

NURSING, PHD

Banner Code: HH-PHD-NURS

Academic Advising

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

The PhD in Nursing program builds on the MSN degree and requires a total of 78 credit hours of work (a minimum of 48 credit hours beyond the master's). The objective of the program is to prepare nursing scholars who will pursue intellectual inquiry and conduct research for the purpose of extending knowledge to contribute to the health of all populations. Graduates of the program conduct independent and collaborative research, advance nursing science, and provide leadership to the nursing profession.

Admissions & Policies

Admissions Requirements

Applicants must meet the admission standards and application requirements specified in Graduate Admissions 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 assistant dean for doctoral programs. 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 in the past two years with a final grade of 3.00 or higher or will be required to complete NURS 757 Nursing Research and Biostatistics I before beginning PhD coursework. 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, and 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. Transfer credit must be approved by the assistant dean for the doctoral division of the School of Nursing. 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 assistant dean for the doctoral division 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 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 assistant dean for the doctoral division of the School of Nursing, 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 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. PhD students are expected to progress steadily toward their degree and to complete all coursework and the written comprehensive examination in order to advance to candidacy within no more than 6 years from first enrollment.

Academic Termination

A degree-seeking PhD in Nursing student is terminated from the program after earning unsatisfactory grades (below a 3.00) in two 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 in Nursing.

A student may also be terminated from the program due to a finding of violation of the university Honor Code or after demonstrating a significant lack of progress.

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 his/her 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 Healthcare Research	3
NURS 814	Theory and Design in Health Science	3
HHS 818	Advanced Ethics of Healthcare Research	3
HHS 825	Conducting and Publishing Healthcare 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 existing doctoral-level cognate courses designed with their advisor or the assistant dean for the doctoral division to contribute to their program of research.

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

Dissertation

The final requirement for the PhD degree in nursing is 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. 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 (1-3 credits) until the proposal is successfully defended. The student must then register for at least 3 credits of NURS 999 Doctoral Dissertation per semester until the required 12 credits of NURS 998 and/or NURS 999 have been completed and the dissertation is completed.

Advancement to Candidacy

The student must complete all coursework, pass the comprehensive examination to advance to candidacy for the doctoral degree. The assistant dean for the doctoral division 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 assistant dean for the doctoral division. A student who fails the comprehensive examination a second time will be terminated from the program.

Dissertation Committee

With the advice of the assistant dean for the doctoral division of the School of Nursing, 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.

Dissertation Proposal and Research

Dissertation Proposal

The student must initially enroll in 3 credits of NURS 998 Doctoral Dissertation Proposal, and, in consultation with the dissertation committee, 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 each semester until the proposal is approved.

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 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. Once the student has successfully defended his/her dissertation proposal before the dissertation committee, the student may begin registering for NURS 999 Doctoral Dissertation. The student must register for at least 3 credits of NURS 999 per semester until the required 12 credits of NURS 998 and/or NURS 999 has been completed and the dissertation has been defended and officially submitted to the Library. Students who defend in the summer semester must be registered for at least three credits of NURS 999 for that summer semester.

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.

Final Defense of the Dissertation

After the dissertation committee gives preliminary approval of the dissertation, the chair and assistant dean for the doctoral division of the School of Nursing to schedule a final public defense of the dissertation. A copy of the dissertation must be provided to the assistant dean for the doctoral division at least two weeks before the scheduled final dissertation defense. At the close of the defense, the committee makes a final judgment regarding approval of the dissertation. The dissertation must also be approved by the assistant dean for the doctoral division and director of the School of Nursing

Additional Requirements

The student, with the approval of the chair and the assistant dean for the doctoral division of the School of Nursing 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.