committee will communicate this decision by completing the appropriate section on the form, Qualifying Examination: Results of Written Examination within one week. The committee may vote to allow a second attempt of the written component and specify a time frame which maybe no longer than four weeks. The chair then presents the results, deficiencies and decision about the time frame for re-taking the exam to the student. The form, Qualifying Examination: Results of Written Examination, must be submitted to the PhD Program Office.

If the recommendation is that no repetition be allowed, the chair must communicate this decision by completing the appropriate section on the form, Qualifying Examination: Results of Written Examination within one week. The chair must inform the student that the student will then be presented to the PPEC for consideration for dismissal from the program. The form, Qualifying Examination: Results of Written Examination, must be submitted to the PhD Program Office.
After the written examination is completed, the Qualifying Examination: Results of Written Examination Form must be completed and signed by each committee member and submitted to the PhD Program Office:

http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/pdf/qexapprovwritten.pdf
ORAL COMPONENT

Student successfully completes the written component of the exam.

* Three weeks prior to the oral exam, the Ph.D. committee is formally appointed by the program director and the Graduate School by the chair submitting the form, Request to Appoint Ph.D. Committee to the Ph.D. Program Office. The Ph.D. Office will forward to the Graduate School.

* Three weeks prior to the oral exam, the chair submits the form, Request to Schedule Qualifying Examination to the Ph.D. Program Office. The Ph.D. Office will forward to the Graduate School.

* The student notifies the Ph.D. Office if they are conducting the oral examination onsite or using distance education technology at least three weeks prior to the oral exam.

* The Graduate School appoints the committee.

* All of the committee members must participate in the two hour oral examination. The unexpected absence of more than one committee member or the chair requires rescheduling.

* Student’s committee chair is responsible for monitoring the reasonableness of the questions asked using the parameters noted in the PhD Student Handbook.

* Committee members’ final evaluation of the student is based on a consensus process. The committee advises the student of the decision immediately upon completion of the examination. If the student’s performance is deemed acceptable, the student is determined to have passed the oral component of the exam and is advanced to candidacy.

* Committee chair completes Qualifying Examination Results Form and forwards to Ph.D. Program Office within one week. Copies will be forwarded to the Graduate School, student and chair.

* If a grade of “unsatisfactory” is granted per the voting procedures listed in the PhD Student Handbook, the chair will meet with the committee within one week of the finding. The committee may recommend a second attempt of the oral component and specify a time frame which must be within four weeks. If the committee votes to allow such an attempt, the chair must present a written listing of the deficiencies noted by the committee, the time frame for the repeat examination and any other conditions to the student and the Ph.D. Program Director within one week. The chair will also present this verbally to the student to ensure the student is clear about the deficiencies and the time frame. The form, Finding of Unsatisfactory Achievement on the Oral QE, must be submitted to the PhD Program Office.

* If the committee votes that a second attempt is not granted, the chair must inform the student that the student will then be presented to the PPEC for consideration for dismissal from the program. The form, Finding of Unsatisfactory Achievement on the Oral QE, must be submitted to the PhD Program Office.
At least 3 weeks prior to the QE oral exam, the chair submits to the PhD Program Office:

- ✔ Request to Appoint PhD Committee Form
- ✔ Request to Schedule Qualifying Exam Form

http://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/
Qualifying Exam - Written Component

The purpose of the written component is to demonstrate the student’s ability to critically analyze and synthesize theoretical and empirical literature around a phenomenon of interest. The student and his/her Ph.D. committee determine the focus of the qualifying exam paper(s) upon which the student will be evaluated. The phenomenon of interest and the outline(s) of these paper(s) must be approved in advance by the Ph.D. committee. The paper(s) are submitted to the Ph.D. committee for review and evaluation within a timeframe determined by the committee chair. Students should anticipate a committee review period of a minimum of two weeks. At least three members of the student’s Ph.D. committee – one of whom must be the committee chair - must approve the final written qualifying paper(s) and sign the written component approval form. This form, along with the paper(s), is filed in the Ph.D. Program Office. The student is responsible for assuring that committee members and the Ph.D. Program Office receive the exam paper(s). Failure to submit an acceptable paper is grounds for dismissal from the program. It is common for portions of the paper to appear in sections of the dissertation itself.

Criteria for Qualifying Written Exam

A well written, acceptable qualifying paper(s) are prerequisite(s) to taking the comprehensive oral examination. The paper may be presented in a variety of forms, including but not limited to: a publishable manuscript, selected portions of the dissertation or an agreed upon paper(s) that addresses the criteria for the qualifying examination.

The written component must demonstrate: evidence of original thinking, organization, logical progression of ideas, sound critical evaluation of the literature, and evidence of depth and breadth of knowledge related to the phenomenon of interest.

The written material must include the following key topics (not necessarily in this order). The format will vary based on what is negotiated with the committee.

1) Significance of the phenomenon of interest
   a) Significance to society in general
   b) Significance to healthcare
   c) Significance to science/discipline of nursing and gaps, if any, in our knowledge of its significance
   d) Gaps (if any) in knowledge of significance

2) Conceptual and theoretical approaches to the phenomenon of interest
   e) Discuss the history of the phenomenon
   f) Identify and define key concepts related to the phenomenon
   g) Critically analyze theories/frameworks that have been used to explain the phenomenon
   h) Discuss conceptual and/or theoretical limitations [e.g., inconsistencies in conceptual definitions]
   i) Synthesis of conceptual/theoretical knowledge
   j) Gaps (if any) in theories/frameworks
3) Research approaches to the phenomenon of interest
   k) Critically analyze (1) designs, (2) methods (3) measurement tools and (4) statistical techniques that have been used to study the phenomenon
   l) Discuss advantages and disadvantages of designs, methods, measures and analytic techniques used to study the phenomenon. Include analytic and statistical advantages and disadvantages.
   m) Synthesis of research approaches
   n) Gaps (if any) in research approaches

4) Application to your dissertation
   o) What gaps do you want to address?
   p) What are some potential research questions and/or hypothesis?

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The Qualifying Examination: Results of Written Examination Form must be signed by the student’s committee members after review of the written component of the qualifying examination paper and submitted to the PhD Program Office.

[http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/pdf/qexapprovwritten.pdf](http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/pdf/qexapprovwritten.pdf)
**Qualifying Exam – Oral Component**

The oral component of the qualifying examination occurs after the student has successfully completed the written component of the exam.

The purpose of the oral component is to test the student’s ability to verbally respond to questions about the phenomenon of interest and its study. The oral component also tests the student’s ability to be confident and skeptical, empirical and theoretical, and to defend his/her own ideas yet open to alternatives.

The oral examination is not confined to the topic(s) covered in the written qualifying examination paper. It may include knowledge acquired during the program.

After receiving approval from the student’s Ph.D. committee chair, a student may conduct the oral qualifying exam using distance education technology (e.g., Scopia or Skype for Business) instead of being onsite. Regardless of whether the oral qualifying exam is conducted onsite or using distance education technology, it is the student’s responsibility to coordinate a date and time with your Ph.D. committee.

**Approved Onsite Oral Qualifying Exams**

Students who conduct the oral qualifying exam onsite must:

1. Reserve a conference room in advance (prior to submitting the form, Request to Schedule Qualifying Examination) by contacting the Ph.D. Program Office
2. Submit the form, Request to Schedule Qualifying Examination, to the Ph.D. Program Office at least three weeks in advance
3. Determine if any committee members will be offsite and coordinate technology requirements with the Ph.D. Office
4. If any committee member will be offsite, notify the Ph.D. Program Office at least five days prior to the oral exam

**Approved Distance Oral Qualifying Exams**

Students who conduct the oral qualifying exam using distance education technology must:

1. Submit the form, Request to Schedule Qualifying Examination, to the Ph.D. Program Office at least three weeks in advance
2. Notify the Ph.D. Program Office at least three weeks in advance in order to reserve the necessary equipment, licenses and other needed arrangements

The Ph.D. Office will reserve the:
- Conference room
- Polycom camera cart
- Licenses in the public folder calendar
- D-Term speaker phone (back-up in the event of Internet problems)
At least 3 weeks prior to the QE oral exam, the chair submits to the PhD Program Office:

- ✔ Request to Appoint PhD Committee Form
- ✔ Request to Schedule Qualifying Exam Form

http://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/
Detailed Description of the Oral Component Process

The student is encouraged to discuss beforehand with each committee member the type(s) of questions that may be asked. The chair and the committee will not participate in a rehearsal for the examination because it is just that: an examination.

After receiving approval from the Graduate School, an approximately two-hour oral examination is conducted by the qualifying examination committee. At the time the oral exam is scheduled, all committee members should affirm to their agreement to attend. If extenuating circumstances make it impossible for one committee member to attend after the exam is scheduled, the exam will proceed as scheduled. If the chair or more than two members cannot attend because of unforeseen circumstances, the exam will be rescheduled.

The oral examination begins with a no more than 20 minute student presentation summarizing each section of their written paper. One of the committee members then asks a question and the examination proceeds from there. The student, or any committee member, may ask for a short break at any time during the examination. When the chair has determined that all reasonable questions have been asked and that the student has had ample opportunity to answer them, the student is asked to leave the room.

The chair then asks each committee member to voice his or her opinion about how the student performed during the oral examination. The chair may lead a discussion that includes general impressions, specific evaluations, strengths, weaknesses, recommendations, and overall decision. If the committee votes the exam is unsatisfactory, the Finding of Unsatisfactory Achievement on the Oral Qualifying Examination Form must be completed and signed by each member of the committee and submitted to the PhD Office.

Once the committee has made its decision about the outcome of the oral component of the qualifying examination, the student is asked to return to the room and the committee chair reviews the committee’s recommendations.

Depending on the outcome of the examination, either one or two forms are required.

Upon completion of the oral exam, the Results of Qualifying Exam Form must be completed and submitted to the PhD Program Office.

http://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/

If the committee votes the exam is unsatisfactory, the Finding of Unsatisfactory Achievement on the Oral Qualifying Examination Form must also be completed and submitted to the PhD Program Office.

http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/pdf/findingofunsatisfactoryachievementonoralqe.pdf

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Candidate Title

After the Qualifying Exam Results Form has been submitted and the student has passed the qualifying examination (written and oral), the student should use the title “PhD Candidate” in professional communications related to their dissertation research project until they defend their dissertation. The title PhD Candidate is symbolized by using PhD(c) indicating the student has been admitted to candidacy for the degree.
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The Dissertation

Part I: The Dissertation Proposal

- Candidate title
- Beginning to think about the proposal
- The proposal’s purpose
- Proposal completion deadline
- Enrollment status and grading during dissertation proposal writing
- Support for your dissertation project
- The dissertation committee
- Proposal process: working with a committee
- Content and format of the written proposal
- Approval of the dissertation proposal
- Human subjects training requirements
- Human subjects, animal and other review requirements
- Preparing IRB Applications

Candidate title
Since successfully passing the qualifying examination, students should use the title “PhD Candidate” in professional communications related to the dissertation project until they defend their dissertation. The title PhD Candidate is symbolized by using PhD(c) indicating the student has been admitted to candidacy for the degree.

Beginning to think about the dissertation
Students are encouraged by their advisers and through course assignments and other learning experiences to identify research topics of interest from the time of admission. As course work progresses, electives should be chosen to help build a successful dissertation experience. In the second year of full time course work, the student should work with her/his adviser to narrow the focus of inquiry to a “dissertation sized” project. During this time, the student should discuss with his/her adviser if the adviser feels best suited to act as the dissertation chair. If not, they should discuss alternatives with the program director. A third task is to identify possible committee members. A fourth task is to begin to think about dissertation funding. Early attention is critical. The extensive reviews attendant to most funding requests dictates lengthy review cycles.

The following sections contain detailed descriptions of chair, committee and student roles as well as how to seek funding and write and defend a proposal. Without identifying a suitably narrow research topic, it is not possible to make use of this information. This identification must be the first priority.

The proposal’s purpose
The dissertation is a student driven experience with appropriate guidance from the chair and committee members. The content of the dissertation proposal must reflect a project that demonstrates the student’s substantive and methodological expertise in a chosen field. The project proposed must add to the state of the science in the student’s area.

Proposal completion deadline
The student must submit a dissertation proposal that has been approved formally by her/his PhD committee no later than one year after the student’s advancement to candidacy. In this document “committee” refers to members and the chair.
Enrollment status and grading during dissertation proposal writing
Continuous registration is required. Responsibility for registration rests with the student. When all credits toward courses as required by the program of study have been completed (including the six required dissertation hours), registration for dissertation research (NRSC 9999) without hourly credit applies. See the VU Web site for tuition and/or fees. This enrollment grants student privileges and the opportunity to apply for student loan deferral.

Support for your dissertation project
1. The Graduate School often sponsors a free seminar for Vanderbilt PhD students on “Writing the Dissertation”. If you have difficulty writing, get assistance early in the process although you may find this helpful at any time in the dissertation process. Visit www.vanderbilt.edu/gradschool for information and schedules.

2. Students are encouraged to work with their committee to determine funding opportunities based on their interest areas. The time to do this is early in the proposal stage because funding opportunities, especially those offered by the government, often involve extensive review time.

3. Dissertation Enhancement Grants are offered by the Student Affairs Committee of the Graduate Faculty Council and the Graduate School. These grants enhance aspects of work that are not part of the dissertation research but rather supplement the study of new dimensions and worthwhile extensions of the approved work. Go to: www.vanderbilt.edu/gradschool

4. The School of Nursing has established a VUSN PhD Student Support Fund through private donations. The fund supports non-tuition related expenses and priority is given to students who are requesting funds to complete activities directly related to timely completion of their dissertation. The Student Support Fund application is located at: http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/forms.html. Questions should be directed to the PhD Program Office.

The table on the next page summarizes internal funding mechanisms to support your dissertation project including dissertation enhancement grants, the VUSN PhD Student Research Award, Vanderbilt’s Clinical and Translational Science Awards (CTSA) and VUSN Iota Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International. Vanderbilt’s CTSA program is part of an NIH initiative designed to propel discoveries and ideas into meaningful practices and advance translational medicine. The VUSN Iota Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International awards scholarly activity in nursing research.
### Internal Funding Mechanisms and Procedures

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<tr>
<th>Funding Mechanism</th>
<th>Purpose/Description</th>
<th>When to Apply</th>
<th>How to Apply</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduate School Travel Grant</td>
<td>Travel to regional/national conferences to present research</td>
<td>At least 2 weeks before trip</td>
<td>Complete Graduate Student Travel Grant Application <a href="http://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/">http://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/</a> Submit your completed application to the PhD Office for processing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Students can apply for one award of up to $500 per budget year (July 1-June 30) for</td>
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<td></td>
<td>domestic travel or international travel. After completing at least one academic year, student may apply for a travel grant and are allowed a total of three travel grants for their entire tenure at Vanderbilt.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>VUSN PhD Program Office</td>
<td>Travel to regional/national conferences to present research</td>
<td>At least 2 weeks before trip if travel will exceed the Graduate School’s limit (see above) OR At least 4 weeks before trip if you were already awarded a Graduate School travel grant for the budget year</td>
<td>If Requesting Supplemental Funds to a Graduate School Travel Grant: Email your request to the PhD Office and include/attach: Completed Graduate School Travel Grant application Purpose of trip Name of Meeting/Conference Location Dates Total Estimated Expenses Additional Amount Requesting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You may request supplemental funds to cover remaining expenses if you are submitting a Graduate School Travel Grant OR if you were awarded a Graduate School Travel Grant for the budget year and wish to attend other conference</td>
<td></td>
<td>If Requesting Funds Independently of a Graduate School Travel Grant: Email your request to the PhD Office and include/attach: Abstract Purpose of trip Name of Meeting/Conference Location Dates of Attendance Estimated Expenses by category: Air Fare Hotel Taxi/shuttle Registration Fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissertation Enhancement Grant (Graduate School)</td>
<td>To add a new dimension or additional breadth to your dissertation research</td>
<td>February and October You must have passed</td>
<td>Complete Dissertation Enhancement Grant Application <a href="http://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/">http://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/</a> Submit your completed application to the PhD Office for processing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Mechanism</td>
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<tr>
<td>CTSA (VUMC)</td>
<td>Dissertation research project</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Discuss with your faculty adviser/chair to determine if this is a viable option. If yes: Go to STARBrite VUMC research portal (requires VUNET ID) to access VICTR resources: <a href="https://victr.vanderbilt.edu/pub/">https://victr.vanderbilt.edu/pub/</a>. Dr. Mion is the VUSN representative. Contact her if you anticipate requesting ≥$2,000 for her guidance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VUSN Iota Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International</td>
<td>Professional development, nursing research and scholarly activity&lt;br&gt;You must be a member of the chapter; priority is given to applicants attending STTI sanctioned events</td>
<td>Submission Deadlines: March 1st, June 1st, Sept 30th, Dec 31st</td>
<td>Download the application at: <a href="https://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/organizations/STT/index.html">https://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/organizations/STT/index.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VUSN PhD Student Research Award</td>
<td>Non-tuition related expenses such as: Dissertation research&lt;br&gt;Travel to scientific meetings&lt;br&gt;Textbooks</td>
<td>After applying to the following funding mechanisms (if applicable): Graduate School travel grant&lt;br&gt;Graduate School Dissertation Enhancement Grant&lt;br&gt;CTSA funding&lt;br&gt;VUSN Iota PhD Program Office</td>
<td>Complete VUSN PhD Student Research Award <a href="http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/forms.html">http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/forms.html</a>. Submit your completed application to the PhD Office for processing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Procedures for Gift Cards for Research Study Participants
Students who receive funding to purchase gift cards for their research projects (e.g., VICTR or the VUSN PhD Student Research Award) are to follow the procedures outlined below.

Purchasing Gift Cards
a. Upon receiving IRB approval, notify Deborah Fertitta, VUSN administrative assistant, (615) 322-8910 or deborah.fertitta@vanderbilt.edu. Copy your dissertation chair.
   Copy Irene McKirgan if the funding source was the VUSN PhD Student Research Award.
b. Deborah Fertitta will purchase the needed cards in reasonable amounts (i.e., maximum of 20 cards at a time). Allow two weeks for processing.
c. If you are local, you are responsible for picking up cards at VUSN from Deborah Fertitta.
d. If you are out of town, Deborah Fertitta will ship (e.g., Federal Express) to your address. Signature required upon receipt.

Required Gift Card Documentation
Students are responsible for working with Deborah Fertitta to maintain the appropriate documentation for reimbursement as follows:
   e. You must give Deborah Fertitta original receipts with gift card numbers.
f. You are responsible for making a photocopy of the back of the cards to document the card numbers.
g. You are responsible for:
   i. Having the participant complete a gift card receipt form which must be maintained in study files.
   ii. Maintaining an Excel file of needed documentation.
h. You must provide Deborah Fertitta with a copy of the EXCEL file and copies of the signature receipt page when requesting more cards or at any time VU procedures specify.
i. Upon completion of gift card distribution, final documentation must be provided to Deborah Fertitta within two weeks. Documents must be delivered via secure shipment method (e.g., Federal Express/signature required) or you can hand deliver to Deborah Fertitta.

See Deborah Fertitta for gift card receipts and the gift card documentation sheet.
The dissertation committee
While the student’s PhD Committee was formally appointed by the Graduate School during the qualifying examination phase, the VUSN PhD program requires information about the student’s committee during the dissertation phase as well. This is to ensure there are no gaps in relevant areas of expertise of committee members as well as a commitment by members to continue serving on the committee. In addition, changes after the qualifying exam must also be approved. The following reviews the terms for the dissertation committee.

1. Composition. The student works with his/her chair to identify committee members. The committee members should be chosen for their content, methodological or analytic skills. The committee is composed of a chair and at least three other members. Three of the members, including the chair, must have appointments in the School of Nursing and all must have VU Graduate Faculty appointments. One member (not the chair) must be from outside VUSN. If a suitable VU faculty member cannot be identified, an expert from another university or research laboratory may be included. In this case, contact the VUSN PhD Office regarding necessary forms. Non-voting experts may also be included. All members must be approved by the chair and the student. The Request to Form a PhD Dissertation Committee Form must be signed by all members and the student. The rationale for each member’s participation must be included on the form.

The Request to Form a PhD Dissertation Committee Form must be submitted to the PhD Program Office and may be found at:

http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/pdf/reqformdisscomm.pdf

2. Support for non-VU committee members. All expenses associated with travel and lodging must be borne by the student or the non-VU committee member. The VU School of Nursing will provide no financial support.

3. Changes in committee composition. The director of the PhD program must approve any changes based on material submitted by the chair via the Request to Change PhD Committee form. Upon approval, this form must be submitted to the PhD Office (who will forward to the Graduate School)

The Request to Change a PhD Committee Form must be submitted to the PhD Program Office and may be found at:

http://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/

4. Duties of student
The student is responsible for:
- Developing a timetable to be approved by the chair and committee
- Inviting experts to be on the committee after consulting with the chair
- Writing, editing and production of the proposal
- Circulating to the committee after approval by the chair
- Responding to critiques by the chair and committee members

The student must recognize that multiple drafts may be necessary and progress may entail meeting/communicating with the committee and chair individually or as a group. The timetable may change resulting in the need to renegotiate with the committee and chair. In no case should the student expect instant feedback. Two weeks is a typical response timeframe but may be longer.
5. **Duties of chair**

   **The chair:**
   - Assumes responsibility for oversight of the entire process
   - Guides the selection of committee members
   - Reviews all drafts prior to dissemination
   - Determines when proposal drafts should be disseminated to the committee
   - Guides the students in responding to critiques
   - Supports efforts to obtain project funding

6. **Duties of committee members**

   - During the proposal development stage, assist the student in identifying funding possibilities, making suggestions regarding topic, frameworks, methods and analyses consistent with their expertise
   - Review drafts
   - Attend a minimum of one committee meeting with the student per academic year
   - Provide the student (and chair) with timely feedback (i.e., within two weeks unless otherwise negotiated)
   - Vote on the proposal’s merit and the student’s ability to defend it

7. **Unforeseen committee changes.** If a committee member or the chair leaves VU, the director of the PhD program will decide about his/her continuation on the committee. In general, if the dissertation proposal defense or the dissertation defense is scheduled within one semester, the faculty member will be asked to continue until the milestone is passed. In the case of a proposal defense, a change in member and/or chair will be made. If a committee member is on sabbatical, the faculty member maintains committee membership. If the faculty member is the chair, a SON member serves as co-chair until the chair’s return. Prior to beginning the sabbatical, the chair agrees to abide by all committee decisions made during his/her absence. These are general guidelines; decision about committee composition will be made by the student, chair and director of the PhD program based upon the best interest of the student. In the case of chair illness, family medical leave or involuntary prolonged absence (e.g., military deployment), the director will work with the student in naming a new chair. A similar procedure will be followed in the case of committee members (i.e., the director will consult with the chair and student).

8. If the faculty member cannot be present physically at a milestone event, phone and/or videoconferencing are required. The School provides no financial support for faculty travel to participate in meetings, examination or defenses.

**Proposal process: working with a committee**

After the committee is assembled and approved by the PhD program director and VU Graduate School, the following steps are taken:

1. Student further refines his/her timetable with the assistance of the chair
2. Dissertation committee and student agree on the timetable and communicate mechanisms
3. Student prepares dissertation proposal draft(s)
4. Dissertation chair reviews and approves draft(s) for circulation
5. Student distributes draft(s) to committee members
6. Dissertation committee reviews proposal draft(s) and may request revisions
7. If signed approval of the written proposal by the dissertation committee is granted, student coordinates a defense date and time with the chair and committee and contacts the PhD office who will assist with room arrangements.
8. Upon successful defense, the chair submits Dissertation Proposal Acceptance Form.

9. After any committee suggested minor changes to the dissertation proposal have been made by the student and the receipt of IRB approvals (and other approvals and permissions as needed), the student begins dissertation work.

The Dissertation Proposal Acceptance Form must be submitted to the PhD Program Office and may be found at:

http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/pdf/disser_prop_acceptance.pdf

The approved dissertation proposal serves as a contract between the candidate and the committee concerning what is acceptable for the dissertation. Any subsequent changes must be approved by the committee. The candidate and committee must agree how and how often progress on the dissertation proposal’s execution will be shared with the committee. The candidate is responsible for meeting these reporting requirements.

Content and format of the written proposal

The suggested format for the proposal is contained in the Guidelines for Preparation of Theses and Dissertations:

http://www.vanderbilt.edu/gradschool/

The proposal must include:

1) Introduction
   a) Statement of problem
   b) Purpose of the study
   c) Research questions or hypotheses
   d) Significance of the issue and the need for study

2) Literature Review and Theoretical Framework
   a) Theoretical framework
   b) Critical analysis of relevant literature
   c) Definition of terms including operational definitions of all variables in terms of research questions/hypotheses

3) Proposed Methodology
   a) Research design and assumptions
   b) Description of research setting
   c) Sample and sampling plan
      i) Nature and size of sample
      ii) Criteria for sample selection, criteria for inclusion and exclusion
      iii) Methods for subject recruitment
      iv) Strategies to ensure human subjects protection
   d) Data collection methods
      i) Procedures
      ii) Instruments, including a description of content and previous use in research, and information about validity, reliability, credibility and areas of weakness
      iii) Credibility, rigor, validity of design and methods, including discussion of strategies for minimizing weaknesses identified
   e) Data analysis, including plans for dealing with missing and incomplete data

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4) Plans for dissemination of findings. This must include names of specific conferences and publication opportunities.

5) Appendices
   a) Instruments (where appropriate)
   b) Interview guides (where appropriate)
   c) Time line for dissertation completion
   d) Other

Approval of the dissertation proposal
Approval is achieved through production of a committee approved written proposal document and an oral defense of the proposal.

1. **Written proposal.** The written proposal must be approved by the chair and at least two of the three committee members before the student may proceed to the oral proposal defense. Inability to reach agreement must be noted on the VUSN Dissertation Proposal Acceptance Form. The rationale for dissent must be included. In the case of dissent, the director will meet with the chair and the entire committee to determine next steps.

   In a case in which the vote is to not approve the proposal, the chair and committee shall so indicate on the form. They shall inform the student of the rationale for denial of approval verbally and in a memo that shall be copied to the director. In no case shall failure to gain approval abrogate the rule that an approved dissertation proposal be completed within one year of advancement to candidacy. Any student appeal must be presented in writing to the program director within two weeks of receipt of results.

2. **Oral defense.** The chair must approve the request to schedule the oral defense. The student and the committee should agree upon the format of the oral defense. The written proposal must be approved at the time of this defense. The student presents the proposal verbally and responds to questions.

A student may conduct the oral defense of the dissertation proposal using distance education technology (e.g., Scopia or Skype for Business). Regardless of how the oral defense of the dissertation proposal is conducted (onsite or using distance education technology), it is the student’s responsibility to coordinate a date and time with the Ph.D. committee.

**Onsite Oral Defense of the Dissertation Proposal**
Students who conduct the oral defense of the dissertation proposal onsite must:
- Reserve a conference room in advance by contacting the Ph.D. Program Office
- Determine if any committee members will be offsite and coordinate technology requirements with the Ph.D. Office at least five days prior to the oral defense

**Distance Oral Defense of the Dissertation Proposal**
Students who conduct the oral defense of the dissertation proposal using distance education technology must:
- Notify the Ph.D. Program Office at least three weeks in advance to reserve the necessary equipment and other arrangements

The Ph.D. Office will reserve the:
- [X] Conference room
- [X] Polycom camera cart
Procedures in event a member cannot attend. All committee members must participate in person or by telephone. The absence of more than one member requires re-scheduling of the defense.

Voting. The chair and at least two of the three committee members must agree in their votes regarding the proposal defense. Inability to reach agreement must be noted on the VUSN Dissertation Proposal Acceptance Form. The rationale for dissent must be included. In the case of a dissent, the director will meet with the chair and the entire committee to determine next steps.

In a case in which the vote is to not approve the oral defense, the chair and committee shall so indicate on the form. The rationale for non-approval must be included. The chair and committee shall inform the student of the rationale for denial of approval verbally at the time of the defense and in a memo that shall be copied to the director. In no case shall failure to gain approval abrogate the rule that an approved dissertation proposal be completed within one year of advancement to candidacy. Any student appeal must be presented in writing to the program director within two weeks of receipt of results.

Approval forms. Upon completion of the defense, the VUSN Dissertation Proposal Acceptance Form must be signed by the chair and the committee members and forwarded to the PhD Program Office.

Human subject training requirements
The candidate must meet IRB training requirements throughout the dissertation process. Although every VUSN PhD student completes training upon enrollment, all students are required to maintain current IRB certification by completing an annual refresher course and submitting evidence of completion to the Ph.D. Program Office. Students may choose from one of the following:

- Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Course in the Protection of Human Research Subjects by going to: https://www.citiprogram.org

Although a candidate may receive a reminder about continued training, it is the candidate’s responsibility to be current. Evidence of current training compliance must be sent by the candidate to the PhD Program Office each year.

Human subjects, animal and other review requirements

1. After receiving the chair’s approval, the candidate must submit an application to the relevant IRB(s) if the study involves human subjects. If animals are involved, an application must also be sent to the VU Animal Study Review Board. Candidates may not proceed with contacting potential subjects or data collection until written approval from the VUMC (and other sites as needed) IRB and/or animal review board.

2. After receiving the chair’s approval, the candidate must complete the IRB and/or Animal Review annual study renewal. Allowing one’s approval to lapse through failure to complete renewal forms requires the candidate to cease dissertation work until approval is renewed.

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VUSN PhD Student Handbook 2015-2016
3. The candidate must also meet the review requirements of clinical entities, research support agencies and centers. Meeting these requirements can be time consuming and should be included in the timeline. Examples include nursing research committees, research support centers and clinical institutes and centers.

**Preparing IRB Applications**

The IRB has a service available as you work with your Ph.D. chair to prepare IRB applications. We strongly advise that you avail yourselves of this service. Prior to submitting an IRB application, the student should arrange an appointment to go over the application by contacting Wendy Lloyd, Regulatory Affairs & Compliance Specialist, Human Research Protection Program at: wendy.lloyd@vanderbilt.edu, (615) 936-7106. The student sends a rough draft of the entire required IRB application to her prior to the appointment. It is the student’s responsibility to let the Ph.D. chair know about the meeting and to find out if he/she plans to attend. The student is responsible for calling in if a phone appointment is to be used. If the adviser will be present and cannot be at the IRB office during the call (thus making a three way call), the student should contact Irene McKirgan for conference call support. It is the student’s responsibility to let the adviser and the IRB official know the arrangements. Once the application has been approved, the student should contact the assigned IRB staff member for any further questions.

**Additional Procedures to Improve IRB Timeliness**

A student and chair should speak with the IRB representative if the study is deferred for revisions a second time. If the student is at a distance, a conference call (procedure described above) must be arranged. Note: the contact should be the analyst listed on the IRB account.

In addition, the IRB computerized request forms include a box for nursing students to identify themselves (much like the Medical School Access students already do) so that the IRB will be easily reminded of their student status.
Part II: During Dissertation Data Collection

- Communication with the chair and the committee
- Required activities as dissertation data collection reaches completion

Communication with the chair and the committee

1. The candidate arranges a communication schedule and method with the chair and committee members. Regular e-mails, phone appointments and/or meetings are often used. Frequency of contact is dependent on the project but most chairs expect at least monthly progress reports. At least one annual report to the chair and committee is required. More may be specified.

2. The candidate should call upon the chair and committee for clarification and help in problem solving. Typical problems and challenges that arise include slower than expected subject enrollment, higher than projected levels of missing data, unexpected subject attrition, changes in management at clinical sites. Contact your chair and committee early. Do not wait for a problem to grow to an unmanageable size.

3. At this stage, any changes in the chair or the committee for whatever reason will be discussed by the candidate, the chair, committee and the director of the PhD program. Decisions will be based upon the best interest of the student. The student must understand any change in the area of science that is outside the program’s ability to provide sound mentorship and supervision may require withdrawal from the program.

Required activities as dissertation data collection reach completion

1. The candidate is responsible for negotiating a timetable of dissertation completion with the committee. The candidate must recognize that multiple drafts of this work may be necessary and, as was true of the proposal, at least two weeks should be allowed for committee reactions after each draft. The committee will critique the draft and suggest changes.

2. It may seem early to consider graduation, but some candidates who finishes data collection toward the middle of one semester may well intend to complete the degree at the end of the next semester. The candidate and chair must file an Intent to Graduate Form for the semester in which the candidate intends to graduate. This timetable must be discussed with the committee prior to form submission.

The Intent to Graduate Form must be submitted to the Ph.D. Program Office at the beginning of the semester in which the student expects to receive a degree. The Ph.D. Office will forward to the Graduate School. Students need to check the Graduate School Web site for deadline dates and forms by going to:

http://www.vanderbilt.edu/gradschool/

3. Determination of the candidate’s ability to graduate in a given semester should be made based on the realization that: (1) the entire dissertation must be completed (see definitions below) and approved by the committee (see preparing for the defense) before filing and (2) filing must be done four weeks prior to the defense and (3) the defense can occur no later than two weeks before the end of the term in which
the candidate graduates. One must also recognize that a spring graduation carries slightly different requirements with additional time required. (See Graduate School Requirements below). In a typical semester, this means that every aspect of dissertation writing must be final at least six weeks prior to the anticipated graduation date. In spring, at least eight weeks must be allowed.

4. As the candidate writes the dissertation report, adherence to the Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines of the Graduate School is mandatory.

5. Requirements for the Dissertation Report’s Structure
Whatever structure is chosen, the dissertation report must reflect the student’s individual execution of a research project that demonstrates his/her ability to (1) identify, (2) plan, (3) assemble data and, as appropriate, conduct interventions, (4) analyze findings and (5) reach conclusions and make recommendations for a study that advances science within an area of significance to nursing. The points to be included are detailed on the Dissertation Report Content Options Table on the next page.
DISSEINIZATION REPORT CONTENT OPTIONS

The candidate is expected to present the following content within the dissertation report format agreed to by the candidate, chair and committee members.

Abstract

Introduction (note: by its placement in the proposal, the introduction is recognized as such and does not require a subheading to distinguish it from the rest of the document.)

a) Statement of problem
b) Purpose of the study
c) Research questions or hypotheses
d) Significance of the issue and the study

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

a) Theoretical framework
b) Critical analysis of relevant literature
c) Definition of terms, including operational definitions of all variables in terms of research questions/hypotheses

Methodology

a) Research design and assumptions
b) Description of research setting
c) Sample and sampling plan
   i) Nature and size of sample
   ii) Criteria for sample selection, criteria for inclusion and exclusion
   iii) Methods for subject recruitment
   iv) Strategies to ensure human subjects protection
d) Data collection methods
   v) Procedures
   vi) Instruments, including a description of content and previous use in research, and information about validity, reliability, credibility and areas of weakness
   vii) Credibility, rigor, validity of design and methods, including discussion of strategies for minimizing weaknesses identified
e) Data analysis, including plans for dealing with missing and incomplete data

Results

a) Sample characteristics, data reduction techniques
b) Analysis of hypotheses or research questions
c) Other findings

Discussion

a) Meaning of findings in relation to hypotheses or research questions
b) Significance in light of prior research findings
c) Limitations and alternative explanations
d) Implications
e) Recommendations for future research

Appendices
At the Latest, the candidate should discuss the dissertation’s report structure upon completion of the dissertation proposal approval process. Although format plans may change, the candidate, chair and committee need to be in agreement.

Accepted Formats
The PhD in Nursing Science Program supports the following dissertation structures: book style and compendium style. Reports that are multi-media, graphic or in non-print format will not be accepted. If another style is proposed, the student and the chair must consult with the program director before proceeding. If the director finds the proposal of merit, they will refer the proposal to the PhD Program Executive Committee for final approval.

Book Structure
This structure is often referred to as “traditional.” At a minimum the following chapters are required: (1) introduction (including problem, significance of the problem, study purpose and research questions and/or hypotheses), (2) theoretical framework and previous research guiding the study, (3) methodology, (4) results and (5) conclusions and implications.

Compendium Structure
At a minimum the following chapters are required: (1) introduction (including an overview of the area of science and the significance of the problem to be studied, study purpose, research questions and/or hypotheses if not explicated in other sections of the report, the theoretical framework and previous research guiding the study should be included), (2) at least two submitted for publication manuscripts that detail significance and/or methods, analyses, results and implications and recommendations of the study that attempted to answer the questions listed in the introductory chapter and (3) implications for the research trajectory of the student and the field. The number of papers and chapters shall be specified by the chair and the committee.

The candidate is responsible for seeking permission from the publisher(s) to include already published/accepted articles for inclusion in the dissertation. The candidate is responsible for indicating to a publisher(s) the intent to include the paper in a dissertation if the paper is placed for review as the dissertation is being completed.

Authorship
No matter what structure is chosen, the student shall be first author of papers stemming from the project as long as such authorship position is in keeping with the standards listed in the current edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association.

- Dissertation defense completion deadline
- Enrollment status and grading during dissertation preparation
- Preparing for the oral defense: when and how to file
- Structure of the oral defense: an overview
- Oral defense presentation strategies
- Graduate School requirements after the oral defense

Dissertation defense completion deadline
The candidate must complete the dissertation and oral defense within four years of advancement to candidacy. With approval of the chair, a candidate may submit a request for a one-year extension to the director of the PhD program. If approved, a recommendation will be sent to the Graduate School for final approval. If an extension period has expired without successful dissertation completion, the candidate will be dismissed. Readmission to candidacy after dismissal requires a program faculty approved application for Graduate School admission. The Graduate School or the committee may require that an additional qualifying examination and/or additional course work are conditions of the new admission.

Enrollment status and grading during dissertation report preparation
Enrollment in Dissertation Course: NRSC 9999
Continuous registration is required of all full-time degree candidates. Responsibility to maintain registration rests with each student. All students working full-time toward the PhD must register each semester. Candidates must enroll for a total of 6 dissertation credits which can be spread out among several semesters. When the required 72 hours of course work has been completed, registration for dissertation research (NRSC 9999) without hourly credit applies. This reflects full-time effort on research and confers full-time candidate status. The minimum tuition of $200 is charged. This grants full candidate privileges and the opportunity to apply for deferral of student loans.

Submission of Grades for Dissertation Course: NRSC 9999
To ensure that performance and progress is documented, a grade of ‘S’ (Satisfactory) or ‘U’ (Unsatisfactory) for each semester in which the candidate is enrolled in dissertation coursework (NRSC 9999) will be submitted. A grade of ‘U’ shall result in the candidate’s placement on probation. A second grade of ‘U’ at any subsequent point in the dissertation process shall result in dismissal.

The following policies will be strictly enforced regarding grading during the dissertation phase of the program:

1. At the beginning of each semester in which a candidate is registered for dissertation research hours, the candidate and chair shall complete an agreement about the semester’s objectives, activities and resulting products. It is based on the formats used for independent study and the research practicum.

2. Failure to fulfill satisfactorily the objectives shall result in a grade of “U”. The dissertation chairperson shall have the discretion to determine if some objectives could not be met because of situations outside of the candidate’s control. In such a case, a grade of “S” should be awarded. When in doubt about a grade, the dissertation chair should consult with the PhD program director.

3. A grade of “U” shall result in the candidate’s placement on probation.

4. A second grade of “U” at any subsequent point in the dissertation process shall result in dismissal.
Preparing for the oral defense: when and how to file

1. The Intent to Graduate Form must be submitted by the student to the Graduate School at the beginning of the semester in which the student expects to receive a degree. The student must submit to the PhD Program Office who will forward to the Graduate School.

2. The committee meets with the candidate at least once prior to submission of the final draft. The candidate must be aware that multiple revisions of the dissertation report may be necessary and should negotiate a timetable for resubmission of the draft with the committee.

3. When the chair and at least two members of the committee attest to the acceptability of the dissertation report, the candidate may begin preparing for the defense. This preparation includes: filing (chair and committee members’ attestation of acceptability of dissertation), determining content, developing visual aides, and practicing answers to potential questions. At least one month should be allowed for these activities especially considering the program’s mandated four week notification of date filing requirement (see below).

4. No candidate may schedule a defense until at least three members of the committee, one of whom must be the chair, have approved the final written report of the dissertation. Final is defined as all chapters of the dissertation are complete and that all major editing is done. Minor formatting changes may be requested by the Graduate School after the dissertation defense.

5. The form, Request to Schedule Dissertation Defense, must be filed at least four weeks prior to the desired schedule date by the student and chair. At this time, the candidate and chair should discuss room, timing and other details for the defense.

6. After receiving approval from the student’s Ph.D. committee chair, a student may conduct the oral
dissertation defense using distance education technology (e.g., Scopia or Skype for Business) instead of being onsite. Regardless of whether the dissertation defense is conducted onsite or using distance education technology, it is the student’s responsibility to coordinate a date and time with the Ph.D. committee.

7. After the director of the PhD program approves and signs the form, the PhD Program Office will forward it to the Graduate School. The oral defense may not proceed until final approval is received from the Graduate School.

8. At the time of filing, the candidate must present the PhD Program Office with an abstract for distribution at the defense. The candidate is expected to use the abstract format required by the Graduate School.
Approved Onsite Oral Dissertation Defense
Students who conduct the dissertation defense onsite must:
   a. Reserve a conference room in advance (prior to submitting the form, Request to Schedule Final Defense) by contacting the Ph.D. Program Office. Note: 140 FH is the preferred room for dissertation defenses since the videotaping equipment is already set-up in this room
   b. Submit the form, Request to Schedule Final Defense, to the Ph.D. Program Office at least four weeks in advance
   c. Determine if any committee members will be offsite and coordinate technology requirements with the Ph.D. Office at least five days prior to the dissertation defense

Approved Distance Oral Dissertation Defense
Students who conduct the dissertation defense using distance education technology must:
   a. Submit the form, Request to Schedule Final Defense, to the Ph.D. Program Office at least four weeks in advance
   b. Notify the Ph.D. Program Office at least three weeks in advance in order to reserve the necessary equipment, licenses and other needed arrangements
   c. If a committee member is also offsite, have them schedule the dissertation time on his/her agenda to be on the telephone at least 20 minutes before you will begin speaking. This will allow for any technical problems to be worked out. The committee member can set the phone down and do something else until you begin. Your live audience will have to leave in an hour and it is vital that they are present for questions.

The Ph.D. Office will reserve the:
   ✓ Conference room
   ✓ Polycom camera cart
   ✓ Licenses in the public folder calendar
   ✓ Speaker phone (back-up in the event of Internet problems)
Structure of the oral defense
The two parts of the defense are: (1) the candidate’s presentation and response to questions and (2) the final, private oral examination conducted by the chair and committee.

The presentation and response to questions takes place within a one hour period. This first part of the defense is open to the university community and is publicized by the Graduate School and the School of Nursing. Doctoral faculty is expected to attend. The candidate shall present for no more than 25 minutes allowing for 35 minutes of open questioning from the committee and the audience. See “Content Requirements for the Dissertation Defense” for more information.

The second portion of the defense takes place immediately following the public defense. The committee may ask the candidate about the key points raised in the public defense and, if so, how these will influence the candidate’s interpretation of the findings and his/her future directions for research and any other questions relevant to the criteria for graduation. The committee will then ask the candidate to leave the room while the committee considers (1) the candidate’s ability to present the dissertation findings and answer questions and (2) responses in the private session. The chair will request a formal motion from the committee regarding whether or not the student successfully defended the dissertation. The committee will then vote on the motion. The chair will then invite the student into the room and the committee’s decision will be announced.

Given the scientific nature of the defense and its evaluative role, social gestures such as cards are not encouraged until after this announcement. The School of Nursing will provide the graduate with a copy of the defense publicity poster after receiving the Results of the Dissertation Defense Form which must be signed by the chair and members.

The Results of the Dissertation Defense Form must be submitted to the Ph.D. Program Office and signed by all members of the committee. The Ph.D. Office will forward to the Graduate School. This form is available at:

http://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/

Two weeks before the public presentation, present the entire defense to your chair. This will allow ample time if revisions are needed. Your chair may also ask others, often committee members, be present.
Oral Defense Presentation Strategies

Visual aides/handouts

1. PowerPoint access is provided for every defense. For other AV support, contact the PhD Program Office at the time of filing. Please see “Tips for the Presentation” below regarding the use of visual aides.

2. If handouts are to be used, arrangements for these must also be made with the PhD Program Office at time of filing.

3. The candidate must provide a copy of the PowerPoint presentation to each committee member prior to the defense.

Preparing to answers questions

1. The candidate should consider what questions might be asked. Fellow students and the chair are often helpful in thinking of these. The candidate, however, must develop answers to these questions independently.

Tips for the presentation

The following are not an exhaustive list of everything one should do for the defense but are hints to avoid the most common mistakes during the defense.

1. Prepare your attire and try it on well before the date. You may need alterations or repairs. Wear professional but comfortable shoes. Your appearance should convey your status as a serious researcher ready to take a place in the world of science.

2. Familiarize yourself with the presentation technology.

3. Do not rely solely on your PowerPoint slides for the presentation.

4. Use the PowerPoint slides to call attention to the major point you are trying to make.

5. NEVER read your PowerPoint slides line by line.

6. Do not provide handouts of all PowerPoint slides. Use handouts to clarify data, models and complex information.

7. Remember the defense is being taped. Stay within the area the technician showed you.

8. Practice your presentation but do not attempt to memorize a speech or to read from a prepared text. You need to demonstrate your mastery of the project and your ability to talk about implications.

9. Use the active voice in presentation and on any print/PowerPoint material.

10. Prepare sample questions and practice answering them. Note: Non-committee faculty will not participate in “pre-defense” question sessions. To do so would negate the purpose of the defense. Your chair may assist you in considering potential questions.

11. Learn where your body and face are in relation to the audience and what they see. Use a mirror to accomplish this during your practice. Keep your head up. Do not talk to the PowerPoint screen. ALWAYS look at your audience.
12. Huge correlation and/or regression tables are not easy to read even with highlighting. Design the Power Points to indicate only those statistics about which you are going to speak; i.e., those that were significant or were expected to be but weren’t.

13. The suggested pacing is:
   • Significance and gaps in literature (5 minutes)
   • Questions and methods (6 minutes)
   • Results (7 minutes)
   • Implications and next steps (7 minutes)

   Pacing will, of course, vary by project but the emphasis needs to be on findings, implications and next steps.
Graduate School requirements after the oral defense

1. The Results of the Dissertation Defense Form available at [http://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/](http://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/) signed by the committee members and the program director must be forwarded immediately to the PhD Program Office who will forward to the Graduate School.

   The Results of the Dissertation Defense Form must be submitted to the Ph.D. Program Office and signed by all members of the committee. The Ph.D. Office will forward to the Graduate School. This form is available at:

   [http://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/](http://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/)

2. After obtaining signed approval by the committee, the candidate must obtain final dissertation format approval from the Graduate School. Make an appointment with Liz Leis, 322-3934. This may require several meeting with the format editor. Refer to Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines in making this final format check. These are summarized in General Guidelines for the Final Dissertation Report. Most candidates find it helpful to make this contact as soon as the committee approves the written document.

3. The candidate then provides (a) two hard copies of the approved dissertations with the original signature of not less than a majority of the PhD committee (b) two hard copies of the abstract of no more than 350 words. The copies of the title pages and abstracts must be printed on acid free, white, quality bond paper of at least 25% cotton content and 20 pound weight. The chair must sign the abstracts. These materials must be given to the Graduate School no later than two weeks before the end of the term in which the degree is confirmed with the exception of spring term. A candidate who expects to graduate in May must submit the materials by the date listed by the Graduate School. Students who have chosen to submit electronically must have provided all documents to the Web site by the date specified by the Graduate School. After revising the title page for the electronic format and conversion to a PDF file, the candidate submits the documents to [http://etd.library.vanderbilt.edu](http://etd.library.vanderbilt.edu).

4. The PhD Program Office must also be provided with one signed, hard copy of the title page and abstract as described in item 2.

5. No degree will be awarded until all fees and all forms are submitted to the Graduate School.
Graduation / Commencement

Overview and Checklist
The university holds its annual Commencement ceremony following the spring semester. Degree candidates must have completed all curriculum requirements and have passed all prescribed examinations by the published deadlines to participate in the ceremony. A student completing degree requirements in the summer or fall semester will be invited to participate in Commencement the following May. However, the semester in which the degree was actually earned will be the one recorded on the diploma and the student’s permanent record. Students unable to participate in the graduation ceremony will receive their diplomas by mail.

There is a VU Commencement Web site that contains necessary information regarding Commencement activities and dates (http://www.vanderbilt.edu/commencement/). The Ph.D. Program Office also communicates directly with graduating students regarding Commencement activities.

Checklist Leading to Graduation
Students and their dissertation chair(s) need to complete all of the following checklist items:

- Successful completion of all required course work, qualifying examination (written and oral), and a dissertation (including a public defense)
- Intent to Graduate Form
- Results of Qualifying Exam Form
- Dissertation Proposal Acceptance Form
- Request to Schedule Final Defense Form
- Results of Final Dissertation Form
- Signed Dissertation Title Page
- Dissertation Abstract Form
- Dissertation formatted, approved and uploaded
- Payments made/Graduate School Pay Form
- Regalia ordered (if attending Commencement)

Intent to Graduate
The Intent to Graduate Form must be submitted by the student to the Graduate School at the beginning of the semester in which the student expects to receive a degree. The student also must send a copy to the Ph.D. Program Office.

The Intent to Graduate Form must be submitted to the Ph.D. Program Office at the beginning of the semester in which the student expects to receive a degree. The Ph.D. Office will forward to the Graduate School. Students need to check the Graduate School Web site for deadline dates and forms by going to:

http://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/
NUTS AND BOLTS: PRACTICAL INFORMATION YOU NEED TO KNOW

Access to VUSN Building
The main doors automatically unlock during normal business hours:
Monday–Friday: 7:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Weekends: when classes/events are scheduled

Arranging Meetings with Your Ph.D. Committee
Students are responsible for arranging meeting dates and times with their Ph.D. committee. This includes regularly scheduled meetings or dates for events such as your oral qualifying examination and dissertation defense. Students should determine frequency and method of these critical times: preparing for the oral qualifying exam, dissertation proposal defense, during data collection as well as dissertation writing.

Block Sessions
Each semester, attendance at all portions of the Ph.D. block session is mandatory for enrollment (full or part-time)* within that semester unless there is an extenuating circumstance that prohibits attendance. Students must contact the program director immediately (via e-mail or by phone) regarding the nature of the emergency. Students who fail to comply are subject to dismissal. An extenuating circumstance is one that is serious in nature and could not have been foreseen but that interferes with the student’s attendance for all or part of the block session. Examples include: sudden serious illness or injury, death in the immediate family, military deployment. Examples of circumstances that are not considered extenuating are: foreign vacations, conflicting work schedules, honeymoons. Note: these are only examples.

*Note: Part-time students must attend all block intensives for the first two years in-person. After that, part-time students have the option of either attending required classes’ in-person or at a distance via current VUSN PhD technology options. If you decide to participate at a distance, you must notify the Ph.D. Office at least one month prior to block so the appropriate equipment can be reserved.

Campus Security: VU Police Department
(615) 322-2745
http://police.vanderbilt.edu/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Phone Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emergency</td>
<td>911 from any Vanderbilt phone or (615) 421-1911 from any cell phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Emergency</td>
<td>(615) 322-2745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking Escorts</td>
<td>(615) 421-8888</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Computing and Technology Requirements
Managing information is a central role for nursing at all levels. The science of finding, organizing, sharing, and adding to information – especially with the assistance of technology – is an essential area at VUSN. Consequently, expectations regarding student computer skills are increasing at VUSN. You will be required to use the Internet when you are away from school buildings to communicate with faculty and other students and to access learning resources. You will use e-mail, on-line discussion boards, and file sharing as an integral part of your classroom, clinical, and research experience. You must have the computer skills to negotiate the World Wide Web; access all Websites and library resources required to successfully complete course and dissertation work; download, move and copy files; and utilize word-processing and spreadsheet software.

Laptop Computer
Vanderbilt School of Nursing has wireless networking capabilities throughout the school. The school’s computing environment is predominately Microsoft Windows based. The Ph.D. program requires that you have a contemporary laptop computer. Expectations for student home and/or laptop computers, software and other
technology requirements are located at:
http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/tools/techinfo.html
http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/tools/techtable.html

Contacting a Faculty Member
Students are encouraged to stay in close contact with their faculty advisers and individual faculty who are teaching specific courses. The faculty is available to help with concerns relating to course content, examinations, and assignments. Faculty is eager to be of assistance to students, but is also involved in research and practice. Therefore, it is important that students make an appointment to see a faculty member. You may contact a faculty member by e-mail or voice mail to arrange an appointment. Please do not plan to just drop by their office unless a faculty member has indicated this is appropriate.

Copies/Printing & Course Reference Materials
The VUSN Frist Nursing Informatics Center (FNIC) student computer lab is equipped with 27 Dell Precision T1650 computers, three laser printers, and two scanners. Use of FNIC labs is restricted to VUSN students, staff, and faculty. Laser printing of school-related assignments is free of charge for the first 500 prints per semester; thereafter prints may be purchased on a Commodore card for five (5) cents a copy. However, students are charged to use the copier. There is a copy machine with an automatic document feeder for student use in Room 240C Frist Hall. It accepts coins only ($1 bills can be changed in the snack vending machine). Copies cost ten cents each (subject to change as VUSN evaluates student usage). There are other printer/copiers available for student use at the Eskind Biomedical Library. Eskind printing costs 5 cents per side (black and white) and 25 cents per side (color) and requires a Commodore card. Eskind has a scanner and 3 printer/copier/scanners (2 black and white, 1 color) available for student use; there is no charge for using the scanners to copy course reference material.

Dress Code
In order to promote a professional work environment, all students and faculty are required to adhere to the VUSN Dress Code policy.

The VUSN Dress Code
1. Apparel must be clean, neat, and in good condition
2. Persons should be clean, maintaining appropriate level of personal hygiene
3. The following apparel is considered inappropriate:
   ▪ Torn, ripped, or frayed clothing
   ▪ Tight, sheer, or revealing clothing
   ▪ Off the shoulder blouses, sweaters or dresses; any blouse, sweater, shirt that does not cover the entire midriff area
   ▪ Halter tops, crop tops, or spaghetti strap shirts
   ▪ Visible body piercing with the exception of ears
   ▪ Visible body art

Violations of the Professional Dress policy should be reported to the person’s supervisor. Disciplinary action, including Performance Improvement Counseling may be taken for violations of the policy.

Editorial Assistance
Editorial assistance is available to students preparing papers for classes, qualifying examination papers, dissertation drafts, manuscripts for publication, and grant proposals. Students may originate a request for assistance by contacting Dr. Minnick who will help determine an appropriate resource.
E-mail
E-mail service is provided to all enrolled students. Because information is communicated frequently by electronic mail, students are responsible for checking electronic mail on a daily basis during the academic year. VUMC Outlook Web Mail Access and Help VUMC Outlook Web Mail (https://e-mail.mc.vanderbilt.edu/) is the e-mail system the School of Nursing uses. Use your VUnetID for access. For questions about VUMC Web mail call the VUMC Help Desk at 343-4357 (343-HELP). You may also contact Jerry Murley (343-3300), Ryan McNew (343-3046), Scot Loerch (343-5623).

Financial Information

Vanderbilt Tuition and Other Fees
Tuition and fees are set annually by the Board of Trust and are subject to review and change without further notice. Payment of tuition - and all other charges incurred prior to or at registration - must be received by certain deadlines for the fall and spring semesters. All charges incurred after classes begin are due and payment must be received in full by the last business day of the month in which they are billed to the student.

See the Graduate School Web site Fees at: http://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/

For additional information about payment of tuition, fees, e-billing, and student accounts see the Graduate School Catalog located at: http://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/

Financial Aid/Assistance
The Dean of VUSN is committed to supporting Ph.D. student education in the School of Nursing and works with the director of the Ph.D. program, students, faculty, and the university to identify mechanisms and sources of financial support for students. Availability of VUSN funds to support Ph.D. students is determined annually by the director of the Ph.D. program in conjunction with the VUSN Dean. Approval of funds for students is made in consideration of need and with evidence of acceptable academic performance.

Students, in concert with their faculty adviser and the director of the Ph.D. program, are encouraged to explore all avenues of financial support. Sources outside the School of Nursing include Honor Fellowship Funds and Dissertation Enhancement Grants available through the Graduate School. Full-time students are encouraged to apply for pre-doctoral funding through various external agencies such as NIH, specialty organizations and foundations. Additional support for dissertation work and educational expenses may be available from other foundations through educational loan programs and by assignment to research projects. Students who need more financial aid than what is provided by the School of Nursing may apply for loans through the Federal Direct Loan Program. In order to be considered for Federal Loan programs, students must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the Vanderbilt Nursing Graduate/Professional Financial Aid and Scholarship Application (First Year or 2nd Year/Returning). Questions about financial aid should be directed to: Kristie Smith, Director of Student Financial Services, Vanderbilt School of Nursing at (615) 322-8986 or Kristie.l.smith@vanderbilt.edu

Nurse Faculty Loan Program
The Nurse Faculty Loan Program (NFLP) of the Department of Health and Human Services provides a loan forgiveness program to full or part-time nursing students who meet the qualifications of the loan. Students must be a permanent U.S. resident. The NFLP provides financial support for tuition and other fees associated with advanced nursing degrees for individuals interested in pursuing a faculty role upon graduation. NFLP borrowers are limited to a 12 month timeframe to establish employment as full-time nurse faculty at a school of nursing following graduation from the program. Once students with this loan have begun working as a full-time nurse faculty member after graduation, 85% of the loan will be forgiven over the four year period. The amount of money that is forgiven is earned each year that the student teaches as a nurse faculty member. If a student
ceases to be employed full-time or terminates employment as a nurse faculty at a school of nursing, the unpaid loan balance will bear interest at the prevailing market rate. Students who are awarded the loan can serve their four year faculty requirement at any school of nursing in the country.

Money from the grant helps VUSN set up a program to offer a maximum loan of $35,000 per academic year to currently enrolled PhD nursing students. Those who apply for the loan will use the money to pay for tuition, books, and fees associated with their educational program and sign an agreement to commit to teaching for four years upon graduation at the location of their choice and hiring. Students in the loan forgiveness program will be required to take two education courses to prepare them to teach nursing in their specialty area. Costs of these courses will be covered by the loan.

If you have questions about this program, contact: Kristie Smith, VUSN Student Financial Services Director, at (615) 322-8986 or email Kristie.l.smith@vanderbilt.edu.

Internal Funding Mechanisms and Procedures
There are multiple funding mechanisms within Vanderbilt designed to support PhD students. Both VUSN and the Graduate School are committed to supporting students for activities such as travel to regional and national conferences when the student is acting as a school representative in a research competition, dissertation research and other non-tuition expenses. Monetary support will be determined at the time of the award.

The following is a brief description of current internal funding sources as well as a chart outlining when and how to apply to each funding mechanism.

Graduate School
- Travel Grants
  Students can apply for one award of up to $500 per budget year (July 1-June 30) for domestic travel or international travel. After completing at least one academic year, student may apply for a travel grant and are allowed a total of three travel grants for their entire tenure at Vanderbilt.

  - Dissertation Enhancement Grants
    To apply for this grant, you must be working full-time on your dissertation. This grant is designed to add a new dimension, additional depth or enhance your dissertation. If awarded, the grant must be used within a six-month period following the date of the award. The maximum award is $2,000 (the Graduate School provides one-half and the PhD Program Office provides the remaining one-half).

VUSN PhD Program Office
Students may request funds for travel to present their research at regional/national/international conferences to either supplement a Graduate School travel grant or if you exceeded the Graduate School travel grant limitation for the year.

CTSA
Another potential source of support for research projects is the CTSA, a time limited federal research award made to VU for translational science. Information about this program is available through STARBrite on the VUMC research portal. You should work with your adviser to determine if this is an option for you.

VUSN Iota Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International
The purpose of these awards is to support active members of the VUSN Iota Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International in their professional development and to foster participation in nursing research and scholarly activity. Examples of this include, but are not limited to, support for travel for dissemination or attendance at professional conferences to network with colleagues. In addition, this award could be used to support participant payments, buy materials or equipment needed for research projects or as indicated by applicants.
VUSN PhD Student Research Award
The VUSN PhD Student Research Award was established by Graduate Faculty and program alumni to assist students in meeting non-tuition related expenses (e.g., textbooks, dissertation costs and travel to scientific meetings) incurred while acquiring their PhD in Nursing Science at Vanderbilt University. The fund is administered by the PhD Funding Subcommittee including award decisions which are made independently from program administrators after peer review by committee members. The amount of funding available for awards will vary over time. Award decisions (full or a portion of the requested amount) will be made by a majority vote of the subcommittee members after considering the amount of available funds and the quality of the application. Students may be asked to revise and re-submit an application one time at the committee’s request. All committee discussions regarding funding are confidential; however, the subcommittee will send an annual report to the PhD Program Executive Council (i.e., PPEC) and to all program alumni regarding applications that were funded. While all student’s may apply for funding, priority will be given to students who: (a) have completed course work (b) are requesting funds to complete activities directly related to timely completion of their dissertation and (c) have not previously received funding from the Graduate School or VUSN PhD Student Research Award. Applications will not be considered for retrospective funding requests.

Student’s wishing to request funding must follow the procedures outlined below.

Eligibility Requirements for Students
1. Enrolled in the PhD in Nursing Science Program as either a full-time or part-time student
2. In good academic standing as defined by the PhD program
3. Submit written support from their faculty adviser and/or chair
4. Show documentation they applied to other funding sources available at Vanderbilt, if applicable (e.g., Graduate School Travel Grant, Graduate School Dissertation Enhancement Grant, CTSA) and have been denied full support.

Procedures for Students
1. Complete the VUSN PhD Student Research Award application
2. Provide a letter of support from the faculty adviser and/or chair
3. Submit the application and letter of support a minimum of 60 days prior to the date funds are needed
4. If funding is awarded, sign a Repayment Agreement form that will be enforced only if there is a failure to produce the identified deliverables (e.g., published abstract from a scientific meeting, receipts for textbooks, documentation of committee member recruitment) within the time frame indicated on the application
5. If funded state, “This work was funded by a grant from the Vanderbilt University School of Nursing PhD Student Research Award,” on all manuscripts or presentations support by this award

The VUSN PhD Student Research Award
Application is available online at
http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/pdf/supportfundapp.pdf
# Internal Funding Mechanisms/Resources and Procedures for Current Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Mechanism</th>
<th>Purpose/Description</th>
<th>When to Apply</th>
<th>How to Apply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Graduate School Travel Grant</strong></td>
<td>Travel to regional/national conferences to present research</td>
<td>At least 2 weeks before trip</td>
<td>Complete Graduate Student Travel Grant Application <a href="http://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/">http://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/</a> Submit your completed application to the PhD Office for processing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students can apply for one award of up to $500 per budget year (July 1-June 30) for domestic travel or international travel. After completing at least one academic year, student may apply for a travel grant and are allowed a total of three travel grants for their entire tenure at Vanderbilt.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VUSN PhD Program Office</strong></td>
<td>Travel to regional/national conferences to present research</td>
<td>At least 2 weeks before trip if travel will exceed the Graduate School’s limit (see above) or at least 4 weeks before trip if you were already awarded a Graduate School travel grant for the budget year</td>
<td>If Requesting Supplemental Funds to a Graduate School Travel Grant: Email your request to the PhD Office and include/attach: Completed Graduate School Travel Grant application Purpose of trip Name of Meeting/Conference Location Dates Total Estimated Expenses Additional Amount Requesting If Requesting Funds Independently of a Graduate School Travel Grant: Email your request to the PhD Office and include/attach: Abstract Purpose of trip Name of Meeting/Conference Location Dates of Attendance Estimated Expenses by category: Air Fare Hotel Taxi/shuttle Registration Fee The PhD Office will determine amount of funds available and forward to director for consideration; PhD Office will notify student via e-mail of funding decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dissertation Enhancement Grant</strong></td>
<td>To add a new dimension or additional breadth to</td>
<td>February and October</td>
<td>Complete Dissertation Enhancement Grant Application <a href="http://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/">http://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### (Graduate School)
Your dissertation research

Maximum award $2,000 (Graduate School provides one-half and PhD Program Office provides remaining one-half)

You must have passed your QE and had your dissertation proposal approved

Submit your completed application to the PhD Office for processing

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<table>
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<th>How to Apply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CTSA (VUMC)</td>
<td>Dissertation research project</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Discuss with your faculty adviser/chair to determine if this is a viable option. If yes: Go to STARBrite VUMC research portal (requires VUNET ID) to access VICTR resources: <a href="https://victr.vanderbilt.edu/pub/">https://victr.vanderbilt.edu/pub/</a> Dr. Mion is the VUSN representative. Contact her if you anticipate requesting ≥$2,000 for her guidance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VUSN Iota Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International</td>
<td>Professional development, nursing research and scholarly activity You must be a member of the chapter; priority is given to applicants attending STTI sanctioned events</td>
<td>Submission Deadlines: March 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;, June 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;, Sept 30&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, Dec 31&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Download the application at: <a href="https://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/organizations/STT/index.html">https://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/organizations/STT/index.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VUSN PhD Student Research Award</td>
<td>Non-tuition related expenses such as: Dissertation research Travel to scientific meetings Textbooks</td>
<td>After applying to the following funding mechanisms (if applicable): Graduate School travel grant Graduate School Dissertation Enhancement Grant CTSA funding VUSN Iota PhD Program Office</td>
<td>Complete VUSN PhD Student Research Award <a href="http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/forms.html">http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/forms.html</a> Submit your completed application to the PhD Office for processing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Student Accounts**
Vanderbilt University Office of Student Accounts is the centralized billing and collection point for student accounts.

The primary function of the Student Accounts office is to issue bills, receive payments, as well as provide the means to help understand some basic aspects of an account at Vanderbilt. Students are strongly encouraged to visit the Student Accounts Web site which contains important information regarding deadlines and payment options, including online payment by going to: [http://www.vanderbilt.edu/stuaccts/](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/stuaccts/).

Vanderbilt exclusively uses secure electronic billing (e-bills) for student account charges. **Students are responsible for granting access to parents, guardians, or other payers who should receive email billing notifications.** Paper invoices are no longer printed and mailed. Any month in which there is activity on the student’s account, an e-bill will be generated and an email notification sent to the student’s Vanderbilt email address, as well as to the email addresses of others they have invited (and have completed the activation process). The email notification will have the subject line “Your New Vanderbilt E-Bill Is Now Available” and will contain a link to the secure e-bill website.

All students must complete and submit a Student Account Agreement Form regardless of funding. Students may now complete this form online by going to: [http://www.vanderbilt.edu/stuaccts/graduate/forms.php](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/stuaccts/graduate/forms.php). Student registration is subject to cancellation without a Student Account Agreement Form on file in the Office of Student Accounts.

**Leave of Absence**
Once admitted to the Ph.D. in Nursing Science program, students are expected to maintain continuous enrollment in the VU Graduate School. In the event that a student needs a period of time away from the program, the student must submit a written request for a leave of absence to the director of the Ph.D. program by completing the form, *Request for Leave of Absence*. The director of the Ph.D. program reviews the request and meets with the student as needed to discuss the reasons for the requested leave and to identify strategies for assuring the student is able to continue progression for completion of program. The director will forward the request to the Dean of the Graduate School who must approve an authorized leave of absence. A leave of absence is granted for a maximum of one year.

As noted in *The Graduate School Catalog*, leaves of absence are granted for a maximum of one year. Students who do not have an authorized leave of absence and do not maintain continuous enrollment in graduate courses are dismissed from the Graduate School and must apply for reinstatement. In addition, students applying for leave should take into consideration that under normal circumstances the granting of a leave does not prolong maximum time available for completion of degree requirements.

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A student wishing to apply for a leave of absence from the doctoral program must fill out a *Request for Leave of Absence Form*, which must be submitted to the Ph.D. Program Office. The final decision will be submitted to the Graduate School. The *Request for Leave of Absence Form* is available at: [http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/pdf/reqloa.pdf](http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/pdf/reqloa.pdf)

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**Graduate School Policy on Parental Leave**
This policy is applicable to all students enrolled in the Graduate School and establishes minimum standards for parental leave for graduate students. Departments may offer greater accommodations as are warranted by the
individual circumstances of the student.

**Eligibility:** All students enrolled full-time in the Graduate School and supported by funding from either internal or external sources are covered by this policy. This includes students with funding through stipends, such as training grants or service-free fellowships, and students compensated for services, such as teaching assistants or research assistants. Students supported by external funding sources may be subject to additional rules of the granting agency regarding parental leave. Students are not employees and thus are not subject to the provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

**Period of Leave:** Prior to and/or following childbirth or adoption of an infant, the primary caregiver (whether mother or father) will be allowed to take six weeks of parental leave. During this period, the student’s current stipend, and, if applicable, funding for health insurance and tuition, will be continued without interruption. The student’s enrollment status will be continued during this period, as well.

**Limitations:** If both parents are Vanderbilt graduate students, only one may take parental leave. The parental leave provided by this policy may be taken during the semester in which the child is born or adopted, or during any subsequent semester that begins no later than six months after the birth or adoption.

**Advance notice and approval:** The student must request a parental leave from her or his departmental chair, through the Director of Graduate Studies, at least three months prior to the beginning of the anticipated leave or, in the case of adoption, as soon as the adoption is confirmed. The request must be made in writing and, once approved by the department chair and Director of Graduate Studies, forwarded to the school dean’s office for approval and notification of the Graduate School. Students should also make appropriate arrangements as needed with their course instructors to make up any missed coursework during the leave period.

**Documentation upon return:** As soon as possible, the student must provide her or his departmental chair with (a) a copy of a birth certificate or, (b) in the case of adoption, written certification of child adoption from the adoption agency.

**Extended leave:** Students who wish or need to take a longer period of leave, without continuation of funding, may request a leave of absence for up to one year through the established policy of the Graduate School. Graduate students who are not receiving funding through Vanderbilt should request a leave of absence for childbirth or adoption if they anticipate an interruption in progress toward their degree.

**Lockers (Just-in-time)**
Just-in-time lockers are available for students while on campus for various student-related activities (e.g., attending block intensives, meeting with faculty and/or working on research projects). Lockers are located on the 3rd floor of Frist Hall and assigned on a first come, first serve basis. Upon arriving at VUSN, see Sally Tadrous (1st floor GH) sally.tadrous@vanderbilt.edu (615) 343-7721. If Sally is unavailable, see Ellen Smogur (atrium) ellen.smogur@vanderbilt.edu (615) 322-4400.

**OAK**
OAK (Online Access to Knowledge) is a Web-based course management system used at Vanderbilt University that is powered by the Blackboard Learning System. It allows students to access course-related materials, such as course syllabi, assignments, handouts, and slide presentations, via the Internet. OAK can be accessed from http://oak.vanderbilt.edu/ or via Quick Links to OAK (Blackboard) on all VUSN Web pages. Use your VUnetID to access this program.

**Parking**
Distance students who will only be on campus during the required face-to-face block sessions and need a
parking space have the following options:
Use the automated pay stations located at Wesley Place Garage (2043 Scarritt Place) or Terrace Place Garage (21st & Terrace Avenue). Daily coin box rate is $10.00/day on weekdays and $5.00/day on Saturday and Sunday. The most convenient garage is Wesley Place Garage which is located across the street from the School of Nursing. Additional assistance or questions should be directed to Vanderbilt University Parking Services at (615) 322-2554.

Students who live nearby: Those who plan on using the resources available at Vanderbilt beyond the face-to-face block sessions may purchase a monthly parking permit from VUMC Parking & Transportation Services. You would need to visit the Parking Permit Office which is located on the Level G of the East Garage (across from the hospital). Present your VUMC ID badge and your current state vehicle registration. Student parking permits are $32.00 per month and must be prepaid with cash, check or credit card. There is also a $5.00 gate card deposit.

Students who are already Vanderbilt employees may continue to use their valid access card for that garage.

Note: Parking Lot 7 (in front of VUSN) is restricted to those having a Zone 2 permit. All parking lots on campus require a parking permit at all times (24/7). This includes weekends and after business hours.

**Professional Behavior in Class/Conference Calls**
Students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner while attending classes, including online classes and/or conference calls. Appropriate professional behavior includes refraining from eating, gum chewing, use of keyboard/computer, and any other excessive noise that distracts from the class.

**Religious Holidays**
It is the policy of Vanderbilt to make every reasonable effort to allow members of the university community to observe their religious holidays without academic penalty. Absence from classes or examinations for religious reasons does not relieve students from responsibility for any part of the course work required during the period of absence. Students who expect to miss classes, examinations, or any other assignments as a consequence of their religious observance should be provided with a reasonable alternative opportunity to complete such academic responsibilities. It is the obligation of students to provide faculty with reasonable notice of the dates of religious holidays on which they will be absent, preferably at the beginning of the semester. Students who are absent on days of examinations or class assignments should be offered an opportunity to make up the work without penalty (if they have previously arranged to be absent), unless it can be demonstrated that a makeup opportunity would constitute an unreasonable burden on a member of the faculty. Should disagreement arise over what constitutes an unreasonable burden or any element of this policy, parties involved should consult the department chair, or, in schools without department chairs, the dean of the school.

**Reporting Your Awards and Achievements: Student Achievement Record Survey (STARS)**
Students will be asked to complete a Student Achievement Record Survey (STARS) every semester they are enrolled. The survey is to be used to record publications, presentations, awards (inside and outside Vanderbilt), appointments and editorships. Announcements (and follow up reminders) will be sent via email with a link to the STARS survey for that semester beginning a few weeks before the deadline for participation. If there are no activities to report for that semester, students do not need to log in to the survey and are asked to please disregard the reminders. STARS offers students a convenient way to register and track their accomplishments and offers program administrators access to important metrics about student activities and achievements.
Research Posters
The VUSN Graphics Department supports students in many ways including poster design and printing. Contact the VUSN Graphics Dept. as soon as you are accepted for a poster presentation. VUSN will not pay for the return of posters after their exhibition.

R.N. Licensure
R.N. licensure in the State of Tennessee is not a requirement of the program. RN students must hold an unencumbered license in a U.S. jurisdiction. Institutions and agencies other than the School of Nursing may require licensure for students conducting research in their facilities.

Stipends
Students are able to have stipend payments deposited directly to a bank account. Stipend recipients enroll for direct deposit online using the C2HR system. Generally, stipend payments do not have taxes withheld (this can vary for international students). Graduate students who receive stipends are responsible for tracking stipend amounts received relative for income tax reporting. By January 31 of each year, students should receive a letter regarding taxability and forms to expect from Vanderbilt. This information is provided as a service. Tax guidance or assistance is not provided by Vanderbilt. Students are expected to seek the counsel of a qualified tax adviser to determine their individual circumstances. Students are strongly encouraged to visit the following Web site if they are the recipient of a stipend to check the most current tax issues: http://www.vanderbilt.edu/accounting

Students receiving stipends must contact the Ph.D. Program Office who will assist you in completing the required paperwork

Student Work Area
During blocks students have the option of using either the instructional media lab or if you bring your laptop, any of the open areas in the school (e.g., atrium, living room and student lounge). The instructional media lab is located on the 2nd floor of Frist Hall and keeps an updated schedule of its hours at: http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/imc/imc.html.

Student Identification Card
All faculty and students in the medical center and university are required to carry an identification card. ID cards are required to access the School of Nursing after business hours as well as for access to the medical center library and other libraries on campus. The first identification badge is provided at no charge. Replacement cards (lost or stolen) are provided for a fee which is due at the time the new badge is received. Ph.D. Nursing Science students need to obtain their ID cards at:

Vanderbilt Card Services
Medical Center North S-2311
Phone: 615-936-7026
Hours: Mon. – Fri: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Website: www.vanderbilt.edu/cardservices
Closed: 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. for lunch
Travel (Domestic and International)

If you have been approved to travel as a student representing VUSN (e.g., poster presentation), you must comply with all student travel procedures and requirements including but not limited to:

Completing the appropriate sections of the Student Travel Report Form (including Authorization for Travel) **before** you travel.

Immediately upon your return, send the PhD Program Office your original receipts for all transportation (mileage excluded for personal automobile), lodging and registration fees. *Food is excluded*. Receipts must show method of payment and hotel bills must be itemized. Finance requires that you put your original receipts in order. Small receipts must be taped to an 8½ x 11 sheet of paper (no staples or clips). Reports submitted later than 10 days following travel will not be processed for reimbursement.

Student International Travel Policy

If you travel abroad, you must familiarize yourself with Vanderbilt’s Student International Travel Policy: [http://www.vanderbilt.edu/gss/travel/International-travel-registration.php](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/gss/travel/International-travel-registration.php). The policy contains important pre-departure requirements for all students, including information on travel that may be restricted to certain regions. Please note that this policy covers all international travel that takes place under the auspices of the University, including, in some instances, dissertation research and service trips.

**VUnetID**

Your VUnetID is the means by which you identify yourself as a Vanderbilt student to access services on the Vanderbilt University computer network (VUnet). The following essential services require a VUnetID and associated password:

1. **VUMC Outlook Web Mail:** Vanderbilt University Medical Center’s e-mail system
2. **OAK (Blackboard):** Web-based course management system that allows instructors to post course-related information for students online in a secure environment
3. **YES (Your Enrollment Services):** the primary method used by students to register for courses
4. **Access 2 Academic Information:** allows students to access personal academic record information online
5. **VUmail:** the University's e-mail system (VUSN uses VUMC’s e-mail system – see above)
6. **ResNet:** VU network and Internet access for on-campus residents

All enrolled students are eligible for a VUnetID and e-password. You can get these through a self-service process by going to: [http://www.vanderbilt.edu/epassword](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/epassword). Click on the “Get an e-password link” and follow the onscreen instructions. To obtain your VUnet ID, you must enter your name as it appears in your Vanderbilt records (i.e., on your class schedule), omitting any suffix such as "Jr.", your Social Security (or equivalent) number, and your date of birth. You will have the same VUnetID for as long as you remain a student at Vanderbilt. Make a printed copy of your authorized VUnetID and include your password on the same sheet of paper. Store this document in a safe but accessible location.
**VUSN Gift Policy**

**Purpose**
To maintain a professional academic relationship between faculty and students free from any potential or perceived conflict of interest related to student gift giving.

**Policy**
Vanderbilt University School of Nursing faculty is requested to avoid any potential or perceived conflict of interest which may arise when students wish to give gifts to faculty members.

While faculty members recognize normal social amenities between students and their respective faculty mentors, committee members or committee chairs; faculty are committed to providing an environment in which mentoring and faculty/student scholarship activities are valued as an important element of VUSN’s program for which students should feel no obligation to acknowledge through gift giving to faculty members.

Faculty should not receive gifts from students:
- that exceed $50.00 in value
- that are given prior to the close of the final grading period
- that for any reason, in the judgment of the faculty member, create a perceived or actual conflict of interest

**Withdrawal**
Students who intend to withdraw from the university must discuss their decision with their faculty adviser. After doing so, students must notify the director of the Ph.D. program by completing the form, *Withdrawal from Ph.D. Program*, and submitting to the Ph.D. program office for signature. Once signed by a director, the Ph.D. program office will inform the Graduate School and provide the student with a copy. Improper notification may result in loss of credit or other financial penalties.


**Wireless Internet Access at VUSN**
Those who have laptops with wireless cards may access the Internet from the following VUSN locations: VUSN atrium, Frist Hall student lounge and second floor, Annex hallway and sitting area, and the Godchaux Hall living room and first floor. Students who use the VU/VUMC wireless systems will be responsible for installing critical patches on their laptop computers. Please remember that these are University resources for University-related activities. Please refrain from using wireless resources for downloading large files, because such activity will limit availability to others, or for transfer of patient information, for security reasons. (For more information, click on the “Wireless Networking at VUSN” link on the “Tech Tools” web page: [https://www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/nursing/tools/wireless.html](https://www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/nursing/tools/wireless.html)
WEB SITE LINKS

The VUSN PhD Student Handbook, forms and other important resources are located at:
http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/forms.html

Students are asked to also refer to the VU Graduate School Website for additional, important information:
http://www.vanderbilt.edu/gradschool/

The following are some Web sites of interest for PhD students both within Vanderbilt and externally

American Association of Colleges of Nursing
http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Students/index.htm

American Nurses Association
http://nursingworld.org/

Centers for Disease Control
http://www.cdc.gov/

Council for the Advancement of Nursing Science
www.nursingscience.org

Healthy People
http://www.healthypeople.gov

Institutional Review Board (IRB)
http://www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/irb/

International Network for Doctoral Education in Nursing
http://www.umich.edu/~inden/

John F. Kennedy Center for Research on Human Development
http://kc.vanderbilt.edu/kennedy/

National Institutes of Health (NIH)
http://www.nih.gov

National League for Nursing
http://www.nln.org

Peabody College at Vanderbilt University
http://peabody.vanderbilt.edu
VUSN Ph.D. in Nursing Science
http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/phd/welcome.html

Sigma Theta Tau, International
http://www.nursingsociety.org

Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center (VICC)
http://www.vicc.org/

Vanderbilt Student Handbook
http://www.vanderbilt.edu/student_handbook

Vanderbilt Human Resource Services
http://www.vanderbilt.edu/HRS/hrs.htm

Vanderbilt Office of the Dean of Students
http://www.vanderbilt.edu/deanofstudents

Vanderbilt Office of Student Accounts
http://www.vanderbilt.edu/stuaccts/

VUSN Home page
http://www.nursing.vanderbilt.edu/

World Health Organization
http://www.who.int/en/