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College of Nursing

**Graduate  
Student Handbook**

**2009-2011**



College of Nursing

## **Graduate Student Handbook 2009-2011**

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## **II. College of Nursing Overview**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of the College of Nursing Graduate Student Handbook is to facilitate graduate student advising by providing information to students and faculty members. Upon admission to a graduate program at the College of Nursing, each student is assigned a faculty advisor who interacts with the student as a colleague and mentor throughout the student's program of study and provides guidance regarding degree requirements and access to University and College resources. Each student selects a project advisor (or chairperson) who mentors the student while completing the thesis, report, practice inquiry or dissertation. A faculty member may serve as a student's faculty advisor and project advisor or the student may have two different advisors, depending on the needs and interests of the student and the advisor.

### **General Information**

This publication is for informational purposes and is neither a contract nor an offer to contract. The College of Nursing reserves the right to change any provision or requirement at any time without notice. This material supplements the University of Arizona Graduate Catalog and the Schedule of Classes. Additional information may be found at the following web sites:

[The University of Arizona](#)

[The University of Arizona Graduate College](#)

[The University of Arizona College of Nursing](#)

The College of Nursing Graduate Student Handbook is designed as a resource for graduate students and faculty advisors. Included are pertinent policies and procedures of the University of Arizona, Graduate College and the College of Nursing. Much of the information is online; therefore, the actual web sites are listed for the official information on policies and procedures. Where information is not available elsewhere online, a brief description is provided. Additional information can be obtained from the College of Nursing Office of Academic Affairs and the Office of Student Affairs. Students are responsible to know and adhere to all established policies and procedures.

### **Relationship to Other Documents**

The College of Nursing Graduate Student Handbook is intended to be used in conjunction with other University documents such as the University of Arizona Graduate Catalog. Because students are admitted to and graduate from the Graduate College, this related online document contains essential information. Individual colleges within the University of Arizona have the privilege of altering Graduate College policies and procedures when doing so results in the strengthening of an academic program. Therefore, some of the policies and procedures in the College of Nursing Graduate Student Handbook are specific and important to graduate nursing students.

## **Code of Ethics for Nurses**

The College of Nursing faculty subscribes to the American Nurses' Association (ANA) Code of Ethics for Nurses as approved by the ANA House of Delegates in June 2001. Students are expected to learn and perform in accordance with this Code. The nine provisions of the ANA Code of Ethics are available free of charge via the [ANA web site](#).

## **Mission**

The College of Nursing, a professional college of the University of Arizona, is in accord with the purposes of the University and Arizona Health Sciences Center. The purposes of the College are education, research and scholarship, and service. Within the purpose of service is a commitment to practice as an essential element in the discipline of nursing.

The mission of the College is to provide baccalaureate and graduate education, generate and expand nursing knowledge, and provide service to the community.

The College conducts its educational mission by preparing professional nurses who function in various roles related to advancing human health in meeting the health care needs of the people of Arizona and society in general.

The College conducts its research and scholarship mission to generate and expand nursing knowledge by fostering and sustaining programs of research and scholarship directed toward advancing nursing science.

The College conducts its service mission by providing leadership in professional and health-related activities. The service mission incorporates nursing practice in meeting local, regional, national and global health needs.

Adopted 4/89, Revised 12/93, 12/96, 11/98, 3/01, Reaffirmed 3/09

## **Vision**

The College of Nursing is a learning community that is committed to excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, and service that enhances the health and well being of the people of Arizona and society in general. The community values creativity and balance and promotes excellence through identity as nurses and recognition of social responsibility.

Adopted 5/98, Reaffirmed 3/01

## **College of Nursing Organizational Structure**

[Faculty \(.pdf\)](#)

[Administrative \(.pdf\)](#)

[Staff \(.pdf\)](#)

### **III. Academic Policies and Procedures for Graduate Students**

#### **Code of Academic Integrity**

Integrity and ethical behavior are expected of every student in all academic work. This Academic Integrity principle stands for honesty in all class work, and ethical conduct in all labs and clinical assignments. This principle is furthered by the student Code of Conduct and disciplinary procedures established by ABOR Policies 5-308 through 5-404, all provisions of which apply to all University of Arizona students. This Code of Academic Integrity is intended to fulfill the requirement imposed by ABOR Policy 5-403.A.4 and otherwise to supplement the Student Code of Conduct as permitted by ABOR Policy 5-308.C.1. This Code of Academic Integrity shall not apply to the Colleges of Law or Medicine, which have their own honor codes and procedures.

[Code of Academic Integrity](#)

#### **Student Code of Conduct**

The aim of education is the intellectual, personal, social, and ethical development of the individual. The educational process is ideally conducted in an environment that encourages reasoned discourse, intellectual honesty, openness to constructive change and respect for the rights of all individuals. Self discipline and a respect for the rights of others in the university community are necessary for the fulfillment of such goals. The Student Code of Conduct is designed to promote this environment at each of the state universities. The Student Code of Conduct sets forth the standards of conduct expected of students who choose to join the university community. Students who violate these standards will be subject to disciplinary sanctions in order to promote their own personal development, to protect the university community, and to maintain order and stability on campus.

[Student Code of Conduct](#)

#### **Disruptive Behavior in an Instructional Setting**

The University seeks to promote a teaching and learning environment free from material and substantial classroom disruptions. Faculty members and teaching staff have the authority and responsibility to effectively manage their classroom environments. Instructors may determine the time and manner for student questions and expression of points of view in the instructional setting. Accordingly, instructors should establish, communicate and enforce reasonable rules of classroom behavior and decorum via the syllabus and classroom discussion. This policy is not intended to discourage appropriate classroom expression, discussion or disagreement, but to promote respectful interactions.

[Policy on Disruptive Behavior in an Instructional Setting](#)

## **Policy on Threatening Behavior by Students**

The University seeks to promote a safe environment where students and employees may participate in the educational process without compromising their health, safety or welfare. The Arizona Board of Regents' Student Code of Conduct, ABOR Policy 5-308, prohibits threats of physical harm to any member of the University community, including to one's self. Threatening behavior can harm and disrupt the University, its community and its families.

### Policy on Threatening Behavior by Students

## **Line of Communication**

The College of Nursing is committed to the creation of an environment which promotes the student learning experience. Open, respectful dialogue between students and faculty is critical to the enrichment of the learning experience.

In order to facilitate the open communication between students and faculty, the College of Nursing has outlined a line of communication to resolve academic issues that may arise in the classroom and/or at the clinical site. Student issues or concerns need to be addressed promptly and according to the established line of communication outlined below. Dialog with the next person in the line of communication is necessary only after the prior contact does not lead to resolution.

### Line of Communication for Problem Resolution

Course Instructor or Clinical Instructor ►  
Course Chair or Level Coordinator (if applicable) ►  
Division Director ►  
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs *or*  
Associate Dean for Academic Practice ►  
Dean

The Assistant Dean for Student Affairs is available to assist the student in this process. Contact the Office of Student Affairs at 520-626-3808 or 800-288-6158.

## **Satisfactory Academic Progress**

A high level of performance is expected of students enrolled in a graduate program. To remain enrolled in a graduate degree program, a student must be making satisfactory progress toward completion of the degree. In addition to Graduate College policies, the College of Nursing requires adherence to the following Graduate Academic Progression policies to reflect high standards of scholarship:

- A. A student must earn an overall grade point average of 3.0 or better to be awarded the MS, DNP and PhD degrees.

- B. Graduate students in the College of Nursing are expected to earn grades of "A" (4.0) or "B" (3.0). Grades below a "B" (3.0) are viewed as unsatisfactory academic performance for graduate students.
- C. A student with regular status achieving less than a 3.0 grade point average at any point in the program will be placed on academic probation. Students on probation are required to meet with their Faculty Advisor to discuss steps to be taken to resolve the problem that led to probationary status and devise a written plan of action to be submitted to the College of Nursing Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the Graduate College.
- D. Students on academic probation for two consecutive semesters will be automatically changed to non-degree status. Students must apply for readmission to a degree program once a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 is achieved through additional course work taken in the non-degree status. Additional course work may be taken in the College of Nursing. Readmission must be supported by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and approved by the Dean of the Graduate College.
- E. A student will be dismissed from the program if more than two grades of "C" or below are earned in one class (see #F) or in different classes, whether or not the courses are repeated and better grades subsequently received.
- F. A student may petition the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs to repeat a graduate course once in which a grade lower than 3.0 is received. No more than one course can be repeated. If a student receives a "C" the second time in any one course, the student will be dismissed (see #E).
- G. A student will be dismissed from the program if a grade of "D" or "E" is earned in a graduate course.
- H. A student with provisional admission status must achieve a grade point average of 3.0 or better in each course within the first nine credits of course work in order to be eligible for regular status. Failure to meet this requirement will result in dismissal from the program.
- I. A student may be dismissed from the College of Nursing for unsafe practice and / or unethical conduct in the program without having been previously warned.

## **Grade Appeal**

Grades given in graduate courses may be appealed on the basis of fundamental fairness. To initiate the appeal procedure, the student must contact the course instructor no later than the end of the fifth week of classes of the first regular semester after the semester or summer term in which the grade was awarded. The entire procedure to be followed is described in the [University of Arizona Online Catalog](#).



The College of Nursing has the following significant modifications:

- A. Pending appeal or review, a student who has been awarded a failing grade in or been withdrawn from a course on the basis of failing to provide safe patient care may not attend either the theory or clinical portions of the course.
- B. Pending appeal or review, a student who does not complete a required nursing course satisfactorily is not eligible to progress in the professional nursing major.

## **Leave of Absence**

Students may request a leave of absence from the College of Nursing and the Graduate College. Requests may be considered for the following types of leaves:

- A. Academic Leaves: Academic LOAs (i.e., leaves to take course work at another university, for research, field work, internships, professional development, etc.) are handled on a case-by-case basis by the College of Nursing and the Graduate College.
- B. Medical Leaves: With appropriate documentation from their medical provider, graduate students in degree programs may be granted a Medical Leave of Absence by the Dean of the Graduate College. Under extraordinary circumstances, LOAs may be granted retroactively for up to one year. Students will be readmitted without reapplying to the College of Nursing and the Graduate College. Only when the LOA is approved prior to the beginning of the semester for which the LOA is being sought will students be exempted from fees for that semester. Only academic services or facilities available to the general public can be used during the LOA.
- C. Personal Leaves: Graduate students in degree programs may be granted a Leave of Absence for a maximum of one year throughout the course of their degree program by the Dean of the Graduate College. LOAs may be granted retroactively for up to one year. LOAs are granted on a case-by-case basis for compelling reasons including birth or adoption of a child, personal or family reasons, medical reasons, military duty, or financial hardship. Students will be readmitted without reapplying to the College of Nursing and the Graduate College at the expiration of the LOA. Only when the LOA is approved prior to the beginning of the semester for which the LOA is being sought will students be exempted from fees for that semester. Only academic services or facilities available to the general public can be used during the LOA.

Leaves of Absence (LOAs) may affect the status of a graduate student's financial aid. Students are responsible for determining the requirements of their funding agency and / or academic unit prior to applying for a Leave of Absence.

Failure to obtain a Leave of Absence or remain in continuous enrollment will result in

penalties, as described in the [Continuous Enrollment](#) policy requirements.

To request a Leave of Absence from the College of Nursing, the student should first discuss their intent with their faculty advisor and propose an updated Plan of Study to complete their coursework, if applicable. If the faculty advisor supports the request, a formal written request should be forwarded to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. The request should include the Plan of Study and a time line to complete coursework or other degree requirements.

[Leave of Absence form](#)

## **Withdrawal Grades**

Withdrawal from a course within the first four weeks after registration will result in the deletion of the course from the academic record. After the fourth week and through the end of the tenth week of classes, the grade of "W" may be awarded to students earning a passing grade at the time of the official withdrawal. If a student is not earning a passing grade at the time of the withdrawal, the grade of "E" will be awarded. Requests for complete withdrawal from the University are initiated through the [Dean of Students Office](#). Students leaving the University without a statement of formal withdrawal will be awarded a failing grade in each course.

## **Grades of Incomplete**

The grade of "I" for "Incomplete" may be awarded only at the end of the semester when all but a minor portion of the course work has been satisfactorily completed. Graduate students should make arrangements with the instructor to receive an Incomplete grade before the end of the semester. Instructors should work with the student to document what course work must be completed by the student for the "I" grade to be removed and replaced with a grade. Documentation should include:

- A. which assignments or exams should be completed and when
- B. how this work will be graded
- C. how the student's course grade will be calculated.

Both the instructor and student sign this agreement and forward the agreement to the Office of Student Affairs.

Graduate students have a maximum of one calendar year to remove an Incomplete. An Incomplete not removed within one year is replaced by a failing grade of "E" and counted as an "E" in determining the student's grade-point average. If the coursework cannot be completed within one year, the student may petition to extend the Incomplete. This petition must be submitted before the grade converts to an "E".

If there is a possibility that the student's cumulative grade-point average will fall below 3.00 through the conversion of Incomplete grades to failing grades, the graduate degree will not be awarded.

## **Readmission to the College of Nursing Graduate Programs**

Students who have been granted an approved leave of absence and who return within the approved time period, do not have to apply for readmission.

Students who were previously enrolled in a graduate degree program but have not been officially enrolled for one regular semester or more must re-apply for admission. Readmission requires approval by the College of Nursing Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Only students in good standing will be reviewed for readmission. The student must also reapply for admission to the [Graduate College](#).

If the student was in good standing at the time of departure and now wishes to return and enroll in a course or Master's level role option in which there is unlimited space, then readmission is likely to be approved. However, if there are any reservations about readmitting the student, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs may consult with the appropriate Graduate Committee. Before a student can be readmitted to enroll in any course or role option in which there are space limitations, recommendation for approval from the faculty member teaching the course or coordinating the role option must be forwarded to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

## **Petitions**

A student, who believes with good academic reason, that they deserve redress or exception to the University of Arizona Graduate College rules, regulations, or policies can formally petition for an exception. A petition form must be submitted to the Graduate College Degree Certification Office explaining all relevant facts. The petition form must be accompanied by supporting documents and a letter of support from the student's Major Advisor, Director of Graduate Studies, or Department Head. Petition forms are available from the [Graduate College](#).

## **Time Limitations for Degree Completion**

All requirements for the master's degree must be completed within 6 years. Time-to-degree begins with the earliest course to be applied toward the degree, including credits transferred from other institutions. Work more than 6 years old is not accepted toward degree requirements.

All requirements for the degrees of Doctor of Philosophy and the Doctor of Nursing Practice must be completed within 5 years of passing the Comprehensive Exam. Should a student not finish within that time period, he or she may be allowed to re-take the Comprehensive Exam with permission of the College of Nursing, and then proceed to complete other requirements, e.g., the dissertation or practice inquiry.

## **IV. Student Resources**

### **E-mail**

Students are required to have basic computer knowledge prior to beginning the first semester of a graduate program in nursing. Students receive a personal e-mail account on the College's computer network (\_\_@nursing.arizona.edu). E-mail sent to this address can be accessed within the College of Nursing and from remote sites (via the Internet) and must be checked daily, as it is the official source of communication between faculty, staff and students. All technology related issues should be directed to the Information Technology Group, located in room 351 at the College of Nursing. E-mail [help@nursing.arizona.edu](mailto:help@nursing.arizona.edu) or call 520-626-5053 or 1-866-278-1427.

### **Computer Access / Wireless Access**

All graduate students have access to computer facilities in the Research Resource Center, located in room 351 at the College of Nursing. Wireless computer access is available within the College of Nursing for students, faculty and visitors. The University of Arizona offers wireless access across much of the Tucson campus through [UAWiFi](#).

### **Information Technology Group (ITG)**

The College of Nursing [Information Technology Group \(ITG\)](#) provides a wide variety of services which support the instructional, research, and administrative missions of the College of Nursing.

### **Counseling and Psychological Services**

The Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) within the [Campus Health Service](#) (520-621-3334) provides crisis intervention and brief counseling. All services are confidential.

### **Graduation**

After completion of all degree requirements, graduates are “Hooded” by their project advisor and the Dean during the College of Nursing convocation. Attendance at convocation is voluntary, but faculty and students are encouraged to attend.

## **V. General Master's Information**

### **Transfer of Graduate Credit**

The College of Nursing follows the Graduate College guidelines for Transfer Credit. In addition, transfer courses must be approved through the College of Nursing.

No more than 20% of the minimum number of units required for a master's degree can be transferred from other accredited institutions (e.g., if a Master's degree requires 40 units, then no more than 8 units can be transferred from another university). Such transfer credit can be applied to an advanced degree only upon satisfactory completion of deficiencies as prescribed by the head of the major department in which the student seeks a degree. Transfer of credit toward an advanced degree will not be made unless the grade earned was A or B, and unless it was awarded graduate credit at the institution where the work was completed. Grades of transfer work will not be used in computing the student's grade-point average. Credit for correspondence courses or extension work from other institutions will not be accepted for graduate credit. Students who wish transfer credit must submit an Evaluation of Transfer Credit form before the end of their first year of study.

Coursework taken prior to acceptance into the program:

The total number of units of coursework taken as an undergraduate, in graduate non-degree status and transferred from other institutions can be no more than 12. General limits on the 12 units taken prior to acceptance into the program:

- A. Not more than 6 units of University of Arizona undergraduate coursework at the 400 level can be accepted into a master's program, only if they were not used toward the undergraduate degree.
- B. No more than 12 units of coursework taken in graduate non-degree seeking status may be used toward a master's degree.
- C. Transfer work may not exceed 20% of the required number of units for the master's degree being sought. (Example: For a degree that requires 30 units, no more than 6 units of transfer work may be used.)

## **Continuous Enrollment Policy / Minimum Enrollment**

A student admitted to a master's program must register each fall and spring semester for a minimum of 3 graduate units, from original matriculation until all degree requirements are met. If the degree program requirements are to be completed in the summer, the student must register for a minimum of 1 unit of graduate credit during that term. Master's candidates do not have to register for graduate units during summer sessions unless they plan to make use of University facilities or faculty time. If they do plan to use facilities or faculty time, they must enroll for a minimum of 1 unit of graduate credit. The student and faculty advisor should discuss the number of units required for registration, relative to the activity.

## **Plan of Study**

All Master's students need to complete and submit a Master's Plan of Study to the Office of Student Affairs for review. Following approval by the College of Nursing, the Plan of

Study must be submitted to the Graduate College Degree Certification office by the end of the student's 2<sup>nd</sup> semester.

The form is available at the Graduate College [MyGradColl](#) website for students to complete. The Faculty Advisor must approve and sign the form, which must conform to the approved program requirements. In addition, the student must be able to identify the advisor for their thesis or master's report, whichever applies, at the time that the Plan of Study is submitted. For Master's students, the completed form is then submitted to the Graduate Academic Advisor in the Office of Student Affairs for approval and submission to the Graduate College. A copy is kept in the student's file.

Your bursar account will be billed a candidacy fees of \$35.00 at the time your Masters / Specialist Plan of Study is submitted to the Graduate Degree Certification Office. This is a one-time fee, and you will not be billed again if you change your anticipated graduation date.

## **Nurse Practitioner Certification**

There are two forms of certification for advanced practice as a nurse practitioner: required State certification to legally practice within a particular area of specialization and voluntary (until July 1, 2004) national certification granted by professional organizations.

Certification requirements related to advanced practice as a nurse practitioner vary from state to state. Some states provide their own certification and others require a national certification examination while others have no specific certification requirements. It is the student's responsibility to investigate certification requirements in the state where she / he plans to practice and to keep up to date on changes in requirements.

- A. Arizona Certification: Nurse Practitioners are certified to practice in Arizona by the [Arizona State Board of Nursing](#). One of the requirements for certification is to hold national certification from a national certifying body recognized by the Board.
- B. National Certification: Within Arizona, national certification is required as of July 1, 2004. There are four national certifying bodies:
  - 1. American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (FNP and ANP)
  - 2. American Nurses Credentialing Center (FNP, ANP, among others)
  - 3. National Certification Board of the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Associates and Practitioners (PNP)
  - 4. National Certification Corporation (Neonatal and Women's Health).

A Master's degree is required to sit for national certification examinations.

NOTE: Effective July 1, 2004, Nurse Practitioners coming from another state are not certified based upon their national certification, they must meet the requirements of [Arizona Administrative Code R4-19-504](#).

Students graduating from the Family Nurse Practitioner, Adult Nurse Practitioner, Adult Acute Care Nurse Practitioner and Adult Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner programs at the College of Nursing are eligible to sit for these examinations when they have met ALL requirements for the Master's degree, including completion of the thesis or master's report.

## **Master's Thesis or Report**

Master's students have a choice of a 3 credit Master's Thesis (NURS 910) or a 3 credit Master's Report (NURS 909). Students must identify an advisor who will help the student initiate work on the project. The faculty advisor begins this process, but may not be the thesis or report advisor. The role of the faculty advisor is to assist the student in identifying a potential topic and a potential thesis or report advisor (also called the thesis or report committee chairperson).

Project guidelines:

- A. Master's Thesis: Several years ago the faculty voted to reformulate the view of the Master's thesis. Given their level of expertise and career goals, most students should not be encouraged to do original research for the Master's thesis. Most should be strongly encouraged to complete a secondary analysis, evaluation of a clinical innovation or program and/or a research utilization project under the direction of a qualified nursing researcher.

Steps to Completing a Master's Thesis:

1. Students select possible research questions and explore mutual interests with potential thesis advisors. The student selects a thesis advisor (committee chairperson) and makes an appointment. The committee chairperson must be a tenure-track (or equivalent) College of Nursing faculty member.
2. The thesis advisor and student develop the research question and select two other members to serve on the thesis committee. (See committee guidelines below.) The thesis advisor and student work together until the student has developed an acceptable draft of the first three chapters of the proposal (background and significance, framework and literature review, methods). When the thesis advisor approves the draft, it is distributed to other committee members and a meeting is planned.
3. At the meeting, the thesis committee discusses the draft of the proposed research. The student then completes the Human Subjects Forms.
4. The student and thesis advisor work together completing the project with the advice and input of other committee members as appropriate. The student and thesis advisor work to develop the penultimate draft report of the research.

This final draft is distributed to other committee members at least one week prior to the final defense.

5. As soon as the final defense date is set, the student should notify the Graduate Advisor in the Office of Student Affairs with the date and time so that a room may be reserved for the defense. The student will need to fill out a “Master's / Specialist Completion of Degree Requirements” form, which can be found at the Graduate College [MyGradColl](#) website. This form should be given to the thesis advisor before the start of the defense. The student or thesis advisor may write in the title of the thesis at the time of the defense; this is the last opportunity to change the thesis title.
6. At the final defense (or “final examination”), the student discusses his or her research and answers questions about the final draft of the thesis. Committee members may accept the thesis without revisions, may require minor revisions in the text (which means the student and thesis advisor are responsible for the final product), or may require major revisions (which means another committee meeting is desired). A student who fails a final examination may, upon the recommendation of the College of Nursing, be granted a second examination. The results of the second examination are final.
7. At the conclusion of a successful final defense, the committee members sign the student's Completion of Degree Requirements form, and the thesis advisor completes the Change of Grade form located in the Office of Student Affairs. Both documents should be submitted to the Office of Student Affairs.
8. Following any revisions required by the committee and / or report advisor, the student must submit the report to the appropriate divisional support staff for review of formatting compliance with Graduate College / College of Nursing guidelines.
9. Students must contact the Office of Nursing Research to verify compliance with Human Subjects procedures and requirements. Even if the student did not use Human Subjects, they still must verify their project with the Office of Nursing Research.
10. Students must submit an electronic copy (via disk, CD or email) to the office of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. The College of Nursing maintains a digital repository of master's reports, master's theses, practice inquiries and dissertations. Students are required to submit a Statement of Agreement that grants or denies the College of Nursing license to include the student's work in the digital repository.
11. Submission of the thesis to the Graduate College, for publication by University Microfilms, Inc. and inclusion in The University of Arizona Library archives, is optional. If you are uncertain about archiving your thesis, please discuss the matter with your Faculty Advisor. There is a fee for microfilming and for copyrighting should a student choose those options. For more information consult the Manual for Theses and Dissertations available online and from the Graduate Degree Certification Office.

- [Manual for Electronic Submission of Theses and Dissertations](#)
- [Manual for Paper Submission of Theses and Dissertations](#)



- B. Master's Report: The master's report is a scholarly paper, prepared in accordance with general guidelines for any scholarly paper, with additional requirements as outlined by the report advisor. (see criteria below) The report should focus on a clinically-relevant problem or issue and contribute to nursing knowledge. As a final requirement in completing this project, the report must be presented to an audience of the student's peers and faculty committee.

Criteria for an acceptable Master's Report include:

- Demonstrates depth of knowledge in a selected area
- Demonstrates breadth of knowledge
- Synthesizes relevant knowledge in the field
- Integrates experiential knowledge with research-based knowledge.
- Writing is logical and clear.
- Pertinent references are included
- Written in a scholarly manner, e.g. with appropriate reference style, grammar.

Examples of possible Master's reports are:

- A comprehensive review of the literature related to an area of interest, with practice and policy implications.
- An educational model for teaching clients about some aspect of their health care. This project might include both health care professional materials and client materials.
- Synthesis of literature and application to practice - this type of project would focus on a clinical problem.
- Other scholarly projects as recommended by a faculty advisor.

Steps to Completing a Master's Report:

1. The student and report advisor work together completing the project with the advice and input of the other committee members as appropriate. The student and report advisor work to develop the final draft report of the report. This final draft is distributed to the other committee members at least one week prior to the final presentation.
2. As soon as the final defense date is set, the student should notify the Graduate Advisor in the Office of Student Affairs with the date and time so that a room may be reserved for the defense. The student will need to fill out a "Master's / Specialist Completion of Degree Requirements form, which can be found at the Graduate College [MyGradColl](#) website. This form should be given to the report advisor before the start of the defense. The student or report advisor may write in the title of the report at the time of the defense; this is the last opportunity to change the report title.
3. At the conclusion of a successful final defense, the committee members sign the student's Completion of Degree Requirements form, and the report advisor

completes the Change of Grade form located in the Office of Student Affairs. Both documents should to be submitted to the Office of Student Affairs.

4. Following any revisions required by the committee and / or report advisor, the student must submit the report to the appropriate divisional support staff for review of formatting compliance with Graduate College / College of Nursing guidelines.
5. Students must contact the Office of Nursing Research to verify compliance with Human Subjects procedures and requirements. Even if the student did not use Human Subjects, they still must verify their project with the Office of Nursing Research.
6. Students must submit an electronic copy of the report (via disk, CD or email) to the office of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. The College of Nursing maintains a digital repository of master's reports, master's theses, practice inquiries and dissertations. Students are required to submit a Statement of Agreement that grants or denies the College of Nursing license to include the student's work in the digital repository.

Composition of the Master's Thesis or Report Committee:

- A. Master's Thesis: The committee must consist of three members; at least two must be tenure-track (or equivalent) College of Nursing faculty members. If the third member is not a tenure-track UA or College of Nursing faculty member, he or she must be approved by the Graduate College as a special member. The committee chairperson must be a tenure-track (or equivalent) College of Nursing faculty member. A member who is not tenure-track (or equivalent) will not be eligible to serve as sole chair of the committee but can serve as co-chairperson if approved to do so by the Graduate College.
- B. Master's Report: The committee must consist of a minimum of two faculty members; the committee chairperson must be a tenure-track (or equivalent) College of Nursing faculty member. The second member may be any faculty or adjunct faculty member as approved by the Graduate College.

## **Human Subjects Procedures**

Please see the College of Nursing website for information regarding [Human Subject Procedures](#).

## **VI. General Doctoral Information**

### **Doctoral Transfer of Credits**

The maximum amount of credits accepted for transfer credit is 9. Students who wish transfer credit must submit [Evaluation of Transfer Credit form](#) to the Graduate College before the end of their first year of study. The College of Nursing doctoral advisory

committee and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs must also approve of the transfer of credits.

College of Nursing procedure for obtaining approval of transfer credit:

- A. Discuss the desirability of transferring credit with the assigned Faculty Advisor as soon as possible.
- B. Obtain an official transcript of grades awarded at the institution where the work was completed.
- C. Obtain a course description of each course for which transfer credit is requested.
- D. When the transfer credit is to be used to meet a core course requirement, the Faculty Advisor discusses the course content, course objectives, and grade awarded with the College of Nursing faculty member assigned to teach the comparable course at the University of Arizona. Based on the discussion, the Faculty Advisor initials the [Evaluation of Transfer Credit form](#) to designate approval. When the transfer credit is to be used to meet an elective course requirement, the Faculty Advisor makes a recommendation directly to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.
- E. The transcript, course description, and initialed [Evaluation of Transfer Credit form](#) are sent to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs for review and action.
- F. If approved, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs initials the [Evaluation of Transfer Credit form](#), submits the form to the Graduate Advisor in the Office of Student Affairs and notifies the student and Faculty Advisor of the action taken.
- G. The Graduate Advisor in the Office of Student Affairs will submit the form to the Graduate College.

### **Continuous Enrollment Policy / Minimum Enrollment**

For students admitted prior to August 2004: must be continuously enrolled, fall and spring semesters with a minimum of 3 units each semester until graduation (note 3-unit minimum exceptions listed below).

For students admitted August 2004 and after: must maintain full-time enrollment and to complete their plans of study as outlined. If students wish to change their Plan of Study in a way that will impact the timeline to complete their coursework, after consultation with the faculty advisor and advisory committee, the student will forward a request to the Doctoral Program Committee. The Doctoral Program Committee must review and approve changes to the plan of study that may result in failing to complete the coursework on a full-time basis.

If students are being advised by faculty during the summer, they must register for a minimum of 1 unit. The student and advisor should discuss the number of units required for registration, relative to the activity. Students must be registered for a minimum of 1 unit if they are defending a practice inquiry or dissertation during a summer session.

#### Additional Enrollment Policies for Doctoral Students:

- A. If hired on an assistantship, students must register for six (6) graduate level units (not including audit).
- B. If degree requirements are not completed, i.e., still need to complete one or more of the following: course requirements, comprehensive exam, and either 9 units of practice inquiry or 18 units of dissertation, students must register for three (3) graduate level units (not including audit courses).
- C. If the student has completed the course requirements, passed the Oral Comprehensive Exams, and has completed the required 9 units of practice inquiry or 18 units of dissertation, and is using University resources such as the library, faculty services or computer services and/or receiving scholarships, fellowships or grants through the University of Arizona, the student must register for three (3) 900 level units (not including audit courses).
- D. If the student has completed the course requirements, passed the Oral Comprehensive Exams, and has completed the required 9 units of practice inquiry or 18 units of dissertation, and is **NOT** using University resources such as the library, faculty services or computer services and is **NOT** receiving scholarships, fellowships or grants through the University of Arizona, the student may register for one (1) 900 level unit.
- E. PhD students must enroll for a total of 18 units of Dissertation (NURS 920) over the course of their program. If 18 units have been taken and the dissertation is not yet completed, students must register for Supplemental Registration units (NURS 930) each fall, spring, and possibly summer semesters, as determined by the student and the advisor, until the dissertation is complete.
- F. DNP students must enroll for a total of 9 units of Practice Inquiry (NURS 922) over the course of their program. If 9 units have been taken and the practice inquiry is not yet completed, students must register for Supplemental Registration units (NURS 930) each fall, spring, and possibly summer semesters, as determined by the student and the advisor, until the practice inquiry is complete.

### **Doctoral Residency Requirement**

To meet the minimum Graduate College residence requirement, the student must complete a minimum of 30 units of graduate credit in residence at The University of Arizona (18 units of dissertation plus 12 units of regular graded coursework taken at The

University of Arizona). “In residence” is defined as units offered by The University of Arizona, whether or not they are offered on campus.

## **RISE**

For PhD students, RISE means “Research Intensive Summer Experience.” For DNP students, RISE means “Role Intensive Summer Experience.” RISE is held on the University of Arizona campus in Tucson for 5-10 days in August, prior to the beginning of the fall term. During RISE, students are immersed in intensive scholarly research or role experiences punctuated with time for meeting with advisors and committee members. Students have opportunities to become acquainted with other students, faculty and staff, to learn to use a variety of instructional technologies and to learn more about their program and the College of Nursing. Students are required to attend RISE for either two or three years, depending on their program.

## **Plan of Study**

All doctoral students need to complete and submit a doctoral Plan of Study to the Graduate Advisor in the Office of Student Affairs for review and submission to the Graduate College by the end of their 3rd semester. The form is available at the Graduate College [MyGradColl](#) website for students to complete.

A minimum of 64 units are required of the MSN to PhD student.

A minimum of 79 units are required of the BSN to PhD student.

All **PhD** students must complete 18 dissertation units and a minimum of 9 units for a minor. The maximum number of units that apply to a minor is 18.

A minimum of 43 units are required of the MS to DNP student not seeking NP certification.

The number of required units for the MS to DNP students seeking Nurse Practitioner certification and BSN to DNP students seeking Nurse Practitioner certification varies based on Nurse Practitioner specialty.

All **DNP** students must complete 9 practice inquiry units and a minimum of 9 units for a minor. The maximum number of units that apply to a minor is 18.

## **Benchmarks for Satisfactory Progression through Doctoral Programs**

Satisfactory progression in the doctoral program is expected of all students. Students will be reviewed annually and assessed for satisfactory progression. The following performance benchmarks have been developed to assist faculty and students to determine satisfactory progression. Failure to meet these benchmarks may trigger a review by the Doctoral Program Committee. Failure to progress satisfactorily may result in dismissal from the program.

- A. Completion of coursework per Plan of Study: Students are expected to maintain full-time enrollment and to complete their plans of study as outlined. If a student wishes to change their plan of study in a way that will impact the timeline to complete their coursework, after consultation with their advisor and advisory committee, the student will forward the request to the Doctoral Program Committee. The Doctoral Program Committee must review and approve changes to the plan of study that may result in failing to complete the coursework on time.
- B. Time line for coursework to comprehensive exams: Students are expected to successfully complete their comprehensive exams within two academic year semesters following completion of coursework. See comprehensive examination policy for specifics about the exam.
- C. Time line for comprehensive exams to practice inquiry or dissertation proposal: Students are expected to successfully defend their proposal within two academic year semesters following completion of comprehensive exams.
- D. Time line for practice inquiry or dissertation proposal to IRB process: Students are expected to submit for IRB approval for their practice inquiry or dissertation project within six months following their proposal defense.
- E. Time line for practice inquiry or dissertation final defense: Students are expected to successfully defend their practice inquiry or dissertation within two years following their proposal defense.

### **Appeal of Decision of Unsatisfactory Progress**

In accordance with College of Nursing policy, the student has a right to initiate a written appeal to the Doctoral Program Committee for the unsatisfactory progress decision during the 5 week period following written notification of disqualification from the program. The second and final level of appeal is to the College of Nursing Dean / Dean's designee.

### **Completion of Annual Report**

Students in the doctoral programs must submit an annual report of work completed towards their degree. The [PhD Annual Report](#) and the [DNP Annual Report](#) are available on the College of Nursing website and must be completed or updated in April of each academic year. The Doctoral Program Committee reviews individual Annual Reports to determine adequate progression toward degree completion.

### **Transferring between Doctoral Programs within the College of Nursing**

Students wishing to transfer from one doctoral program to another (PhD to DNP or DNP to PhD) must be in good academic standing in their current doctoral program. Students

should first meet with their faculty advisor to discuss the transfer, and then the following documentation must be provided to the Doctoral Program Committee for review:

- A. The student provides a letter requesting the change that contains:
  - 1. Requested option
  - 2. Rationale for changing options:
    - a) What they plan to do after obtaining their doctoral degree
    - b) Anticipated area of research or practice inquiry
    - c) Question to be answered by research or practice inquiry
- B. The student's advisor provides a letter of support.
- C. An identified potential mentor in the "receiving" option provides a second letter of support, indicating their willingness to mentor the student.
- D. Requests for transfer must be submitted no later than one month prior to the end of the semester.

The Doctoral Program Committee will review the request at their next scheduled meeting and notify the student and advisor of their decision. The student should then notify the Office of Student Affairs of the change and schedule a meeting with their advisory committee to discuss any changes in the Plan of Study. The transfer will take effect the semester following the approval.

## **National Research Service Awards**

National Research Service Awards (NRSAs) are training grants that are awarded by the National Institutes of Health. These awards do not have to be paid back if the student works in nursing research or education for a designated period of time following graduation. Writing one of these proposals involves a fair amount of thought and work and close association with the sponsor. However, they are well worth it and serve as a major source of funding and the first funding obtained in building the student's program of research. Students are strongly encouraged to write an NRSA as early in the program as possible.

Students need a sponsor for their proposal. The sponsor might be the Faculty or Research Advisor, chairperson or another committee member. In some cases it is wise to have a co-sponsor. The earlier the proposal is submitted after the student is accepted into the program, the better the chances of being funded. NRSAs are competitive grants and the longer the student is in the program, the higher the expectation for the proposal in terms of sophistication. Students should make sure to request enough time when deciding on the amount of time to be funded. It is better to ask for extra time instead of not enough time as it is impossible to get an extension. NRSA money is taxable income. There are 2 options for NRSAs:

- A. Institutional NRSA: this type of NRSA is awarded to the College of Nursing for a specific area of investigation. Student proposals are reviewed in-house. Award of this grant requires the student to follow the specific area of investigation targeted by the NRSA.
- B. Individual NRSA: NIH reviews this award in a topic area of the student's choice.

International students and students receiving particular federal scholarships or fellowships are not eligible for NRSAs.

NRSA money goes toward a monthly stipend and the institutional allowance is used to pay tuition and / or fees. In addition, the institutional allowance can be used for legitimate educational expenses such as books, a computer, etc.

NRSAs are renewable yearly. Generally the renewals are late, therefore, holding up the initial stipend check for the new year. Students need to consider this in budgeting. When the student receives their award papers, they must submit them to the Assistant Dean for Finance and Administration, the Associate Dean for Research and the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. It takes time for the university to receive the money and the student cannot receive a stipend until they are in the university system. This can take several weeks.

## **Human Subjects Procedures**

Please see the College of Nursing website for information regarding [Human Subject Procedures](#).

## **VII. Doctoral Progression**

### **Committees**

There are 3 types of committee that are vitally important to doctoral students. Students can change committee members at any time. However, it is advantageous to the student if the committee is fairly well determined before the written and oral comprehensive examinations which occur at the end of course work. The committee that assists with program planning is often the committee that conducts the written and oral portions of the comprehensive examination. However, students always have the right to alter their committee as their scholarly interests or needs indicate. Faculty also has the right to remove themselves from a student's committee. This may occur if the faculty member is retiring, going on sabbatical or if the faculty member is not interested in or feels unqualified in assisting with the student's scholarly interests.

- A. Major Advisory Committee / Comprehensive Exam Committee: At the completion of the first year of the program, the doctoral student forms an Advisory Committee that will meet during the following RISE.



- The **PhD** Advisory Committee consists of a chairperson from the major substantive area, two members from the substantive area and a member representing the minor area of study.
- The **DNP** Advisory Committee consists of a chairperson, usually the faculty advisor, one member from the student’s advanced practice specialty area and one member representing the minor area of study.

All committee members must be College of Nursing faculty prepared at the doctoral level. During the meeting at RISE, the student and the committee develop a Plan of Study. This meeting essentially serves as the “Qualifying Exam.” The purpose of the Advisory Committee is to guide the student through the coursework in the Plan of Study and to supervise the Major and Minor Comprehensive Examinations.

- B. **Minor Committee:** Every doctoral student must have a minor committee consisting of one or 2 members from the minor department. These committee members help the student plan their minor plan of study and ultimately approve that portion of the graduate study plan. The number of units required for a minor varies and is strictly up to the minor department. Minimum units are 9 and maximum are 18. Minor committee members are selected based on mutual interests and research expertise and getting to know the minor department members often takes time. Most minor departments have a minor student advisor who makes initial suggestions about course selection and potential committee members. Choosing the minor committee members should be done within the first year in the department.
- C. **Practice Inquiry or Dissertation Committee:** Choosing the Practice Inquiry or Dissertation Committee is a task best done following the completion of comprehensive examinations. The only exception to this is if the student elects to submit a National Research Service Award (NRSA). Committee members can be changed after the submission of the NRSA, but changing the committee chairperson (called “sponsor” for the NRSA) requires approval of the funding agency. See more under the DNP Practice Inquiry Committee / PhD Dissertation Committee section.

## **PhD Comprehensive Examination**

The student's major and minor committees prepare the Comprehensive Examination. Before advancement to degree candidacy, the student must pass a general examination in the chosen fields of study. This examination is intended to test the student's comprehensive knowledge of the major and minor subjects of study, both in breadth across the general field of study, and in depth within the area of specialization. The examination is composed of two parts, written and oral. The oral examination must be taken within 3 months of successfully passing both major and minor written examinations.

The student must be registered during the term in which they take their comprehensive exams. The student must request 3 units of NURS 930 Supplemental Registration through the Independent Study Request system on the College of Nursing website.

#### A. Written Comprehensive Examination

1. **Scheduling the Examinations:** Students should schedule each part of the comprehensive examination only after conferring with their advisory committee. Minor and major written examinations should be taken separately, but no more than 3 months apart (calculated from when the examination is begun). If either examination is not passed, students may take an alternate version of the examination. The alternate examination must be taken within 3 months of the initial examination. Failure to pass either the major or minor examination on the second try will result in the student's disqualification from the program. The comprehensive examination, including both the written and oral examinations, must be completed at least three months before the final dissertation defense. The student is responsible for scheduling the written examinations with the Graduate Academic Advisor in the Office of Student Affairs *at least two weeks prior* to the start date of each exam.
2. **Planning the Examination:** The written comprehensive examinations will take the form of a take-home examination. Students will have 7 days to complete each written examination (major and minor). Students may elect (in consultation with their minor advisory committee) to write a publishable paper for their minor in lieu of the take-home examination. Deadline for submission of the publishable paper is no later than three weeks prior to the major written comprehensive exam. For students taking an external minor (i.e., not within the College of Nursing), the policies for the minor exam shall be those of the college providing the minor.
3. **Writing the Test Questions:** The student's advisory committee members confer with the student to review the student's plan of study (completed courses and dates of completion). This meeting enables the committee to get a sense of the student's research interests, which will be used as a context for the examination. However, the examination is to be based on completed coursework, not the student's planned dissertation research. The advisory committee members then determine who will write the three questions (theory, substantive, method). Questions should require that students demonstrate the ability to synthesize relevant content and apply it within their own research context. The exam questions are solicited from the committee members by the chairperson of the comprehensive examination committee. Once all questions have been received, the chairperson compiles the examination and shares it with the other members, who then confer and agree on the final examination. The major or minor advisory committee chairperson forwards the appropriate examination to the Graduate Academic Advisor in

the Office of Student Affairs at least one week prior to the scheduled examination.

4. Taking the Examination: The Graduate Academic Advisor will email the examination to the student. Students may contact the advisory committee chairperson or designee with any questions regarding the examination. The student's written examination will take the form of a scholarly paper. The student should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the extant literature; and both depth and breadth of knowledge will be evaluated. APA format is required with a complete reference list. At the end of the agreed-on one week period, students email their completed examination to the Graduate Academic Advisor. Doctoral students are required to submit written comprehensive exams to Turnitin® for an originality report. Students receive instructions regarding Turnitin® with their examination questions.
5. Grading the Examination: The Graduate Academic Advisor forwards the student's completed examination via email to the advisory committee chairperson who, in turn, forwards copies to each committee member. The committee has 10 business days to review student responses. Members use a grading sheet to score the examination and then confer with each other to determine the final outcome. To successfully "pass" the major comprehensive examination, a student must receive a rating of "pass" by a majority of the advisory committee on each of the three questions. The chairperson notifies the student by email or phone of the results. The Graduate Academic Advisor is also notified. The Graduate Academic Advisor then notifies the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the Graduate College. A letter from the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs is sent to the student as official notification of the examination results. The committee chairperson returns faculty grading sheets and student responses to the Graduate Academic Advisor. A copy of the examination is forwarded to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, who maintains a Test Question Bank for students and faculty.

## B. Oral Comprehensive Examination

1. Scheduling the Oral Examination: The oral examination must be taken within 3 months of successfully passing both major and minor written examinations. The oral examination may be repeated once if not passed initially. Failure to pass the second examination will result in the student's disqualification from the program. The student should consult with all members of their advisory committee to determine a date and time for the oral examination. As soon as a date and time are agreed upon, the Graduate Academic Advisor in the Office of Student Affairs must be notified so that a room may be reserved for the exam. The student will be responsible for filling out the "Results of Oral Comprehensive Exam" (which can be found at the Graduate College [MyGradColl](#) website) and obtaining the appropriate pre-exam signatures.

They will then take the form to the exam where the committee will record the results and provide their signatures. The Graduate Academic Advisor is available to assist distance students with this process. Following the exam, the form must be submitted by the committee to the Graduate Academic Advisor who will submit to the Graduate College.

2. Taking the Examination: The oral examination will be conducted, either onsite or via teleconferencing, as arranged by the student and the advisory committee, following procedures put forward by the Graduate College. The oral examination will cover both major and minor emphasis areas and will require the student to demonstrate breadth of knowledge in the field, as well as depth of knowledge in the student's specialty area. The oral examination must be at least one hour in length. All committee members must be present for the entire examination.

The Graduate Academic Advisor provides the committee chairperson with the appropriate paperwork for the exam, including:

- the approved "Results of Oral Comprehensive Exam" form for students participating from a distance
- the Policies and Procedures for Oral Comprehensive Examination for Doctoral Candidacy
- the Ballots

The committee chairperson takes these documents to the Oral Comprehensive Examination. The Graduate Academic Advisor provides all members of the committee with a copy of the student's Plan of Study and notifies the committee of the date, time, and room where the examination will be held.

The examination is conducted in closed session. It is not open to the public. All members must be in attendance for the entire exam which should be at least one hour in length, but not exceed three hours. If a participant cannot be located within ten minutes of the scheduled starting time, the committee chair must notify the Graduate Degree Certification Office so that another examiner, acceptable to both the student and the committee, may be found if possible. Only one substitute member is permitted. If a full committee is not assembled, the examination must be canceled or postponed and the Graduate Degree Certification office must be notified accordingly.

- C. The Comprehensive Examination Committee: The examining committee must consist of a minimum of four members. The Major Advisor (Committee Chair) and two additional members must be tenured, or tenure track or equivalent. The fourth member may be tenured or tenure-track or equivalent, or a special approved member. Special members must be pre-approved by the Dean of the Graduate College. Any members beyond the fourth can also be tenured or tenure-track, or special approved members. One member acts as reporter. This person

(who cannot be the student's advisor) ensures that the exam is administered fairly and files the report with the Graduate College. The committee should include a member from outside the department as a reporter if necessary to ensure objective reporting.

- D. Evaluation of Performance in the Oral Examination: At the conclusion of the Oral Comprehensive Examination (and after the student has left the room), discussion of the student's performance is initiated. Each member of the examination committee is expected to evaluate the student's performance on the basis of the examination **as a whole**, not just on a particular area of questioning or only on his/her own field of specialization. The reporter reviews aloud the voting policies and procedures prior to the voting. Straw votes are encouraged. However, only one final, official, and secret vote by ballot is permitted. There can be no more than one negative or abstaining vote. No student will be permitted a second attempt to pass the Oral Comprehensive Examination unless it is recommended by the examining committee, endorsed by the major department, and approved by the Dean of the Graduate College. The second examination, if approved, may not take place until four months after the date of the first examination.

Special care to ensure the secrecy of the voting process must be taken in those instances when a committee member cannot be present and the examination is conducted by conference telephone call (this requires prior approval by the Dean of the Graduate College). Obtaining the official vote (and any straw votes) of the absent member with the telephone speaker temporarily switched off, and making sure that none of the members present disclose the other ballots, are important additional responsibilities of the reporter at these times. Ensuring the audibility, attribution of questions, and responses during both the questioning period and the subsequent discussion prior to voting is also the responsibility of the Reporter in these instances. The Reporter, acting as proxy, signs for the absent member in an examination involving a conference call.

Ballots are tallied by the reporter, who informs the committee whether the vote was **Pass or Fail**. Other than the Pass/Fail decision, the numbers of Pass versus Fail votes and the identities of persons voting one way or the other are kept in strict confidence by the reporter. An examiner who disagrees with the committee's decision may note the objection beside his/her signature on the report if desired. A student *passes or fails* the Oral Comprehensive Examination. If the student fails, the Committee has two options which need to be noted on the **Results of the Oral Comprehensive Examination** form. The option to be followed is determined by a majority vote of the Committee.

**Option 1:** Repeat the Oral Comprehensive Examination

**Option 2:** The Committee votes not to recommend a repeat examination

No further course work is required from students before a re-examination. If a re-examination is recommended, the committee members must be the same as those present at the first examination. If changes are made in the composition of the examination committee, they must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate College prior to the examination.

Regardless of the outcome of the Oral Comprehensive Examination, a committee member must return the “Results of the Oral Comprehensive Examination for Advancement to Candidacy” and the ballots to the Graduate Academic Advisor in the Office of Student Affairs for submission to the Graduate Degree Certification Office.

## **DNP Comprehensive Examination**

Before admission to DNP degree candidacy, the student must pass a general examination in the chosen fields of study. This examination is intended to test the student's comprehensive knowledge of the major and minor subjects of study, both in breadth across the general field of study, and in depth within the area of specialization. The examination is composed of two parts, written and oral. The written portion in the major covers content in advance practice through national certification, methods, and the minor area of study.

The student must be registered during the term in which they take their comprehensive exams. The student must request 3 units of NURS 930 Supplemental Registration through the Independent Study Request system on the College of Nursing website.

### **A. Written Comprehensive Examination General Policies:**

1. Students should schedule each part of the comprehensive examination only after conferring with their faculty advisory committee.
2. All three examinations areas hold equal weight. The methods and minor examinations may be taken in any order. Successful completion on one is not required to take the next exam. If desired, an informal comprehensive planning meeting may be held at which time the advisory committee members and the student generate a basic plan for the examination.
3. If the student fails any of the three written examinations, the student may retake national certification and/or an alternative examination of the methods or minor examination. The timeframe for repeating the national certification examination must coincide with the timeline established by the board certifying agency. The alternate methods and/or minor examination must be taken within 3 months of the initial examination. Failure to pass the national certification exam, methods or minor examination on the second try will result in the student's disqualification from the program. The comprehensive

examination, including both the written and oral examinations, must be completed at least three months before the final practice inquiry defense.

B. Written Comprehensive Examination portions:

1. Substantive Major (Advanced Practice) examination: the DNP student's substantive major is their advanced nursing practice specialty. The written examination to test the student's comprehensive knowledge of the DNP practice substantive major is the national certification examination for advanced practice specialty.

Once all requirements are achieved for the nurse practitioner preparation, BSN to DNP students may receive a Master of Science degree and are eligible to take the national certification examination and apply for licensure as an advance practice registered nurse.

MS to DNP students with a nurse practitioner specialty will receive a Post-Master's Nurse Practitioner certificate and are eligible to take the national certification examination and apply for licensure as an advance practice registered nurse. Students must demonstrate national certification before progressing to the practice inquiry project (NURS 922 Practice Inquiry) and must provide documentation to the Office of Student Affairs once certification and licensure are obtained.

The student must notify the faculty advisor when the student will take the national certification examination and provide written evidence to the Graduate Academic Advisor in the Office of Student Affairs when this examination is scheduled. The Associate Dean for Academic Practice and/or Director of the Doctor of Nursing Practice will review and sign the student's application to take the national examination to validate eligibility to take the exam. The student must provide evidence of test outcome to the faculty advisor and Graduate Academic Advisor in the Office of Student Affairs within 30 days of notification by the certifying agency.

For MS to DNP students with national certification in an advanced practice specialty, the College of Nursing will accept current national certification and state licensure as evidence of mastery of the substantive major written examination.

Certification requirements related to advanced practice as a nurse practitioner vary from state to state. It is the student's responsibility to investigate certification requirements in the state where she/he plans to practice and to keep up to date on changes in requirements. Regardless of the certification requirements in the state where the student plans to practice, taking the certification exam is part of the overall comprehensive examination process at the College of Nursing. The College of Nursing views successful completion

of the national certification exam as evidence of mastery of the substantive major written examination.

2. **Methods Major examination:** This examination is intended to test the student's comprehensive knowledge of the methodologies related to conducting scholarly work at the highest level of nursing practice. The methods examination will occur after the completion of the following courses: NURS 631 Advanced Statistics, NURS 652 Methods for Scholarly Inquiry, NURS 752 Evaluation Methodologies for Safety and Quality.

A DNP student may take the written methods examination in the semester that the last of these courses is taken. The methods exam will be offered once each semester in September and February. This examination must be successfully passed before the student can progress to the practice inquiry project (NURS 922).

The student is responsible for discussing readiness to take the methods written examinations with their faculty advisor. The faculty advisor and advisory committee will coordinate the examination and grade the examination. The faculty advisor and student will notify the Graduate Academic Advisor in the Office of Student Affairs when the student is eligible to take the methods examination. Students, after discussing with their committee, will sign up for either September or February for examination. Students must inform the Graduate Academic Advisor one month prior to taking the exam.

**Methods Exam Format:** The first part of the exam will be a written critique of a published article/research report from a tier-1 journal and is meant to test knowledge as presented in the statistics and quantitative methods coursework. The student will critique this article with respect to adequacy of design, sampling, data collection, and data analysis. Appropriate references are to be included. The length of the critique should be no more than 12 pages, excluding references. The use of APA format is expected.

The second part of the exam will be a written critique of a published meta-analysis, best practice, or evidence based guidelines from a tier-1 journal. This critique is meant to test knowledge in evidence based practice and practice improvement and evaluation methodologies. The students will critique the article with respect to a) the adequacy of the information to inform the "state of the science/practice" and b) how the article could be used to evaluate the effectiveness of that science/practice for a given population. There will be an attempt to select an article that reflects each student's research interest. Appropriate references are to be included. The length of the critique should be no more than 12 pages, excluding references. The use of APA format is expected.

**Methods Exam Evaluation:** The methods examination will be graded as follows:



- a. The article to be critiqued for the first part question will be selected and graded by the student's Advisory Committee.
- b. The article (s) for the meta-analysis, best practice, or evidence based guidelines for the second question will be selected and graded by the Advisory Committee.
- c. Members use a grading sheet to score the examination and then confer with each other to determine the final outcome. To successfully "pass" the major comprehensive examination, a student must receive a rating of "pass" by a majority of the advisory committee.
- d. In the case of a non-passing grade, the student may take the exam a second time. A second non-passing grade will result in disqualification from the program.

Methods Exam Procedure:

- a. The exam will be offered one time each semester in September and February.
- b. The articles and associated questions will be emailed by the faculty advisor to the Graduate Academic Advisor in the Office of Student Affairs at least one week prior to the scheduled examination.
- c. The Graduate Academic Advisor will email the examination to the student. Students may contact the advisory committee chairperson or designee with any questions regarding the examination. The student's written examination will take the form of a scholarly paper. The student should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the extant literature; and both depth and breadth of knowledge will be evaluated. APA format is required with a complete reference list. The student will have 7 days to complete the entire exam.
- d. At the end of the agreed-on one week period, students email their completed examination to the Graduate Academic Advisor. Doctoral students are required to submit written comprehensive exams to Turnitin® for an originality report. Students receive instructions regarding Turnitin® with their examination questions.
- e. The Graduate Academic Advisor forwards the student's completed examination via email to the faculty advisor who, in turn, forwards copies to each committee member. The committee has 10 business days to review student responses.
- f. The faculty advisor notifies the student by email or phone of the results. The Graduate Academic Advisor is also notified. The Graduate Academic

Advisor then notifies the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. A letter from the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs is sent to the student as official notification of the examination results. The faculty advisor returns grading sheets and student responses to the Graduate Academic Advisor. A copy of the examination is forwarded to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, who maintains a Test Question Bank for students and faculty.

- g. After receiving written notice of the outcome of the written methods and minor examinations, the student may talk with committee members about areas for further study or other advice as a follow-up of the examination and in preparation for the oral examination.
3. Minor examination: The minor examination will take the form of take home question or a scholarly paper. The student will confer with the Faculty Advisory Committee prior to taking this examination and the Faculty Advisor will notify the College of Nursing Graduate Advisor when this exam will be taken. Students will have one week to complete the take home question. To successfully “pass” the minor comprehensive examination, a student must receive a rating of “80 percent.”

### C. Oral Comprehensive Examination

1. Scheduling the Oral Examination: The oral examination must be taken within 3 months of successfully passing both major and minor written examinations. It is highly recommended that the student schedule the oral examination within the first ten (10) days of the semester they register for NURS 922 Practice Inquiry. The oral examination may be repeated once if not passed initially. Failure to pass the second examination will result in the student’s disqualification from the program. The student should consult with all members of their advisory committee to determine a date and time for the oral examination. As soon as a date and time are agreed upon, the Graduate Academic Advisor in the Office of Student Affairs must be notified so that a room may be reserved for the exam. The student will be responsible for filling out the “Results of Oral Comprehensive Exam” (which can be found at the Graduate College [MyGradColl](#) website) and obtaining the appropriate pre-exam signatures. They will then take the form to the exam where the committee will record the results and provide their signatures. The Graduate Academic Advisor is available to assist distance students with this process. Following the exam, the form must be submitted by the committee to the Graduate Academic Advisor who will submit to the Graduate College.
2. Taking the Examination: The oral examination will be conducted, either onsite or via teleconferencing, as arranged by the student and the advisory committee, following procedures put forward by the Graduate College. The oral examination will cover both major and minor emphasis areas and will

require the student to demonstrate breadth of knowledge in the field, as well as depth of knowledge in the student's specialty area. The oral examination must be at least one hour in length. All committee members must be present for the entire examination.

The Graduate Academic Advisor provides the committee chairperson with the appropriate paperwork for the exam, including:

- the approved "Results of Oral Comprehensive Exam" form for students participating from a distance
- the Policies and Procedures for Oral Comprehensive Examination for Doctoral Candidacy
- the Ballots

The committee chairperson takes these documents to the Oral Comprehensive Examination. The Graduate Academic Advisor provides all members of the committee with a copy of the student's Plan of Study and notifies the committee of the date, time, and room where the examination will be held.

The examination is conducted in closed session. It is not open to the public. All members must be in attendance for the entire exam which should be at least one hour in length, but not exceed three hours. If a participant cannot be located within ten minutes of the scheduled starting time, the committee chair must notify the Graduate Degree Certification Office so that another examiner, acceptable to both the student and the committee, may be found if possible. Only one substitute member is permitted. If a full committee is not assembled, the examination must be canceled or postponed and the Graduate Degree Certification office must be notified accordingly.

- D. The Comprehensive Examination Committee: The examining committee must consist of a minimum of three members. The Major Advisor (Committee Chair) and one additional member must be tenured, or tenure track or equivalent. The third member may be tenured or tenure-track or equivalent, or a special approved member. Special members must be pre-approved by the Dean of the Graduate College. Any members beyond the third can also be tenured or tenure-track, or special approved members. One member acts as reporter. This person (who cannot be the student's advisor) ensures that the exam is administered fairly and files the report with the Graduate College. The committee should include a member from outside the department as a reporter if necessary to ensure objective reporting.
- E. Evaluation of Performance in the Oral Examination: At the conclusion of the Oral Comprehensive Examination (and after the student has left the room), discussion of the student's performance is initiated. Each member of the examination committee is expected to evaluate the student's performance on the basis of the examination **as a whole**, not just on a particular area of questioning or

only on his/her own field of specialization. The reporter reviews aloud the voting policies and procedures prior to the voting. Straw votes are encouraged. However, only one final, official, and secret vote by ballot is permitted. There can be no more than one negative or abstaining vote. No student will be permitted a second attempt to pass the Oral Comprehensive Examination unless it is recommended by the examining committee, endorsed by the major department, and approved by the Dean of the Graduate College. The second examination, if approved, may not take place until four months after the date of the first examination.

Special care to ensure the secrecy of the voting process must be taken in those instances when a committee member cannot be present and the examination is conducted by conference telephone call (this requires prior approval by the Dean of the Graduate College). Obtaining the official vote (and any straw votes) of the absent member with the telephone speaker temporarily switched off, and making sure that none of the members present disclose the other ballots, are important additional responsibilities of the reporter at these times. Ensuring the audibility, attribution of questions, and responses during both the questioning period and the subsequent discussion prior to voting is also the responsibility of the Reporter in these instances. The Reporter, acting as proxy, signs for the absent member in an examination involving a conference call.

Ballots are tallied by the reporter, who informs the committee whether the vote was **Pass or Fail**. Other than the Pass/Fail decision, the numbers of Pass versus Fail votes and the identities of persons voting one way or the other are kept in strict confidence by the reporter. An examiner who disagrees with the committee's decision may note the objection beside his/her signature on the report if desired. A student *passes or fails* the Oral Comprehensive Examination. If the student fails, the Committee has two options which need to be noted on the **Results of the Oral Comprehensive Examination** form. The option to be followed is determined by a majority vote of the Committee.

**Option 1:** Repeat the Oral Comprehensive Examination

**Option 2:** The Committee votes not to recommend a repeat examination

No further course work is required from students before a re-examination. If a re-examination is recommended, the committee members must be the same as those present at the first examination. If changes are made in the composition of the examination committee, they must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate College prior to the examination.

Regardless of the outcome of the Oral Comprehensive Examination, a committee member must return the "Results of the Oral Comprehensive Examination for Advancement to Candidacy" and the ballots to the Graduate Academic Advisor in the Office of Student Affairs for submission to the Graduate Degree Certification Office.

## **Advancement to Candidacy**

When the student has an approved doctoral Plan of Study on file with the Graduate College Degree Certification Office, has satisfied all course work, and passed the written and oral portions of the Comprehensive Examination, they will be “advanced to candidacy” by the Graduate College. The student’s bursar account will be billed the [fee for candidacy, dissertation processing, and archiving](#). This is a one-time fee and the student will not be billed again if they change their anticipated graduation date. Copyrighting is optional and carries an additional fee.

## **DNP Practice Inquiry Committee / PhD Dissertation Committee**

After completion of the comprehensive examination and before submitting the practice inquiry or dissertation proposal, it may be appropriate to review the composition and chairmanship of the nursing advisory committee that will become the practice inquiry or dissertation committee. The need for specific areas of expertise must be addressed and reflected in committee composition. Other factors such as faculty sabbatical leaves, time available to work with the student, faculty interests and other areas as deemed pertinent by faculty and/or student must be addressed at this time. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs must approve changes in the advisory / dissertation committee composition and / or chairperson.

- A. DNP Practice Inquiry Committee: The Graduate College and the College of Nursing require a minimum of three practice inquiry committee members. Two members, including the chairperson, must be University of Arizona tenured, tenure-track, or approved as equivalent. The third member may be tenured or tenure-track, or a special approved member. Special members must be pre-approved by the Dean of the Graduate College. Any members beyond the third can also be tenured or tenure-track, or special approved members. All practice inquiry committee members are expected to attend the final defense.
- B. PhD Dissertation Committee: The Graduate College and the College of Nursing require a minimum of three dissertation committee members. Three members, including the chairperson, all of whom must be University of Arizona tenured, tenure-track, or approved as equivalent. If a committee has only three members, all must approve the dissertation. A fourth member may be tenured or tenure-track, or a special approved member. Special members must be pre-approved by the Dean of the Graduate College. Any members beyond the fourth can also be tenured or tenure-track, or special approved members. All dissertation committee members are expected to attend the final defense.
- C. When the student has an approved doctoral Plan of Study on file, has satisfied all course work requirements and passed the written and oral portions of the Comprehensive Examination, he or she must file a Committee Appointment form. This application must be submitted to the Graduate College Degree Certification Office as soon as requirements are met but no later than six months before the

Final Oral Defense Examination (for the practice inquiry or dissertation) is scheduled. The student will be responsible for filling out the “Committee Appointment” form which can be found at the Graduate College [MyGradColl](#) website. If a student’s research for their practice inquiry or dissertation involves human or animal subjects, a copy of the letter from the Human Subjects committee / IACUC is required with submission of this form.

## **DNP Practice Inquiry and Final Oral Examination (Practice Inquiry Defense)**

- A. Practice Inquiry Proposal: The practice inquiry chairperson should work closely with the student during the early stages of proposal development. The student should use the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (4th ed.) as a format guide in writing the practice inquiry. Other sources include the University of Arizona’s [Manual for Electronic Submission of Thesis and Dissertations](#)

When the chairperson has approved the student's draft of the proposal (Chapters 1, 2 and 3, including references), the student will contact all major committee members to set a date for the proposal meeting. The student is to provide major committee members with copies of the proposal at least 2 weeks before the scheduled proposal meeting. Minor committee members may be invited to attend, but their attendance is not required.

After major committee members approve the written proposal, the student must process the proposed study through the Human Subjects Committee, if required, before beginning data collection.

Students must submit a defensible proposal for their practice inquiry within two academic semesters following the successful completion of their written and oral comprehensive examinations. Following approval of the practice inquiry proposal, student progress will be monitored by their practice inquiry chair and annually by the Doctoral Program Committee. If the Doctoral Program Committee, in consultation with the practice inquiry chair, determines that satisfactory progress has not been made, the student may be dismissed from the program.

- B. Final Oral Defense Examination / Practice Inquiry Defense: Once the student and the committee agree on a time and date for the final oral defense examination, the student must schedule the defense by contacting the Graduate Academic Advisor in the Office of Student Affairs. The Graduate Academic Advisor will assist the student with the “Announcement of Final Oral Examination” form that must be submitted to the Graduate College at least 7 business days prior to the defense. The “Announcement of Final Oral Examination” form can be found at the Graduate College [MyGradColl](#) website.

The student must be registered for at least one unit during semester in which the examination is held, either for NURS 922 Practice Inquiry or NURS 930 Supplemental Registration.

The student should provide the committee members with copies of the penultimate draft of the practice inquiry not less than 3 weeks prior to the scheduled date of the defense.

The penultimate draft of a practice inquiry must include:

1. All parts of the dissertation: title page, table of contents, abstract, Chapters 1 - 5, references, appendices
2. Narrative completely typed
3. Tables and illustrations typed or ready for professional drafting
4. A copy of the Human Subjects Committee Approval form

The practice inquiry chair presides over the examination. The examination is closed to the public, except for an initial seminar portion during which the student presents the practice inquiry and entertains questions. An advertisement inviting members of the university community is published in Lo Que Pasa. The final defense is also announced via e-mail to all students, faculty and staff members in the College of Nursing, on the College of Nursing website, on Arizona Health Sciences Center TV screens, and is broadcast live via the internet.

There is no minimum time limit for the Final Oral Examination, but the entire proceedings may not exceed three hours. Members of the committee must be present for the entire examination.

There are four possible outcomes of the examination:

1. Pass
2. Pass with minor revisions (only the dissertation chairperson needs to approve the practice inquiry following revisions)
3. Pass with major revisions (the entire committee needs to approve the practice inquiry following revisions)
4. Fail

Upon successful completion of the Final Oral Defense Examination, the candidate completes any necessary revisions and a formatting review by one of the divisional administrative associates. The student then submits the practice inquiry electronically for forwarding to the The University of Arizona Library and to University Microfilms, Inc (UMI).

The student must also submit an electronic copy (via disk, CD or email) to the office of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. The College of Nursing maintains a digital repository of master's reports, master's theses, practice

inquiries and dissertations. Students are required to submit a Statement of Agreement that grants or denies the College of Nursing license to include the student's work in the digital repository.

The student must also contact the College of Nursing Office of Nursing Research to verify that all procedures and requirements for Human Subjects have been completed.

Upon receipt of the finalized practice inquiry, the Dean of the Graduate College will recommend conferral of the doctoral degree by the Arizona Board of Regents.

### **PhD Dissertation and Final Oral Examination (Dissertation Defense)**

- A. **Dissertation Proposal:** The dissertation chairperson should work closely with the student during the early stages of proposal development. The student should use the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (4th ed.) as a format guide in writing the dissertation. Other sources include the University of Arizona's [Manual for Electronic Submission of Thesis and Dissertations](#)

When the dissertation chairperson has approved the student's draft of the proposal (Chapters 1, 2 and 3, including references), the student will contact all major committee members to set a date for the proposal meeting. The student is to provide major committee members with copies of the proposal at least 2 weeks before the scheduled proposal meeting. Minor committee members may be invited to attend, but their attendance is not required.

After major committee members approve the written dissertation proposal, the student must process the proposed study through the Human Subjects Committee, before beginning data collection.

Students must submit a defensible proposal for their dissertation within two academic semesters following the successful completion of their written and oral comprehensive examinations. Following approval of the dissertation proposal, student progress will be monitored by their dissertation chair and annually by the Doctoral Program Committee. If the Doctoral Program Committee, in consultation with the dissertation chair, determines that satisfactory progress has not been made, the student may be dismissed from the program.

- B. **Final Oral Defense Examination / Dissertation Defense:** Once the student and the dissertation committee agree on a time and date for the final oral defense examination, the student must schedule the defense by contacting the Graduate Academic Advisor in the Office of Student Affairs. The Graduate Academic Advisor will assist the student with the "Announcement of Final Oral Examination" form that must be submitted to the Graduate College at least 7



business days prior to the defense. The “Announcement of Final Oral Examination” form can be found at the Graduate College [MyGradColl](#) website.

The student must be registered for at least one unit during semester in which the examination is held, either for NURS 920 Dissertation or NURS 930 Supplemental Registration.

The student should provide the committee members with copies of the penultimate draft of the dissertation not less than 3 weeks prior to the scheduled date of the defense.

The penultimate draft of a dissertation must include:

1. All parts of the dissertation: title page, table of contents, abstract, Chapters 1 - 5, references, appendices
2. Narrative completely typed
3. Tables and illustrations typed or ready for professional drafting
4. A copy of the Human Subjects Committee Approval form

The dissertation chairperson presides over the examination. The examination is closed to the public, except for an initial seminar portion during which the student presents the dissertation and entertains questions. An advertisement inviting members of the university community is published in *Lo Que Pasa*. The final dissertation defense is also announced via e-mail to all students, faculty and staff members in the College of Nursing, on the College of Nursing website, on Arizona Health Sciences Center TV screens, and is broadcast live via the internet.

There is no minimum time limit for the Final Oral Examination, but the entire proceedings may not exceed three hours. Members of the committee must be present for the entire examination.

There are four possible outcomes of the examination:

1. Pass
2. Pass with minor dissertation revisions (only the dissertation chairperson needs to approve the dissertation following revisions)
3. Pass with major dissertation revisions (the entire committee needs to approve the dissertation following revisions)
4. Fail

Upon successful completion of the Final Oral Defense Examination, the candidate completes any necessary revisions and a formatting review by one of the divisional administrative associates. The student then submits the dissertation [electronically](#) for forwarding to the The University of Arizona Library and to University Microfilms, Inc (UMI).

The student must also submit an electronic copy (via disk, CD or email) to the office of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. The College of Nursing maintains a digital repository of master's reports, master's theses, practice inquiries and dissertations. Students are required to submit a Statement of Agreement that grants or denies the College of Nursing license to include the student's work in the digital repository.

The student must also contact the College of Nursing Office of Nursing Research to verify that all procedures and requirements for Human Subjects have been completed.

Upon receipt of the finalized dissertation, the Dean of the Graduate College will recommend conferral of the doctoral degree by the Arizona Board of Regents.