

UConn School of Nursing PhD Program Handbook 2017-2018 Academic Year



Prepared by:

Jacqueline McGrath, PhD, RN, FNAP, FAAN
Professor, Director PhD Program, School of Nursing
Director of the Center for Nursing Scholarship
Room 313D Phone: 860-486-4435
jacqueline.mcgrath@uconn.edu

Administrative Support Room 211
Joyce McSweeney Phone: 860-486-0508
joyce.mcsweeney@uconn.edu

Introduction: This document was developed to serve as a reference for faculty and doctoral students in the PhD Program at the University of Connecticut (UConn), School of Nursing (SoN)

UConn School of Nursing PhD Program

The UConn School of Nursing (SoN) PhD program supports students in achieving his/her highest research and leadership aspirations through learning experiences that reflect current and future health care needs. Thus, we believe students must 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. Core Competencies are met by graduates through completion of these terminal objectives.

- 1) Advance philosophical and theoretical bases of nursing: 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.

Full time PhD students complete coursework in 4 semesters; 2 academic years followed by dissertation work. Coursework is generally provided face-to-face with some hybrid online activities to augment course objectives. PhD students are encouraged to be active members on SoN faculty committee meetings and attend faculty development 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.

PhD students complete a 3 course sequence in philosophy of science and nursing theory while also gaining skills in qualitative and quantitative research methods. Other courses include: mixed methods, instrumentation and grantsmanship. PhD students also complete 6 credits of Cognates outside the SoN, chosen in collaboration with advisory committee, supportive of the dissertation and included in their personalized Plan of Study (see below for more information).

General Doctoral Advisement Procedures 2017

Table of Contents

1. [General Advisement Procedures](#)
2. [The PhD Advisory Committee: Structure and Function](#)
3. [Role of Major Advisor \(MA\)](#)
4. [Role of Associate Advisors \(AA\)](#)
5. [The Curriculum](#)
6. [The General Exam](#)
7. [The PhD Dissertation Proposal Procedure](#)
8. [Selecting the Dissertation Format](#)
9. [Defense of the Dissertation \(Taken directly from the Graduate School guidelines\)](#)
10. [IRB Application Process](#)
11. [Timelines for Planning Program Completion](#)
12. [After the Defense](#)

1. General Advisement Procedures:

- a. In addition to rigorous academic achievements, students are admitted based on the match between their research/clinical interests and that of the faculty. A Major Advisor (MA) is assigned at admission by the PhD Admissions & Progressions Committee based on that match. Changes in MA can be made at the discretion of the student and/or MA. Changes need to be seriously considered as these types of changes can delay progression. Please see routing process policy for the doctoral programs within the School of Nursing (all documents referred to in this Handbook can easily be found on the [UConn School of Nursing PhD Program Webpage](#)).
- b. School of Nursing e-mail communications between students and faculty should be **addressed within 2 business days** following receipt of message. This is to foster prompt communication between advisors and advisees.
- c. Faculty are expected to provide information on process and procedures; and thus, support the student navigation through the academic process; and provide feedback on chapter/project drafts, IRB applications, etc. to students **within 2 weeks** during the academic year (August through May)
- d. **Major Advisors and committee members with 9-month, 10-month and 11-month appointments** may have different schedules during the summer months and thus, working with students' timelines need to be discussed at the end of each academic year so that student dissertation work can progress. MAs should notify students of vacation plans and develop timelines for communication during the summer months. Independent study hours with the MA could be an option to compensate faculty for their time during the summer months. Students and MA advisors need to have open conversations about how support and mentorship is provided to graduate and doctoral students at

the beginning of the advisement relationship and throughout the time the student is working with the MA.

2. The PhD Advisory Committee: Structure and Function

- a. An advisory committee will collectively mentor doctoral students throughout coursework, dissertation development, general exam, final defense, and manuscript preparation. The role of the committee is to guide development and critique the students' work in progress. Committees generally consist of 3 members (1 Major Advisor and 2 Associate Advisors) configured by the end of the 1st year of full-time study (completion of 12 credits). Committee members are chosen by the student in conjunction with the MA. Configuration of the committee must be completed by the end of the 1st year for part time students or completion of 12 credits for full-time students and is consistent with the graduate school policies. Once the committee is in place it is advisable that they meet **at least once each semester**, or more often, to provide guidance for the student. These meetings can be in person, on the web synchronous or asynchronous; or by phone. How the committee meets is not as important as conducting *regular meetings*. Regular meetings of the student and committee can best help assure progression in the doctoral program. Two additional reviewers (readers) are added to the review of student works once the student is in the general exam and dissertation implementation phase. 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 committee of the advisory committee ultimately rests with the PhD student; she/he should schedule meetings as needed to guide progress. It is incumbent for both faculty and student to know procedures for any likelihood that might arise, e.g. need to take a leave of absence; need to fill out re-instatement form; complete a course audit request, etc. We work in partnership to ensure continuation of enrollment and avoid any missteps that might cause a student's active status to be interrupted.
- b. 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 1 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. 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. An up-to-date CV is submitted to the PhD Program Director and in-turn to the Graduate School for approval. Approval can occur with submission of Program of Study, General Exam, and/or Dissertation defense, which can all be found on the [Graduate School website](#).

3. Role of Major Advisor (MA)

- a. The PhD Admissions Committee works with faculty MAs 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. Once admitted, the student must schedule an advising appointment with the MA prior to registering for course work. This meeting can be in person or with the use of technology, by skype, phone or other software.
- b. Sometimes, a change in MA is necessary i.e. if a student has a substantive change in direction for their interests. Changes in the MA require that a [“Change in Major Advisor Form”](#) be completed and submitted to the PhD Program Director.
- c. Students should 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. The MA should file Doctoral Advisement notes in the student record at least twice yearly.
- e. Each year in the spring, the MA works with the student to submit an updated NCBI bio-sketch, which should be completed electronically and submitted by email to the PhD Program Director. These will be used to update the PhD website. Students will learn how to create the NCBI bio-sketch during a brown bag seminar in the fall semester of each academic year and will update on a regular basis.
- f. 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 committee. Any member of the advisement committee can ask for a meeting, however, it is often the role of the student and/or the MA to finalize the schedule and make sure a room is available if the meeting is to be face-to-face.

4. Role of Associate Advisors (AA)

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

5. The Curriculum

- a. Students follow the plan of study for the PhD Program in the School of Nursing. The program of study sequence for required courses is prescribed. Specific details are provided in the program guidelines.

- b. An official [“Plan of Study”](#) must be completed by the student and signed by the student’s three-person advisory committee prior to the completion of 12 credits (for all students part-time or full-time and at least the end of first year of full-time study). Submission at this point in time in the student’s progression in the program is consistent with the graduate school policies. The sooner the program of study is in place the better for the student since this guides timely progression through the program. The student is responsible for submitting the required number of signed copies to the PhD Program Director. The Plan of Study is then submitted to the Graduate School through the **PhD Admissions and Enrollment Services** office (SON, room 211), where a copy is maintained in the student’s file. Students should also retain their own copies of all signed forms. Please see our policy for submission of paperwork.
- c. [A Routing Policy Document](#) is prepared for you to guide you through the steps of Plan of Study, General Exam, Dissertation Proposal Approval Stage, and the Dissertation / Final Exam. It is important to continually refer to the document for guidance about the process.

6. 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 3-person advisory committee. The General Exam may be completed after 75% of the program coursework has been completed consistent with graduate school policies. 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.

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 publically available data. Formats that require IRB review are **not** permitted, because the research could not be considered independent since the major advisor must be the PI for UCONN IRB submission. The overall concept and format for the General Exam must be approved by the student’s committee prior to the student commencing the work on the paper to be used for General Exam (see General Exam forms; PhD student resources).

The student will submit the completed paper to his/her 3-person advisory committee. 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. The student will

revise and resubmit, as necessary, until the paper receives the approval of the advisory committee.

The student will submit the committee-approved paper to his/her two readers. The readers with the committee members 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 concerns. The student will revise and resubmit, as necessary, until the paper receives the approval of the two readers.

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.

The PhD student schedules the oral portion of the general exam. 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 5-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. Please use the [General Exam Forms](#) at the oral defense for faculty comments and signatures. The form needs to be submitted to the PhD Program Director by the MA once the oral defense of the General Exam is completed. A copy is kept in the School of Nursing in the student file and the original is submitted to the Graduate School.

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 general exam committee may provide additional feedback to the student to strengthen the manuscript and to enhance its chances for acceptance.

It is highly advisable to use the School of Nursing, [PhD General Exam Checklist](#) to verify that every aspect of the process is completed.

Once the student passes the general exam, s/he may proceed to the PhD degree dissertation phase.

7. The PhD Dissertation Proposal Procedure

1. **Advancement to Candidacy:** The student advances to candidacy when the following conditions are met:
 - 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.)
 - Fulfillment of the residence requirement (two consecutive semesters of fulltime study)
 - Passing the General Examination
 - Completion of all coursework on the Plan of Study
 - Graduate Executive Committee approved 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.
 - 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 the desire.

8. Selecting the Dissertation Format:

There are two options for completion of the dissertation:

Chapter Dissertation -- the 5 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) or the;

Manuscript Dissertation -- three manuscript option. The manuscript style dissertation includes 5 chapters with the same first (Overview of Problem) and last (Discussion/application and Conclusions) chapters as the 5 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 of all three of these papers. Authorship should be determined using the International COPE authorship guidelines 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 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.

9. The Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Procedure: Please read and follow steps carefully as outlined below.

- a. Once students register for dissertation credits, they must participate in a mandatory dissertation seminar (GRAD 6950) each semester until the dissertation is complete. 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. 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 graduate coursework each semester until they graduate; not registering will withdraw the student from the program and constitute a need for reinstatement should the student return to the program. Registering for these credits is less expensive and keeps the student in dissertation status until completion of all the University requirements.
- c. The student prepares the Proposal according to [Graduate School Guidelines](#). Please check these guidelines often as they do change on a regular basis.
- d. Generally speaking, initial drafts of the Proposal should be 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).
- e. The Dissertation Proposal is reviewed and accepted by the student's 3-person advisory committee (MA and both Associate Advisors). Timelines for revision and progression should be an aspect of the planning for degree completion. Following completion of this step, the process and role responsibilities are the following:

i. **Student Role:**

The student should provide the MA with **EACH** of the following documents:

1. The Proposal (a well-labeled electronic file is acceptable); please ask your MA for their preferences. For example, manuscripts/chapters could be submitted in the format for the planned journal of submission instead of APA however, the Student and Advisory Committee will manage these formatting choices.
2. The internal School of Nursing [Doctoral Proposal Review Cover Sheet](#) with *electronic signatures from all 3 committee members.*
3. The [Graduate School Dissertation Proposal Approval Form](#) with *signatures from all 3 committee members. (These signatures cannot be electronic.)*
4. The students' [Plan of Study](#) with signatures from all 3 committee members. *(These signatures cannot be electronic.)*
5. The student is responsible for gathering all signatures on these forms. It is not the responsibility of the MA or PhD Program Director's administrative staff to gather signatures.
6. Students are responsible for obtaining current CV's for all non-UCONN Associate advisors and submitting them with the dissertation Proposal paperwork. This is to facilitate courtesy appointments through the Graduate School.
7. The student is responsible for submitting the completed hardcopies of the signed Graduate School forms listed above to the PhD Program Director. Copies will be made for the student's file in the **Admissions and Enrollment Services** office in the School of Nursing and then the entire packet of materials is submitted to the Graduate School.
8. Use of the School of Nursing, [Dissertation Proposal Checklist](#) to verify that every aspect of the process is completed is highly advisable.
9. If you are applying for **funding** for your dissertation please contact the **Center for Nursing Scholarship (CNS)** as soon as you decide you are going to apply for funding. All funding should go through the School of Nursing. 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 times; so it is very important that you work with the CNS early and throughout your dissertation proposal process. Please do not hesitate to ask for this support.

ii. **Major Advisor Role:**

1. The MA makes recommendations to the PhD Program Director for 2 additional reviewers (readers). The PhD Program Director has the ultimate responsibility of selecting reviewers, but will consider the requests of the MA).

2. The MA submits an electronic copy of the Proposal and the internal review sheet to the PhD Program Director for distribution to reviewers who prefer an electronic copy.
3. 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.
4. The readers will use the [Doctoral Proposal Review Cover Sheet](#) to provide their feedback to the student.

iii. **The PhD Program Director Role:**

1. The PhD Program Director sends the Proposal out to 2 additional reviewers (readers) with a request for a 2-week turn-around.
2. The PhD Program Director will notify the MA of the reviewers' decision/recommendations. MA advisor notifies the student and works with them to complete next steps as appropriate.

iv. **MA Role:**

The MA supervises any revisions to the dissertation proposal, including guiding student interactions with reviewers and seeking approval from AA's, following completion of any revisions indicated by the readers

v. **Student:**

The student provides **one hardcopy** of the **final** proposal along with the IRB approval form to the PhD Program Director to be sent to the Graduate School at the University. The signed approval form is scanned and combined with the electronic files for each of the above (dissertation proposal and IRB approval form) for archiving in the School of Nursing.

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 Center for Nursing Scholarship (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.

vi. **PhD Program Director Role:**

The PhD Program Director submits the signed graduate form, final Proposal and IRB Approval Form to the Graduate School.

10. IRB Application Process: Please note: IRB applications should not be submitted until the Proposal has been fully approved by the 3 person committee, with the final input from the reviewers. 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. It is the responsibility of the MA to oversee and approve student IRB applications prior to submission.
- b. The IRB application must be approved internally within the School of Nursing before submission to the IRB. The School of Nursing IRB representative (or his/her appointee), provides the initial review and notifies the Major Advisor when the application is ready for internal approval. (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).
- c. There are *2 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 should 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 should be accomplished through InfoEd as described in “f” below.
- d. All student IRB applications are submitted with the name of the MA as the PI, not the student. (UConn policy). For applications being submitted to non-UConn IRB’s, the MA must designate an affiliation with that organization through the CITI Program online and complete any additional modules specific to that institution. This must be done before the student submits the official IRB application.
- e. 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.
- f. Submission of IRB applications is done electronically through “INFOED”. *Please note that IRB approval must be obtained prior to final Dissertation Proposal submission to the Graduate School.
- g. IRB approval must also be secured from the clinical agency where the research will be conducted. The MA supervises this process as well. Most often, IRB approval should be secured first from the clinical agency, followed by the UConn IRB. The MA supervises the student’s interaction with the UConn IRB to facilitate this process.

Defense of the Dissertation (Taken directly from the Graduate School guidelines)

- a. The final examination (or final defense) shall be oral and under the jurisdiction of the advisory committee. It shall deal mainly with the subject matter of the dissertation. The examination shall be held not earlier than seven days after a working copy of the complete dissertation has been submitted to the Graduate Office and not later than thirteen days prior to commencement for a degree to be granted in that semester. Invitation to participate in the examination is issued by the advisory committee, (In the School of Nursing, the invitation is extended by the PhD Program Director) although any member of the 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.
- b. MAs mentor and guide doctoral students in the preparation for the final defense as necessary regardless of the SON doctoral program enrolled. Guidance about the dissertation needs to begin early in the program for best progression.
- c. Use of the School of Nursing, [Dissertation Defense Checklist](#) to verify that every aspect of the process is completed is highly advisable.
- d. The student is expected to bring to the exam a copy of Graduate School's Report on the Final Exam and the original Approval Page (student types up with appropriate format and titles), for signatures. The approval page of the dissertation is signed by all three advisors with their names only, no degree credentials.
- e. The decision as to whether a candidate has passed, conditionally passed, or failed the examination rests solely with the advisory committee, which shall take into account the opinions of other participating faculty members and other experts. 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 PhD Program Director will then submit the official report to the Graduate Records Office through the school's doctoral program coordinator.
- f. After completing the defense, the student has 10 days to submit all remaining paperwork to Graduate Records and the library. The student must complete the Graduate School's Dissertation Submission checklist and obtain the certificate that is generated once the last step is taken.
- g. In addition to the copies required by the Graduate School, the student is also required to provide a bound copy of the approved dissertation to each committee member and one for the Sheila A. Packard Doctoral Student Reading Room.
- h. As a reminder, IRB permissions need to be closed out when the study is completed. Students should check with the appropriate IRB for specific procedures required.

[Go to Top](#)

11. Timelines for Planning Program Completion:

This document works backwards from the end of the semester. The last day for finishing everything (thereby fulfilling degree requirements) is the last day of 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:

1. Call the Graduate School and obtain last day for submission of everything.
2. The defense needs to be scheduled no later than 10 days prior to that.
3. Obtain the latest copy of the Graduate School guidelines and forms from the Graduate School website.
4. Plan to present your research/project at the School of Nursing Annual Athena Research Conference. It is mandatory that graduating students present their findings at this event. Printing costs are covered by the School of Nursing; please work with the Center for Nursing Scholarship to have your poster printed for this event. Posters need to be ready for printing at least one week in advance of the event.
5. Set the defense date with your committee at the beginning of the semester. It is the student's responsibility to coordinate advisory committee schedules for the defense date. Notify the PhD Program Director's administrative support of the tentative date and confirm it when the date is finally set. Reserve a room and AV equipment with the PhD Program Director's administrative support (6-0508). Tip: Don't make it the last possible day, in case you run into any delays along the way.
6. Find-out faculty travel dates for the semester and also dates when school is not in session (Breaks, major conferences for faculty, etc.). This way, you will know when you can reach people during the semester. Don't expect faculty to read during Thanksgiving and Spring break. Most are willing to read in summer, if you are trying to get ready to graduate.
7. It is highly advisable to use the School of Nursing, [Dissertation Defense Checklist](#) to verify that every aspect of the process is completed.
8. Set a calendar of deadlines at the beginning of the semester with your advisor and committee members and stick to it. If a deadline is missed, your advisor will counsel you about options. If a 2nd deadline is missed, it is likely that the defense will be canceled and you will need to wait to graduate an additional semester.
9. Schedule a meeting with the Grad School office to review your dissertation copy and address details you need to know as you prepare to graduate. You must have a 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.
10. Once your 3 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.

11. **Two weeks prior to the defense**, the following actions must be completed *by the student*:

- The Graduate School needs the announcement 2 weeks prior to the defense so it can be published in UConn Today, etc. The [UConn Today Notice](#) needs to be completed online and submitted.
- The **student must complete and submit** the [Dissertation Tentative Approval Page](#) to the Graduate School. (Signatures of committee members are no longer required on this form).
- A “tentatively approved” copy of the dissertation must be submitted electronically to the Graduate School (please do not send hardcopies). The MA and both AA’s should be cc’d on this submission. (Please refer to the Grad School website: “Dissertation Completion Process” for specifics re: paperwork submission and required timelines).

12. After the Defense

After you have successfully defended your dissertation, there are still a few items you need to attend to. You have 10 days to make any corrections and to deliver the final pristine copies of the dissertation to the Graduate School. 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 she/he likes within a one to two year period.* Most would say this is advisable. However, this is a topic that should be discussed with the Major Advisor.

It is also important to 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 but other work around the study should be complete at this time.

It has been traditional that you present bound copies of your dissertation to your advisory committee (all 5) and a copy to the PhD Program Director. However, please ask first as they may prefer an electronic copy, instead. Your final step is to attend the School of Nursing Convocation as well as the University PhD Commencement to celebrate your success.

All students are expected to participate in the School of Nursing, Athena Research Conference each spring after their defense. Students will provide a poster presentation of their research/project results. Please be aware of the date of the conference and add this to your timeline calendar. The PhD Program Director will provide more information about this event as it approaches each spring but please be prepared to participate.

The Scholarly Portfolio: Students will develop a scholarly portfolio which will include at least one published manuscript, at least one peer-reviewed poster/podium presentation from a professional conference external to UConn, and a copy of a grant application that has been submitted for review by an external agency. The Scholarly Portfolio contents will be approved by the student's advisory committee and contents maintained in the school's student's file.

End of Year Report. Each spring while in the program, PhD students will submit an updated electronic NIH NCBI Bio-sketch in PDF format that can be added to the Doctoral Student Directory on the School of Nursing webpages (due May 1st annually to the PhD Enrollment and Progression office). Bio-sketches are to follow the NIH NCBI guidelines (see NIH fellows bio-sketch guidelines and NIH fellows bio-sketch forms). Please disregard/do not include the bio-sketch section on Scholarly Performance. These annual reports will also be included in the student's Scholarly Portfolio.

Timeline for PhD Students: The equivalent of at least three years of full-time study beyond the baccalaureate or two years beyond the master's degree (in the same or a closely related field) is required. All work must be completed within a period of eight years of the beginning of the student's matriculation in the degree program, or, if the student entered with a master's degree in the same or a closely related field, the doctorate must be completed within seven years. The General Exam must be passed within four years of the beginning of the student's matriculation in the degree program. Failure to complete the work within the periods specified or failure to maintain continuous registration will require reevaluation of the student's entire program and may result in a notice of termination. A one-time extension of the student's terminal date of no longer than two years is considered only when there is substantial evidence that the student has made regular and consistent progress toward completion of degree requirements. A detailed recommendation to extend the terminal date must be submitted in a timely manner to the Graduate School. Approval is granted by the Dean of the Graduate School.

V. Feb. 2018

Resources

[Plan of Study- Full Time](#)

[Plan of Study- Part Time](#)

[BS in Nursing to Doctor of Philosophy](#)

[PhD Curriculum](#)

[Graduate School Plan of Study Form](#)

[Doctoral Proposal Review Cover Sheet](#)

[Dissertation Defense Checklist](#)

[Report on the Final Examination](#)

[Go to Top](#)