

NURSING, PHD

Banner Code: HH-PHD-NURS

Academic Advising

Website: <https://chhs.gmu.edu/students/academic-advising/graduate-advising#nurs>

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Nursing prepares future nurse scientists and scholars to pursue intellectual inquiry that supports health equity and contributes to the health of all populations. Graduates of the PhD program conduct independent and collaborative research, advance nursing knowledge, and provide leadership to the profession.

Admissions & Policies

Admissions

Requirements

Applicants must meet the admission standards and application requirements specified in Graduate Admissions (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/admissions/graduate-policies/>) and must apply using the online Application for Graduate Admission (<https://www2.gmu.edu/admissions-aid/>). Nursing PhD applicants must hold a Master's degree in nursing from an accredited program equivalent to 30 credits or a Master's degree in a related health field with a baccalaureate degree in nursing. Applicants also must hold a valid, current nursing license in a U.S. state or territory; waivers for international applicants will be determined by the PhD program director. Applicants must have a 3.00 GPA or higher on a 4.00 scale in their Master's program. Applicants also must have completed a graduate-level course in statistics with a final grade of 3.00 or higher. The application process is competitive, and applications are considered for the fall semester only. For application deadlines and detailed application requirements, refer to the CHHS Admissions website (<https://chhs.gmu.edu/admissions/graduate-admissions/standards-requirements-and-deadlines/>).

Policies

Reduction of Credit

Students must have a Master's degree before being admitted to the PhD in Nursing program. Up to 30 hours of relevant graduate credit may be awarded for past Master's-level courses. Students will complete the minimum of 48 additional credits following the curriculum below.

Transfer of Credit

Students may transfer a maximum of 9 credits into the program from graduate courses taken at other institutions or taken at Mason in non-degree status, including courses offered through the college's Academic Outreach program. Transfer credit is governed by university transfer of graduate credit policy and the university requirements for doctoral degrees, which can be found in AP.6 Graduate Policies (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/>). Transfer credit must be approved by the PhD program director. Students who intend to apply to the PhD program and enroll initially through non-degree studies or the Academic Outreach program should seek course advising through the PhD program director and apply to the PhD program as soon as possible.

Program Requirements

To complete the PhD in Nursing, students must:

- Complete the program of study outlined in the PhD curriculum.
- Pass a written doctoral candidacy comprehensive examination after completing all PhD course requirements, except NURS 998 Doctoral Dissertation Proposal and NURS 999 Doctoral Dissertation.
- Pass the oral dissertation proposal defense within 2 years of advancement to candidacy and submit a dissertation proposal approved by the doctoral dissertation committee.
- Pass the final oral dissertation defense and submit a doctoral dissertation. Consistent with university graduate academic policy, final approval of the dissertation must be given by the doctoral dissertation committee, the PhD program director, the Director of the School of Nursing, and the Dean of the college. The dissertation is submitted in the approved format to University Libraries.
- Complete application material for graduation in accordance with prevailing Mason policies.

Professional Conduct

All students in the School of Nursing are expected to adhere to the Professional Conduct Policy (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/colleges-schools/health-human-services/#requirementspolicies>) of the College of Health and Human Services.

Grading

Throughout the semester, students are assessed on how well they have met curricular outcomes. Consistent with the university, the PhD in Nursing program does not provide a D grade. Final grades for all PhD in Nursing courses are submitted to the university as letter grades.

Grade	Quality Points	Graduate Courses
A (90-100%)	4.00	Passing
B (80-89%)	3.00	Passing
C (70-79%)	2.00	Failing
F (69% or lower)	0.00	Failing

Time Requirements

Students must complete all requirements for the PhD in Nursing within 9 calendar years from the time of first enrollment as a doctoral student in the program or with provisional status. Students must advance to candidacy within 4.5 years from the start of the program. Once students advance to candidacy, they must defend their oral proposal within 2 years. PhD students are expected to progress steadily towards their degree.

Academic Termination

A degree-seeking student can be terminated from the PhD in Nursing program for reasons including, but not limited to, the following:

- after earning unsatisfactory grades (below a 3.00) in two core courses. Any core course in which a student earns a grade below a 3.00 must be repeated and may prevent the student from progressing any further in coursework; a core course may be repeated only once. A student may not repeat more than one course. Any cognate course in which a student earns a grade below 3.00 will not be counted

towards the 9 credits needed to meet the cognate requirement for the PhD program.

- after not passing the comprehensive exam on the second attempt.
- after demonstrating a significant lack of progress.
- a finding that the student has violated the university Honor Code (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/>).

Requirements

Degree Requirements

Total credits: 78

The PhD in Nursing program of study is based on the student's interests and career goals and on the expertise of the faculty. A student develops their program of research through core coursework, cognate courses, and dissertation research.

Scientific Base/Research Core

Code	Title	Credits
NURS 804	Advanced Quantitative Data Analysis for Healthcare Research I	3
NURS 805	Advanced Quantitative Data Analysis for Healthcare Research II	3
HHS 810	Systematic Reviews of Health Research	3
NURS 814	Theory and Design in Health Science	3
HHS 818	Advanced Ethics of Health Research	3
HHS 825	Conducting and Publishing Health Research	3
NURS 860	Measurement Theories in Healthcare Research	3
NURS 920	Qualitative Research in Nursing and Health Care	3
NURS 930	Quantitative Methods in Nursing and Health Care	3
Total Credits		27

Cognate Courses

Students must complete a cohesive set of doctoral-level (700 or higher) cognate courses selected with their academic advisor or the PhD program director to contribute to their program of research. A minimum of 9 credits of cognate courses must be completed prior to taking the comprehensive exam.

Code	Title	Credits
Complete nine credits of cognate courses		9
Total Credits		9

Dissertation

Advancement to Candidacy

The student must complete all coursework and pass the comprehensive examination to advance to candidacy for the doctoral degree. The Doctoral Program Director of the School of Nursing will approve the student's program of study and recommend advancement to candidacy to the director of the School of Nursing, who will render final approval for candidacy. A student who is unsuccessful in passing the comprehensive examination will be provided only one additional opportunity to sit for the examination after completing a remediation plan approved by the

program director. A student who fails the comprehensive examination a second time will be terminated from the program.

Dissertation

The final requirement for the PhD degree in nursing is the submission of an acceptable dissertation. The dissertation will be a report of an original, independent research project completed by the student and approved by the dissertation committee.

Credits

During the process of writing the dissertation proposal, students must initially register for a minimum of 3 credits of NURS 998 Doctoral Dissertation Proposal; the student may repeat NURS 998 for variable credit until the proposal is successfully defended. The student must initially register for at least 3 credits of NURS 999 Doctoral Dissertation. Once the student has completed the required combined minimum of 12 credits of 998 and/or 999, they must register for at least 1 credit per semester until they have successfully completed the dissertation. The University guidelines for dissertation registration (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/#ap-6-10-6>) (998, 999) provide additional guidance.

Code	Title	Credits
At least 12 credits of		12
NURS 998	Doctoral Dissertation Proposal ¹	
NURS 999	Doctoral Dissertation ²	
Total Credits		12

- ¹ Students must enroll for 3 credits the first time NURS 998 Doctoral Dissertation Proposal is taken.
- ² Students must register for at least 3 credits of NURS 999 per semester until completing a total of 12 credits for 998 and 999 combined.

Dissertation Committee

With the advice of the PhD program director, and approval of the Director of the School of Nursing, the student will select a dissertation committee, composed of at least 3 members of the graduate faculty (as defined by the university), who will direct the dissertation research. The committee will be composed of a chair and at least two additional members who meet the criteria as established by university policy A.P.6.10.5 Dissertation Committee (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/#ap-6-10-5>).

Dissertation Proposal

The student, in consultation with the dissertation committee, will write an acceptable dissertation proposal. If an acceptable proposal cannot be completed within the first semester the student is registered for the course, the student may continue working on the proposal under the direction of the committee, registering for at least one credit of NURS 998 Doctoral Dissertation Proposal each semester until the proposal is approved. Once the student has successfully defended their dissertation proposal before the dissertation committee, the student will be eligible to register for NURS 999 Doctoral Dissertation.

Dissertation Research

The dissertation will be a written report of original research in a content area of significance to the discipline of Nursing. As defined by the

university, the dissertation demonstrates the candidate's mastery of the subject matter, methodologies, and conceptual foundations in their chosen field of study. The PhD in Nursing program requires that the dissertation meet the guidelines and content as specified by the University Library and also include at least two publishable manuscripts as approved by the dissertation committee. After the dissertation committee gives preliminary approval of the dissertation, the chair and PhD program director will schedule a final public defense of the dissertation. A copy of the dissertation must be provided to the PhD program director and dissertation committee members at least two weeks before the scheduled final dissertation defense. At the close of the public defense, the committee makes a final judgment regarding approval of the dissertation.

The dissertation must be approved by the PhD program director. Students who defend in the summer semester must be registered for at least one credit of NURS 999 Doctoral Dissertation for that summer semester. The student, with the approval of the chair and the PhD program director, is responsible for completing the application for graduation and submitting the final dissertation to the University Library by the appropriate deadlines. Failure to meet the required deadlines will result in the student not graduating during the intended semester.