

## PhD Program Handbook 2023-2024



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**UConn**  
SCHOOL OF NURSING

**PhD Program**

**25+ Years of Excellence**  
*From 1994 to Today*

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>Welcome to UConn</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>PRAXIS Pledge</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>UConn SON PhD Program – History and Overview</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>I. PhD Advisory Committee</b>	<b>6</b>
A. Three member committee	
B. Advisory Committee Roles	
1. Role of student	
2. Role of Major Advisor (MA)	
3. Role of Associate Advisors (AA)	
4. Role of Reviewers (external readers)	
C. Change of Major Advisor	
D. Change in Associate Advisor	
E. Communication.	
<b>II. PhD Program Requirements and Milestones</b>	<b>11</b>
A. Curriculum & Plan of Study	
B. Annual Progress Report	
C. The General Exam	
1. The Written Component	
2. The Oral Component	
D. PhD Dissertation and Defense Procedures	
1. Selecting the Dissertation Format	
2. Steps to Follow	
3. Process Roles and Responsibilities	
4. IRB Application Process	
5. Submission of proposal to Registrar’s Office	
6. Advancement to Candidacy	
7. Completing the Dissertation	
8. Defense of the Dissertation	
9. Timelines for planning the defense and submission of final product	
10. After the Defens	
<b>III. PhD Portfolio / The Student Portfolio</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>IV. Resources and Opportunities for Students</b>	<b>25</b>



UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT

## Welcome to UConn

Greetings PhD and BS-PhD students,

Welcome to the UConn Community of Scholars! This handbook is a reference for faculty and students in the PhD Program at the University of Connecticut (UConn), School of Nursing (SON). It is to be used in conjunction with the Graduate School catalog. The Graduate School awards the degree.

Our faculty & staff will communicate with you through messages to your UConn email address or those distributed on the doctoral listserv [DNP\\_PHDNURS-L@listserv.uconn.edu](mailto:DNP_PHDNURS-L@listserv.uconn.edu).

The PhD Program website will provide continually updated information. The Graduate School and Registrar's Office websites listed below give not only updated information on University requirements, but also additional needed forms.

<https://nursing.uconn.edu/doctoral-students/>

<https://phd.nursing.uconn.edu/>

<https://registrar.uconn.edu/graduation/graduate-programs/>

<https://gradcatalog.uconn.edu/>

The handbook will be updated annually. Once your plan of study is filed, any changes made to the curriculum or scholarly portfolio do not apply to you; however, any process changes are relevant for your progression.

Together with your Major Advisor, faculty, and staff, we are always available to address any questions, concerns or issues you may have.

Best wishes for a smooth and fulfilling PhD experience.

Regards,

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# **PRAXIS** Pledge

The **PRAXIS Pledge** is the guiding compass for behavior in the SON and UConn. All students are held responsible to and accountable for this pledge; adherence is expected and violations will be adjudicated.

**Professionalism** in behavior, presentation, and conduct

**Respectful** of the richness and diversity of others and of self

**Accountability** for my actions

**eXcellence** in scholarship, practice, teaching and service

**Integrity**, inquisitiveness, and innovation

**Service** to the profession and the community



## UConn SON PhD Program – History and Overview

The UConn School of Nursing PhD Program admitted its first class in August 1994. From the outset, our focus was on developing and advancing the theoretical, conceptual, and empirical structures for our discipline. As a research-based degree, our attention is on contemporary methods to address the pressing questions in nursing and healthcare.

Our first graduate was in 1999. The average time to degree completion is four and a half years. Our goal is for students to complete in four years or less as leaders in research are needed in our discipline for key academic, practice and policy roles. Highly organized and motivated students have completed the program in three years.

The UConn School of Nursing (SON) PhD program supports students in achieving their highest research and leadership aspirations through learning experiences that reflect current and future health care needs. Therefore, it is our goal for students to be exposed to a broad range of experiences to grasp the depth and breadth of conducting nursing science in the real world, and to gain leadership skills to advance health.

PhD students complete a three-course sequence in philosophy of science and nursing theory while also gaining skills in qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research paradigms. Specific research courses include responsible conduct of research, quantitative methods for design (three courses), qualitative methods (two courses), mixed methods and grantsmanship. PhD students also complete six credits of Courses Supportive of the Dissertation (CSDA or cognates), which are included in their personalized Plan of Study (see below for more information).

Upon completion of course work and all prescribed experiences (general exam, publication, and dissertation as three examples), our graduates are prepared to:

1. Advance philosophical and theoretical bases of nursing by:
  - a. Analyzing knowledge development and its influence on the past, present, and future of the nursing profession.
  - b. Generating knowledge to support the philosophical and theoretical bases of nursing using empirical, ethical, esthetic, and existential methods.
2. Conduct independent inquiry that advances nursing science by:
  - a. Using quantitative and qualitative research methods to study nursing phenomena.
  - b. Evaluating philosophical bases and assumptions of varied research methods.
  - c. Integrating knowledge and skills needed for securing competitive funding.

3. Provide distinguished leadership in the resolution of significant health care issues by:
  - a. Demonstrating expertise in applying nursing knowledge to the resolution of health care issues.
  - b. Using decision-making and problem-solving processes to influence health care policy.

In healthcare, we know it is important to address discharge at the time of admission. Similarly one needs to focus on post-doctoral activities at the start of your program. To that end, PhD students are encouraged to be active members on SON faculty committees, attend faculty and student development sessions, and participate in 'Lunch & Learn' sessions. Through this socialization, students are immersed and supported in forging long-lasting relationships and networks that optimize their research and leadership trajectories while also launching their own careers. We also encourage you to seek teaching opportunities in your area of expertise while completing your program of study. This will provide valuable experience to strengthen your portfolio and receive formative feedback from expert scholar practitioners.

## I. PhD Advisory Committee

An advisory committee will collectively mentor doctoral students throughout coursework, general exam, dissertation development, final defense, and manuscript preparation. The role of the committee is to guide professional development and critique the students' work in progress.

Membership on the advisory committee is integral to a student's success. Members will be carefully and deliberately selected and the dynamic of the committee is an important consideration.

### A. Three member committee

A major advisor is assigned at the time of admission to the PhD Program on the basis of content area or other variables.

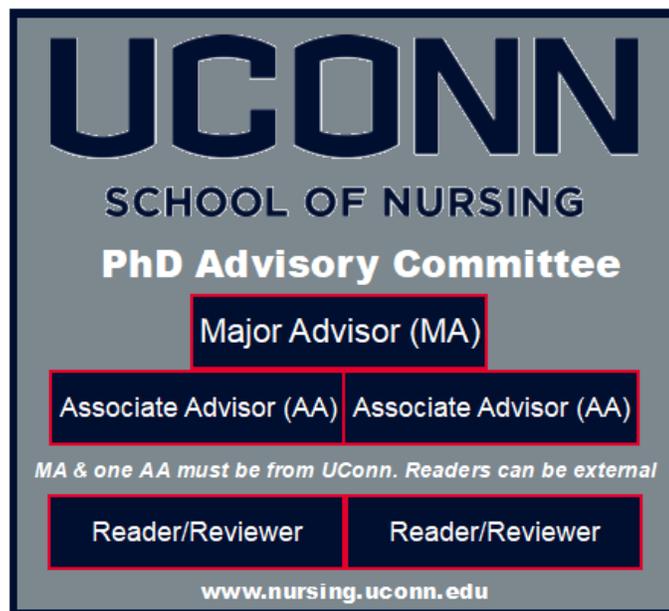
Committees generally consist of three faculty members (one Major Advisor and two Associate Advisors). Configuration of the committee must be complete by the end of the first year or upon completion of 12 credits, whichever comes first, consistent with Graduate School policy.

A combination of UConn faculty and non-UConn faculty members may be assembled to form an advisory committee. Of the three core members of the advisory committee, the Major Advisor and at least one Associate Advisor MUST be members of the UConn faculty with a Graduate School appointment; only the MA needs to be from the School of Nursing.

The committee needs to be assembled early in the student’s progress and meet regularly to guide the student’s works. The communication and coordination of the advisory committee ultimately rests with the PhD student, who will schedule meetings as needed to guide progress.

Once the committee is in place, it is advisable that they meet *at least once each semester* to provide guidance for the student. These meetings can be in person, by phone, or through electronic means. How the committee meets is not as important as conducting *regular meetings*. Regular meetings of the student and committee can best help assure continued progression in the doctoral program. Two additional reviewers (readers) are added for review of student works once the student is in the general exam and dissertation phase.

Roles for various committee members follow below. Associate Advisors from outside the University must meet the criteria for graduate faculty status; all members must have a terminal degree. For Associate Advisors from outside the University, an up-to-date CV must be submitted to the PhD Program Director and in-turn to the Registrar’s Office for approval. Additional information about the UConn graduate degree program advisory system can be found on the [Graduate School website](#).



## B. Advisory Committee Roles

### 1. Role of student:

- a. Students initiate the needed advisory meetings.
- b. Once admitted, the student must schedule an advising appointment with the MA prior to registering for course work.
- c. Students shall meet with the MA at least twice yearly (usually at least once

- each semester, more as needed to best support student progression) to review the student's course of study.
- d. Address recommendations of the advisory committee in a timely manner.
  - e. Inform committee, particularly MA, if/when progression issues occur.

## **2. Role of Major Advisor (MA):**

- a. The PhD Admissions & Progress Committee works with faculty to determine the best match for the student at the time of admission. This determination is made by matching the area of interest indicated on application materials with a faculty member who has expertise in that area.
- b. MA is a SON faculty member.
- c. The MA will file Doctoral Advisement notes in the student record at least twice yearly.
- d. Each year in the spring, the MA works with the student to submit an updated NCBI biosketch, which will be completed electronically and submitted by email to the PhD Program Director (CC: PhD Program Coordinator). Students will learn how to create the NCBI biosketch during a Lunch and Learn in the fall semester of each academic year and will update on a regular basis. (<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm>).
- e. It is recommended that once the student advisement committee is assembled that the committee meet at least once each semester and more often as needed to best assure the student's progression in the program. Any member of the advisement committee can ask for a meeting; however, it is the responsibility of the student and/or the MA to finalize the schedule and provide a Webex meeting link or secure a meeting location for in-person meetings.
- f. Facilitate timely completion of and adherence to the Plan of Study.

## **3. Role of Associate Advisors (AA):**

- a. AAs share the responsibility with the MA of assisting with the development of the student's plan of study and meeting doctoral requirements.
- b. The AAs usually have subject matter or methods expertise that brings a complementary perspective to that of the MA.
- c. The student selects AAs in consultation with the MA.
- d. As stated above, at least one AA must be from the UConn faculty.

## **4. Role of Reviewers/Readers:**

- a. Every general exam and dissertation has at least two external reviewers/readers.
- b. Individuals may be selected from UConn or outside the university; these individuals should have terminal degrees in an area complementary to the student's program of study. A CV must be provided for reviewers/readers outside of UConn.

- c. Reviewers/Readers serve as final checks and balance as committee members have assisted in the design and implementation of the study.
- d. Reviewers/Readers are recommended by the Major Advisor and must be approved by the PhD Program Director (see page 10).
- e. Reviewers/Readers critique the student's product and contribute to the deliberations, but do not vote on the outcome of the general exam or dissertation defense.

### **C. Change of Major Advisor**

Sometimes, a change in MA is necessary, i.e., if a student has a substantive change in direction for their interests.

1. Per SON policy (May 2018), any request to change a major advisor is submitted to the PhD Admissions and Progress Committee via the PhD Program Director. They will review the request, whether submitted by a faculty member or a student, and make a decision to change the advisor or guide in a different solution. Discussions will be held with all parties and a decision made.
2. If a change is approved, a ["Change in Major Advisor Form"](#) to be completed by the student, signed\* by the original and new advisor, and submitted to the PhD Program Director AND the Registrar's Office.

*\*Please see page 29 for Current Practices for Document Approvals and Submissions from the UConn Registrar's Office.*

### **D. Change in Associate Advisor**

The Advisory Committee, with the student, makes the decision to change associate advisors as needed.

1. Please notify the Program Coordinator so the files can be updated.
2. If the new associate advisor is outside UConn, an updated CV must be submitted to the PhD Director and Registrar's Office. This may be done by email to registrar (registrar@uconn.edu) and PhD Program Director noting the student's name and who the new person is replacing on the committee.

## E. Communication

**Important Note:** UConn email is the only email used and materials circulated through that format are official documents.



### Academic Year 2023-2024

1. School of Nursing e-mail communications between students and faculty generally will be **addressed within two business days** following receipt of message.
2. Advisors are expected to provide feedback on chapter/project drafts, IRB applications, etc. to students **within two weeks**.

### Summer 2024 (May 23<sup>rd</sup> through August 22<sup>nd</sup> )

***As Major Advisors and committee members appointments vary between 9-month, 10-month, 11-month or 12-month appointments:***

1. General exams, dissertation proposal review, and/or dissertation defenses are not routinely held May 23<sup>rd</sup> through August 22<sup>nd</sup>.
2. Summer schedules differ and thus, timelines need to be discussed prior to the end of each semester so that student progression can continue without impeding faculty scholarship and summer activities.
3. MAs should notify students of plans and develop timelines for communication during the summer months. Independent study credits with the MA is an option to compensate faculty for their time during the summer months when on a 9- or 10-month contract.

## II. PhD Program Requirements and Milestones

### A. Curriculum & Plan of Study

The program of study sequence for required courses is prescribed, yet individualized. Please see the UConn SON PhD Program website for current recommended course sequencing.

1. An official individualized Plan of Study must be completed by the student and signed\* by the student's three-person advisory committee prior to the completion of the first year of study or 12 credits (for all part-time or full-time students), whichever comes first. Submission at this point in time in the student's progression in the program is consistent with the Graduate School policy. The sooner the plan of study is in place the better for the student since this guides timely progression through the program, facilitates course offering decisions, and serves as a contract between the student and UConn.  
*\*Please see page 29 for Current Practices for Document Approvals and Submissions from the UConn Registrar's Office.*
2. The student is responsible for submitting the executed form to the PhD Program Director (CC: Program Coordinator). The PhD Program Coordinator will submit the form to the Registrar's Office, and an electronic copy will be uploaded to the student's file in the SON Q: Drive.
3. Changes may be made to the plan of study by the student and approved by the committee. Substituting one CSDA for another requires approval and a change of plan of study submission, whereas a change in the semester a course is completed requires no change to the plan of study.

## **B. Annual Progress Report/Biosketch** (*end of academic year report*)

Each spring while in the program, PhD students will submit an updated electronic NIH NBCI Biosketch (**due May 1<sup>st</sup>** annually to the PhD Admissions & Progress Committee via Program Coordinator). Biosketches are to follow the NIH NCBI guidelines (see NIH fellows biosketch guidelines and NIH Fellows biosketch forms in resource section - <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm>). A copy of the Annual Progress Report/Biosketch will be saved in the student's file in the SON Q: Drive and will also be included in the student's Scholarly Portfolio.

## **C. The General Exam** (*MUST be completed within four years of matriculation*)

The programmatic goal for the General Exam is that the PhD curriculum prepares students for independent scholarly work and thus, successful completion of the General Exam demonstrates student learning and skills for independence based on the curriculum completed at time of exam. The General Exam in the SON PhD program is a two-part process (written and oral); both parts must be passed to be successful on the General Exam. The product of the general exam is a publishable manuscript in a peer-reviewed journal on a topic and format approved by the student's three-person advisory committee. The General Exam may be completed after 75% of the program coursework, exclusive of GRAD 6950, has been completed consistent with Graduate School policies.

## 1. The Written Component:

The overall concept and format for the General Exam must be approved by the student's committee prior to the student commencing work on the General Exam (see General Exam forms [see PhD student resources]).

- a. Acceptable formats include: integrated or systematic review (using the [PRISMA](#) guidelines), meta-synthesis, meta-analysis, concept or theory analysis, philosophy paper, and secondary analysis of publicly available data. Formats that require IRB review are **not** permitted because the project would not be considered independent due to the need for the major advisor to be the PI for UCONN IRB submission.
- b. With the advanced permission of the three-person advisory committee, a student may seek technical assistance on a specific issue, e.g., statistical question, if the issue is beyond what a typical graduate student would be expected to know as a result of the program of study. Otherwise, the paper should reflect only the student's efforts as would be expected on any exam.
- c. Student self-assesses paper using the Grading Rubric (see Resources)
- d. Once all areas are met on the rubric, the student will submit the completed paper simultaneously to their three-person advisory committee during the academic year August 23<sup>rd</sup> through April 1<sup>st</sup> (this end date gives time for the first review and potential defense prior to the end of the academic year). The committee will not provide editorial feedback; they will only determine if the paper is sufficiently developed to proceed to the oral portion of the general exam. The committee may provide general feedback on needed areas of revision. For example, the committee may indicate that a problem exists with the analysis, but the feedback may not be specific and may not include any advice on how to address the concerns. ONE revision is acceptable. If the second submission does not meet standards, the student may not continue with the PhD Program at the School of Nursing.
- e. The MA will submit the committee-approved paper to the student's two reviewers/readers (selected by the MA in collaboration with the PhD Program Director). As with the committee members, the reviewers/readers will not provide editorial feedback to the student; they will only determine if the paper is sufficiently developed to proceed to the oral portion of the general exam (pass/fail). The readers may provide general feedback on needed areas of revision, but the feedback may not be specific and may not include any advice on how to address concern. The student may

revise and resubmit, ONE TIME, for the approval of the two readers. If the paper is not acceptable after the second review, the student may not continue in the PhD program in the SON.

- f. General exams are usually not reviewed nor defended May 23<sup>rd</sup> through August 22<sup>nd</sup>.

## 2. The Oral Component:

The oral portion of the exam will include discussion and defense of the paper as well as an overview of the student's program of study underlying the paper and a plan for future program of research, including the dissertation topic. The five-person general exam committee will examine not only the paper contents and the student's research plan, but also the student's ability to apply philosophy, theory, and research methods within the context of the student's stated area of expertise.

- a. The PhD Student prepares a presentation adhering to the Grading rubric (see Resources)
- b. The PhD student schedules the oral portion of the general exam (August 23<sup>rd</sup> through May 22<sup>nd</sup>).
- c. The Report on the General Exam is used at the oral defense for faculty comments and approval signatures\*. The PhD Program Coordinator will submit the executed Report on the General Exam to the Registrar's office, and a copy will be saved in the student's file in the SON Q: Drive.
  - a. Possible outcomes for the General Exam are: Pass, Pass with Remedial Action Required, and Fail.
  - b. Students have one opportunity to retake the oral component if the outcome is a fail.
  - c. If the student has completed their masters' coursework and should have their masters degree conferred, a letter requesting this action from the MA should be included in the paperwork submission for the General Exam.

*\*Please see page 29 for Current Practices for Document Approvals and Submissions from the UConn Registrar's Office.*

- d. The completed paper must be submitted for publication as part of the student's scholarly portfolio; however, the paper may *not* be applied toward the three-article alternate dissertation option. Following the defense of the general exam, the committee may provide additional feedback to the student to strengthen the manuscript and to enhance its chances for acceptance.

Once the student passes the general exam, they may proceed to the PhD degree dissertation phase, and if their cognate courses are complete and their proposal has been accepted by the Graduate School, they are a PhD candidate.

## D. PhD Dissertation and Defense Procedures

### 1. Selecting the Dissertation Format:

There are two options for completion of the dissertation:

- **Chapter Dissertation** -- the standard five-chapter dissertation addressing a single study (Chapter 1. Overview of Problem; Chapter 2. Review of Literature; Chapter 3. Study Methods; 4. Results; 5. Discussion/Application and Conclusions).
- **Manuscript Dissertation** -- three manuscript option. The manuscript style dissertation includes five chapters with the same first (Overview of Problem) and last (Discussion/application and Conclusions) chapters as the five-chapter dissertation. The other three chapters consist of manuscripts that have been or will be submitted for publication of which at least one of the manuscripts will be the primary research report of the dissertation study. The student and the advisory committee will determine the contents of the three manuscripts. Suggestions for dissertation manuscripts include, but are not limited to: one or more research reports, an integrative or systematic review/synthesis paper, a methods paper and a clinical application paper. Authorship of these papers is determined by the MA and committee members with the student. The student is most often the first author but does not necessarily need to be the first author on all three of these papers. Authorship shall be determined using the International COPE authorship guidelines (see RESOURCES) and does not necessarily include the whole dissertation committee or readers but should be determined by the true work of each of the named authors. Authorship can also include those that are not members of the committee; as appropriate given the work toward the manuscript completion. If the manuscript is already published at the time of the defense the student will need to request copyright to include the work(s) in the dissertation. For each journal this process could be different. It is advisable that the student begin the process of obtaining copyright transfer early in the final dissertation process.
- An approved proposal is required for BOTH formats.

## Dissertation Proposal Guidelines

### 1. REQUIRED ARE:

- A. An accurate title.
  - B. A concise statement which includes (a) the purpose, importance, and novelty of the study, (b) methods and techniques to be used, (c) availability and location of research facilities, and (d) a statement concerning the use of any human or animal subjects that are involved in the research.
  - C. A selected bibliography.
2. The Proposal is to be as brief as possible without sacrificing completeness.
  3. Please limit appendices and other attachments to those that are essential.

*Proposals of unnecessary length are discouraged since reviewers lack the time to read them.*

Within the School of Nursing, it is expected that:

- a. The proposal NOT exceed 10 pages **DOUBLE SPACED** (excluding tables, figures and references).
  - b. The exact format will vary by the type of study but, in general, the proposal needs to include:
    - A. Title
    - B. Brief introduction
    - C. Statement and significance of the problem (in lieu of an in depth review of the literature)
    - D. Conceptual or theoretical structure for the study
    - E. Research question, hypothesis
    - F. Methods & design
    - G. Population & sampling
    - H. Instruments
    - I. Planned Analysis
    - J. Timeframe
    - K. Budget
    - L. References
  - c. Complete approval (committee and reviewers/readers) is required **PRIOR** to submitting the IRB application.
4. IRB applications needs to be approved by Major Advisor prior to submission.

## 2. Steps to Follow:

- a. If the student switches topic/methods for the dissertation following coursework completion, the student may need to take additional cognates to support the successful completion of the dissertation.
- b. Enroll in GRAD 6950, 15 credits total, over multiple semesters, is required for graduation.
- c. Once students register for dissertation credits, they must participate in the mandatory dissertation seminar each semester until the dissertation is complete.
- d. After the student has completed 15 credits of dissertation (GRAD 6950), students should register for GRAD 6999 instead of registering for more dissertation credits. Students need to be registered in some graduate coursework each semester until they graduate. Registering for these matriculation continued credits is less expensive than regular tuition and keeps the student enrolled until completion of all the University requirements. Participation in the dissertation seminar is required during this time.

- e. The student prepares the Proposal according to the Dissertation Specifications listed on the [Registrar's Steps to a Successful Graduation webpage](#)..
- f. Generally speaking, initial drafts of the Proposal are sent to the MA **only**; the MA will determine when drafts are ready to be distributed to Associate Advisors for their input/feedback. (This is the process both before and after the proposal is approved). Your MA will review the preferred process with you.
- g. The Dissertation Proposal is reviewed and accepted by the student's three-person advisory committee (MA and both Associate Advisors). Timelines for revision and progression are an aspect of the planning for degree completion. Once the committee and readers approve the proposal, the student may apply to the IRB as appropriate...see guidelines.
- h. Dissertation proposals are typically not reviewed May 23<sup>rd</sup> through August 22<sup>nd</sup>.

### 3. Process Roles and Responsibilities:

#### ***Student Role:***

The student provides the MA with **EACH** of the following documents:

- a. **The Proposal** (a well-labeled electronic file is acceptable; please ask your MA for their preferences).
- b. The Dissertation Proposal for the Doctoral Degree form, not to be signed by all committee members until entire proposal process is completed.
- c. IRB Approval document(s). This approval document must be currently dated. If UConn IRB is not the IRB of record, a copy of the approval document from the IRB of record AND acceptance document from UConn IRB acknowledging non-UConn said IRB of Record.

The student is responsible for:

- Gathering all signatures\* on these forms. The student may request assistance from the PhD Program Coordinator with document preparation and execution.  
*\*Please see page 29 for Current Practices for Document Approvals and Submissions from the UConn Registrar's Office.*
- Obtaining current CV's for all non-UConn Associate advisors and submitting them with the dissertation Proposal paperwork.
- Submitting the completed hardcopies of the signed Graduate School forms listed above to the PhD Program Director. Students may request assistance from the PhD Program Coordinator for

document submission. Copies of submitted Proposal paperwork will also be saved to the student's file on the SON Q: Drive.

If you are applying for **funding** for your dissertation, please contact the PhD Program Director and PhD Program Coordinator early in the process. All funding requests (grants, scholarships, fellowships) go through the School of Nursing Research Office. Funding to the student for research that does not go through the School of Nursing is considered taxable income. The process to move an application for funding through the University takes time; therefore, it is very important that you work with the PhD Program Director and Coordinator early and throughout your dissertation proposal process. Please do not hesitate to ask for this support.

**Major Advisor Role:**

- The MA makes recommendations to the PhD Program Director for reviewers/readers. The PhD Program Director has the ultimate responsibility of selecting reviewers, consideration of the requests of the MA.
- The MA submits an electronic copy of the Proposal and [Doctoral Proposal Review Cover Sheet](#) to the PhD Program Director for distribution to reviewers who prefer an electronic copy.
- The MA works with the student to ensure that a copy of an up-to-date CV for all non-UConn members of the advisory committee and submit to the PhD Program Director at the time the Proposal is submitted.
- The readers will use the [Doctoral Proposal Review Cover Sheet](#) to provide their feedback to the student.

**PhD Program Director Role:**

- The PhD Program Director sends the committee approved Proposal and [Doctoral Proposal Review Cover Sheet](#) to the reviewers/readers with a request for a two-week turn-around during the academic year.
- The PhD Program Director will notify the MA of the reviewers'/readers' decision/recommendations. MA advisor notifies the student and works with them to complete next steps as appropriate.

**4. IRB Application Process:**

**Please note:** IRB applications must not be submitted until the Proposal has

been fully approved by the 3-person committee, and final input from the reviewers is addressed. Students may begin the application process while the reviewers have the proposal but cannot submit until all final changes of the review process are accepted.

- a. CITI training needs to be complete and up to date prior to IRB submission.
- b. It is the responsibility of the MA to oversee and approve student IRB applications prior to submission including the SON review. The MA must notify the UConn IRB office via e-mail to request that the student be added to their InfoEd Profile. This step must be completed before the student submits the IRB Application.
- c. The IRB application is submitted through InfoEd with routing to the major advisor and then the designated SON representative. The School of Nursing IRB representative (or their appointee), provides the SON review and notifies the Major Advisor when the application is ready for submission to the IRB. (This pre-review step saves time once the application is submitted to the IRB and ensures the quality of all IRB applications being issued from within the SON).
- d. There are *different procedures* to be followed at this point, depending on whether the student will be submitting to the UConn IRB or an external IRB.
  - For students NOT applying to the UConn IRB, all IRB materials must first be approved by the MA and then sent as an e-mail attachment to the School of Nursing IRB representative requesting a review.
  - For students applying to the UConn IRB, the review will be accomplished through InfoED as described in “e & f” below.
- e. Submission of IRB applications to the UConn IRB is done electronically through “InfoED” with the MA as the PI.  
\*Please note that IRB approval must be obtained prior to final Dissertation Proposal submission to the Graduate School.
- f. IRB approval must also be secured from the clinical agency where the research will be conducted. The MA supervises this process as well as the single IRB policy (IRB of record) with associated agreements. The MA supervises the student’s interaction with the UConn IRB to facilitate these processes.

## UConn IRB Approval Process for Students

**Step 1:** ALL human subjects research/scholarship requires IRB consideration (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18811996>) and all human subjects student research must have UConn IRB approval; however UConn is not necessarily the IRB of record.

**Step 2:** Prior to distribution of your IRB application to any entity, your committee must approve the application and determine which IRB will be the IRB of record.

Background (<https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/single-irb-requirement/index.html>)  
The revised Common Rule (i.e., the 2018 Requirements) requires at 45 CFR 46.114(b) that all institutions located in the United States that are engaged in cooperative research conducted or supported by a Common Rule department or agency rely upon approval by a single IRB for the portion of the research that is conducted in the United States.

45 CFR 46.114 states:

*(a) Cooperative research projects are those projects covered by this policy that involve more than one institution. In the conduct of cooperative research projects, each institution is responsible for safeguarding the rights and welfare of human subjects and for complying with this policy.*

*(b) (1) Any institution located in the United States that is engaged in cooperative research must rely upon approval by a single IRB for that portion of the research that is conducted in the United States. The reviewing IRB will be identified by the Federal department or agency supporting or conducting the research or proposed by the lead institution subject to the acceptance of the Federal department or agency supporting the research.*

*(2) The following research is not subject to this provision:*

- (i) Cooperative research for which more than single IRB review is required by law (including tribal law passed by the official governing body of an American Indian or Alaska Native tribe); or*
- (ii) Research for which any Federal department or agency supporting or conducting the research determines and documents that the use of a single IRB is not appropriate for the particular context.*

*(c) For research not subject to paragraph (b) of this section, an institution participating in a cooperative project may enter into a joint review arrangement, rely on the review of another IRB, or make similar arrangements for avoiding duplication of effort.*

**Step 3:** ALL IRB applications MUST be reviewed by the designated School of Nursing faculty member  
For UConn IRB, use Info ED and the UConn forms.

For other than UConn IRB, use the specific agency forms and send to the designated SON faculty member via email with EXTERNAL IRB APPLICATION in subject line.

**Step 4:** After approval is received from the designated SON faculty member, the IRB application may be filed. Complete IRB packet is submitted to the institutional IRB determined to be the IRB of record.

**Step 5:** When an agency external to UConn is the IRB of record, an agreement with UConn must be created. Submit the institutional IRB letter of approval with the proposal to UConn's IRB for the creation of the agreement.

**Step 6:** Data collection may start ONCE the UConn IRB has approved the project.

## 5. Submission of proposal to Registrar's Office

### **Role of the Student after proposal receives approval of committee, reviewers/readers, and IRB**

Following the reviewers'/readers' and IRB approval, the student provides an electronic copy of final proposal, IRB approval form(s) and Dissertation Proposal Approval Form to the PhD Program Coordinator who will send the package of information to the Registrar. Copies of all submitted paperwork will be saved in the student's file on the SON Q: Drive.

The student may begin data collection once the IRB approval is secured and the Proposal copies are submitted to the PhD Program Director's office. With the support of their advisory committee, students may apply for external funding of their dissertation study. This might be completed early in the student's progression and could mean that IRB approval is also submitted earlier (possibly even before completion of the General Exam). All these steps can be accelerated with the support of the Advisory Committee to support the student's progression with the study and through the program. External funding applications are best submitted through the SON (this will facilitate the process and allow the funding to come through the school rather than directly to the student whereby the funding would be considered personal income).

Students who do submit applications for external funding will need to abide by all the regulations required for the funding including IRB approval, reports to funder as needed through-out the study and at study completion.

## 6. Advancement to Candidacy:

The student advances to candidacy when the following conditions are met:

- a. Fulfillment of the language requirements and any related or supporting-area of study (In the School of Nursing, the language requirement is met thorough the completion of two courses outside of the School of Nursing that are supportive of the dissertation. These courses are chosen by the student with advisory committee and are submitted as an aspect of the Plan of Study).
- b. Passing the General Examination.
- c. Completion of all coursework on the Plan of Study (except GRAD 6950)
- d. Graduate Executive Committee has approved the dissertation proposal. A letter of candidacy is sent to students by the Graduate School when students successfully completed all requirements for the degree except

- the dissertation and oral defense.
- e. Students may *not* use the initials PhD(c), these credentials are inappropriate and not recognized by the School of Nursing or the University. Students may sign their name with their credentials and then use the words “PhD Candidate”, if desired.

## 7. Completing the Dissertation:

Manuscripts/chapters may be submitted in the format for the planned journal of submission instead of APA. However, the student and their advisory committee will manage these formatting choices.

### Major Advisor Role

The MA supervises the implementation of the research and the writing of the dissertation, including guiding student interactions with and seeking approval from AA’s. The MA is the standard bearer for quality.

### Student role

The student will keep the MA and AA apprised of progress with data collection and writing. The student should initiate a discussion as to whether the MA prefers to receive all chapters at the same time or if the student should submit components as written. The student needs to address the feedback from the committee members in a timely manner dedicating the time to incorporate needed changes and attending to recommendations. The student is responsible for the final product.

## 8. Defense of the Dissertation

- a. Dissertation defenses are typically scheduled August 23<sup>rd</sup> through May 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- b. The final defense (or examination) is oral and under the jurisdiction of the advisory committee. It deals mainly with the subject matter of the dissertation. The examination can be held:
  - No earlier than seven days after a working copy (a final draft) of the complete dissertation has been submitted to the Registrar’s Office
  - Before the last day to submit paperwork for the semester the degree is to be conferred.
- c. The invitation to the defense will be sent to all committee members and other SON faculty members at the request of the PhD Program Director, and the invitation will also be sent to the SON DNP-PHD Listserv two weeks prior to the defense; any member of the UConn faculty may attend. No fewer than five members of the faculty,

including all members of the candidate's advisory committee and readers, shall participate in the final examination unless written approval for a lesser number has been secured in advance from the Dean of the Graduate School.

- d. Students should discuss with the MA whether family and friends can participate or attend the defense.
- e. Major Advisors mentor and guide doctoral students in the preparation for the final defense. Guidance about the dissertation needs to begin early in the program for best progression.
- f. The decision as to whether a candidate has passed, conditionally passed, or failed the defense rests solely with the three-member advisory committee, which shall take into account the opinions of other participating faculty members and other experts. Five faculty members **MUST** be present at the defense. The vote of the advisory committee must be unanimous. Immediately following the examination, the MA shall communicate the results to the student and send the official report on the examination to the PhD Program Director.
  - The student initiates the [Dissertation Approval Page](#), a webform that is routed to the committee after the dissertation defense for their approvals. Please note that the online workflow will require the student upload the final version of their dissertation as a part of the approval process.
- g. An announcement of a successful defense will be made to the SON doctoral listserv.
- h. After completing the defense, the student has 10 days to submit all remaining paperwork to Registrar's Office and Open Commons.

## 9. Timelines for planning the defense and submission of final product

This section works backwards from the end of the semester in which you plan to complete your program. The last day for finishing everything (thereby fulfilling degree requirements) is the last day of classes in the fall and spring terms and August 24th for summer degree conferral.

At the beginning of the semester you plan to defend, do the following:

- a. Review the [Steps to a Successful Graduation](#) page on the Registrar's website.
- b. The defense needs to be scheduled no later than 10 days prior to the last day for submission – the final day for paperwork submission is posted on [Academic Calendar](#), found on the Registrar's website. Defenses are typically scheduled August 23<sup>rd</sup> through May 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- c. It is **mandatory** that graduating students present their findings at a

- UConn School of Nursing research conference/meeting.
- d. Set the defense date with your committee as early as possible. It is the student's responsibility to coordinate advisory committee schedules for the defense date. Notify the PhD Program Coordinator of the tentative date and confirm it when the date is finally set. The PhD Program Coordinator will reserve a room and technology resources.
  - e. Schedule a meeting with the Graduate School office to review your dissertation copy and address details you need to know as you prepare to graduate. You must have a final draft of the complete dissertation for review at this meeting. Be sure to use the Graduate School's [formatting guidelines](#), which are based on APA style, but are slightly different.
  - f. Once your three members have approved the dissertation, your advisor may want to have a committee meeting that verifies that the student is ready for defense **before** going to the outside readers. If so, make sure this is part of the schedule at the beginning of the semester. Once you have a final copy, you need to deliver it to the advisory committee.
  - g. **Two weeks prior to the defense**, the following actions must be completed *by the student*:
    - The announcement of your defense should be submitted to the Graduate School- Thesis and Dissertation Defense Calendar at least two weeks in advance of the defense date.
    - Provide the PhD Program Coordinator the following:
      - i. Legal Name
      - ii. Phone Number
      - iii. Student ID and NetID
      - iv. Title of Dissertation/Project
      - v. Names of all Faculty/Mentors participating

## 10. After the Defense

You have 10 days to make any corrections and to submit the final pristine copy of the dissertation to Open Commons. If your dissertation does not follow their guidelines exactly, they will reject it, which is costly and time consuming, so be sure to get it right the first time (emphasizing the importance of a Graduate School pre-review appointment prior to defense). Now that the dissertation is uploaded electronically rather than presented in hardcopy to the Graduate School there are other items to consider. One of those is whether to “embargo” or not. Embargoing the dissertation allows for the student to publish the results in another form if they like within a one- to two-year period. Most would say this is advisable. However, this is a topic that to be discussed with the Major Advisor.

*\*\*\*\*\*You **MUST** close the IRB record and complete any final reports related to the research project. These might be related to the agency where the project was completed, to the funding agency and/or the IRB. All these reports need to be completed as you are leaving the University so that everything about the study is complete. Data analysis might continue (IRB approval is needed for additional analysis) but other work around the study shall be complete at this time.\*\*\*\*\**

Your final step is to attend the School of Nursing Convocation as well as the University PhD Commencement to celebrate your success.

### III. PhD Portfolio / The Student Portfolio

A portfolio of your work is a component of program completion, and the student must work with their MA, the PhD Program Director and PhD Program Coordinator to make sure all required elements are completed. Your portfolio must include the following, and the items listed below should be sent by email to the Program Coordinator prior to the end of the semester in which you are graduating:

- Your latest CV and NIH Biosketch
- At least one published paper, one poster or podium presentation (external)
- Participation in a UConn School of Nursing research conference/meeting (internal)
- A copy of a grant application that has been submitted for review by an external agency.

The papers, poster, internal meeting and grant application may be part of your coursework taken to the stage of completion. The Scholarly Portfolio contents will be approved by the student's advisory committee and contents maintained on the SON Q: drive. The portfolio can be used in recruitment for your post-graduation position and serve as a marketing device for your career. The format for the portfolio is individual to you. It will be both in print and electronic. The development of the portfolio shall start at the first course.

## IV. Resources and Opportunities for Students

### Teaching Opportunities

There is currently a major faculty shortage and it is expected to last for several years if not decades. Consequently, post PhD, academics may be a choice employer. To best prepare yourself for that role, several options exist while you are a PhD student.

For more than a decade, the School of Nursing has offered a certificate program to prepare you for teaching. Currently called the Health Professions Education Certificate, it is a nine-credit sequence of three courses (NURS 5700, 5710 and 5720). The courses are online with synchronous discussions and can be started in any semester. These courses may be used as your cognates (courses supportive of the dissertation) IF your dissertation study is education related.

The Graduate School offers a series of one and two credits courses in College Instruction, Fundamentals of Teaching & Learning, Advanced Issues in Teaching & Learning, and a practicum in college instruction. These courses cannot be used as courses supportive of your dissertation per Graduate School policy.

Additionally, a graduate assistant position may include teaching a course or co-teaching a course with a faculty member.

There are options to guest lecture/present a class or classes in courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels throughout the semesters. Please see the PhD Program Director if you are interested in any of these options.

### Financial Support

Financial resources for graduate students are several. They include:

- a. **Graduate Assistantship** (<https://grad.uconn.edu/assistantships/>) positions provide the student their tuition and, in turn, they commit a set number of hours per week of prescribed activity to the School of Nursing or to the grant that is funding the GA. The student is paid for their hours per week at a rate determined by the Graduate School in concert with the graduate student union.
- b. **Pre-doctoral fellowship** is a one-time monetary award provided by the School of Nursing to selected students.
- c. **Nurse Faculty Loan Program (NFLP)** is a loan program administered by Dr. Polifroni. The program is designed as a both a recruitment device to doctoral programs and a retention strategy in academia. The program will loan you tuition and fees AND reasonable costs of attendance (such as books, computer, research supplies) for up to five years. Upon employment in academia, your loan is forgiven 20% for the first year, 20% for each of the second and third years and 25% the

fourth year; all consecutive but not necessarily at the same institution. The remaining 15% balance is amortized over ten years at the prevailing federal interest rate, which is currently 3%.

- d. From time to time, there are additional grant programs such as **Jonas Scholars** or **Robert Wood Johnson Scholars** and advertisement for them is made available through the PhD listserv.
- e. Scholarships are also available and they may be found on the School of Nursing website.

## International Students

### A. New Student Check-In

All new International Students must complete Check-In online through the ISSS Portal on the ISSS website prior to the first day of classes. The link to [Check-In instructions](#) is located on our home page, [issu.uconn.edu](http://issu.uconn.edu). New international students are no longer required to check-in at the ISSS office in-person, although we welcome their visit, and they can use the computers at ISSS to scan immigration documents, print their I-94 and fill out their online check-in forms.

In the past, students verified their physical presence on campus through their in-person check in. Please check with the ISSS office about current verification procedures.

### B. International Graduate Student Orientation

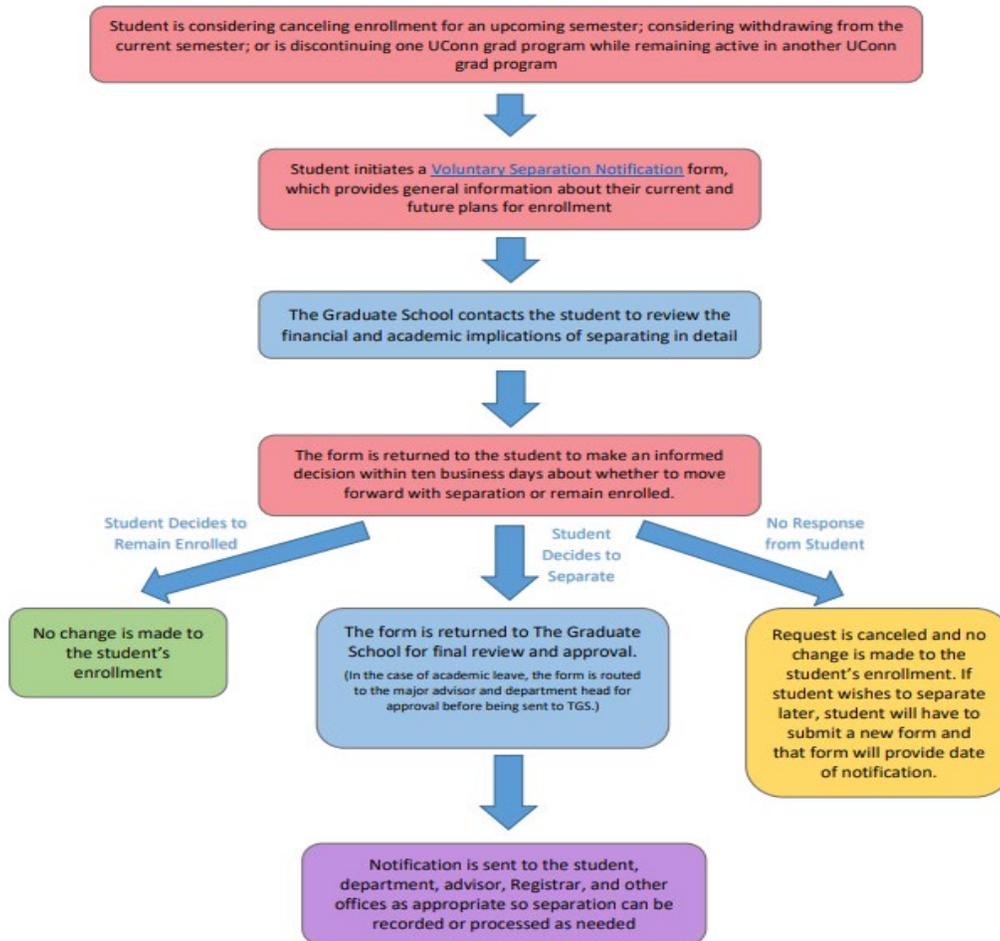
Storrs campus international Graduate Students are required to attend International Graduate Orientation. Please visit the [ISSS website](#) for more information on fees and registration.

The orientation schedule is available online [here](#) and is subject to updates. Regional campus international graduate students are required to attend an ISSS session on the visa regulations as part of the academic program's orientation for international students, or through a separate session facilitated by ISSS when your program does not offer a specific international student orientation.

## Leave of Absence Policy

For the full leave of absence policy from the Graduate School, please review this [website](#).

### VOLUNTARY SEPARATION NOTIFICATION PROCESS



## Resources

### Curriculum

[Nursing PhD Programs | Nursing PhD Program \(uconn.edu\)](#)

### General exam rubrics (oral and written)

[PhD Program Forms](#)

### NetID and Information Technology

- <https://netid.uconn.edu/>
- [Home | Information Technology Services \(uconn.edu\)](#)

### Writing Resources

<https://writingcenter.uconn.edu/overview-of-grad-support/>

### Insurance

<https://grad.uconn.edu/student-life/grad-student-resources/ga-resources/overview-for-graduate-students/>

### Academic calendar

<https://registrar.uconn.edu/academic-calendar/>

### Forms

<https://registrar.uconn.edu/forms/>

## Current Practices for Document Approvals and Submission (Registrar):

### Email Approvals

- 1) Attach completed document in an email to advisory committee as a whole, cc: jenn.horan@uconn.edu and request committee reply all their approval
  - Approval emails must come from advisor's university email (UConn or UCHC) stating their approval of the document(s)
  - External advisors should reply all from their university or company email

### Electronic Approvals

- 1) Attach completed document in an email to advisory committee as a whole, cc: jenn.horan@uconn.edu
- 2) Electronic signatures can be via DocuSign or Adobe Verified Signature
  - Approvals typed with a Microsoft font should be accompanied by a reply all email noting that advisor's approval

**Wet ink** signed documents should be scanned & emailed to [jenn.horan@uconn.edu](mailto:jenn.horan@uconn.edu).

All members of a student's advisory committee must provide an original signature in one of the above ways however, signatures may be on different pages and / or come from multiple faculty emails

**\*\*No hard copies should be submitted to the Registrar's Office\*\***

\*PhD documents should be emailed to [jenn.horan@uconn.edu](mailto:jenn.horan@uconn.edu)

## **School of Nursing Zero Tolerance Policy**

The University of Connecticut University School of Nursing Faculty approved a policy on zero tolerance for disrespect.

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

The University of Connecticut School of Nursing is committed to maintaining and strengthening an environment founded on respect. Disrespect of others based on personal characteristics, including race, color, religion, gender identity or expression, disability, national origin or citizenship status, is antithetical to the standards and ideals of our school community and of the profession of nursing. It is a violation of the second guiding principle of the School's philosophy, PRAXIS, and of the first provision of the American Nurses Association Code of Ethics.

### **ENFORCEMENT**

Any student believed to have disrespected others based on personal characteristics, including race, color, religion, gender identity or expression, disability, national origin or citizenship status, shall be provided a written description of the alleged violation(s), with a copy to the Dean. Then the University's Procedures on Student Discipline, Dismissal and Appeal Process from Professional/Clinical Programs ("Procedures") will be followed but the alleged violation will go directly to a hearing body. The hearing body will consist of five members, two of which will be students. Any student found by the hearing body to have violated the second guiding principle of the School's philosophy, PRAXIS, and the first provision of the American Nurses Association Code of Ethics by disrespecting others based on personal characteristics, including race, color, religion, gender identity or expression, disability, national origin or citizenship status, will be dismissed from the program.

## **School of Nursing Policies**

SON specific policies may be found at School of Nursing Policies | School of Nursing (uconn.edu) and include:

- SON Appeal of Assigned Course Grade
- SON Cell Phone Use Policy
- SON Clinical Practicum & Residency Course Policy
- SON Compliance with Agency
- SON Dress Code Policy
- SON Exam Taking Policy
- SON Laptop Requirement Policy
- SON Medication Math Competency Policy
- SON Missed or late coursework Policy
- SON Missed Exam Policy
- SON Religious Observation Conflict Policy
- SON Social Media Policy
- SON Requirement for Clinical Practicum Courses