

WELCOME & ABOUT

Welcome to the College of Nursing (CON) at Washington State University (WSU)! We are delighted that you have joined our College as an incoming graduate student. Our goal is to train tomorrow's nurses who are compassionate caregivers, excellent leaders, nurse scientists, and nurse educators who make valuable and lasting contributions in their communities. To achieve this goal, the College of Nursing programs are rigorous but student-focused, technologically enhanced, and personalized. You will be challenged, but also nurtured, to develop professional nursing competencies expected for your degree level.

The policies and procedures in this handbook are for programs within the Graduate School. They have been officially approved by our faculty and are consistent with WSU Graduate School regulations. This handbook was developed to be used in conjunction with WSU's [Policies and Procedures](#) and WSU's [Graduate School Policies and Procedures Manual \(PPM\)](#). The [WSU Graduate Catalog](#) and [Graduate School Policies and Procedures](#) contain additional general policies on admissions and programs. Failure to follow these policies and observe the degree requirements inevitably results in complications and could delay or jeopardize completion of your degree. The [Important Forms](#) link is also commonly used by our graduate students.

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with and following the guidelines in all sources. The CON will aid students in understanding the rules and regulations in these documents but ultimately, responsibility for compliance rests with each student. If you have questions, feel free to reach out to your staff coordinator or advisor.

Specific forms, websites, and other materials described herein or included are subject to modification. As forms are updated, they will be made available to students. While students should rely on this handbook in planning their program, in the unlikely event that language contained herein conflicts with WSU policies and procedures, the policies outlined in this handbook are subservient to those outlined by Washington State University or updated policies on the CON website.

Lastly, a glossary is available at the end of this document, [linked here](#).

Welcome to WSU!

Chris Sogge
Director, Center for Student Excellence

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SECTION I: ORGANIZATION

The WSU College of Nursing (CON) Master's degree in Nursing (MN) is accredited by the [Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education](#). The College of Nursing PhD program is under the executive authority and oversight of the WSU Graduate School which is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities through Washington State University. Students in these programs must adhere to the rules of both the College of Nursing and the Graduate School.

Students are encouraged to review the College of Nursing [Mission, Vision, and Values](#) as well as the College's information on [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#).

SECTION II: PROGRAMS

The College of Nursing programs that relate to this handbook are below. All program outcomes are developed based on national standards for master and doctoral education. Information on program outcomes, requirements, and additional information can be found on each program's linked website.

MN

The [Master of Nursing program](#) is designed for licensed RNs who have a bachelor's degree in nursing or another field and wish to go on for a master's degree in nursing with an emphasis on population health. Full- and part-time programs of study are available and are offered at all WSU College of Nursing sites.

PhD

The [PhD in Nursing](#) program prepares nursing scientists to conduct research aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of nursing in specific populations and within various healthcare settings. Most coursework is delivered online. Typically, that coursework is 4-6 Zoom courses with asynchronous instruction for the remainder. However, students and course instructor may negotiate for additional Zoom courses as necessary. Coursework focuses on core areas of nursing science, research, education, and methodology. All coursework contributes to the development and completion of dissertation work. Flexible, individualized programs are available.

Students participating in the [Nurse Faculty Loan Program](#) (NFLP) will be required to obtain the [Nursing Education Graduate Certificate](#). If the NFLP recipient has had multiple education courses or a graduate nursing education certificate, this requirement will be waived after review by the NFLP project director, and a suitable experience will be arranged in order to meet HRSA's requirement.

Graduate Certificates

The CON offers 3 certificates: Nursing Education; Nursing Leadership, and Public Health. Many students opt to add in these certificates to their progression plan. Details are at <https://nursing.wsu.edu/graduate-certificates/>. Please talk to your Academic Coordinator if you are interested in adding a certificate.

SECTION III: SUPPORT AND PROGRESSION

Admitted graduate students will be supported by Academic Coordinators, Academic Success Coaches, and faculty advisors. To help understand where to start with any questions, know that [Center for Student Excellence](#) (CSE) Coordinators and Coaches help students by:

- Referring students to appropriate resources and opportunities
- Facilitating safe and private spaces for advising/coaching, including spaces where a student otherwise does not know with whom to speak or where to start
- Collaborating with faculty advisors/dissertation chair members by referring students to them for course concerns.

Academic Coordinators support students with:

- Creating programs of studies and facilitating degree verifications
- Providing registration guidance each term, including course and section numbers
- Applying and removing advising holds
- Guiding processes and policies, including that for onboarding and admission to programs

Academic Success Coaches support students who want to become stronger learners. Whether students are facing specific learning challenges, or they just want to sharpen their strategies, coaches support students with:

- Learning strategies
- Time management
- Test-taking skills
- Health and wellness tips

Faculty support for graduate students includes:

Department Chair

The Department Chairs oversee all programs in their department. For the purposes of this handbook, that includes the MN program under the Advanced Practice and Community-Based Care Chair, and the PhD program under the Nursing Systems and Science Chair.

Program Director

Program Directors are College of Nursing faculty members overseeing a graduate program (MN/PhD).

Faculty Advisor

Each graduate student registered for classes is assigned a faculty advisor. These assignments are made by the end of the first Fall semester by the Academic Coordinator in conjunction with the Program Director, relevant to each student's program of study. PhD students are provided a faculty advisor that will assist them with their admitted research topic focus area.

Students are urged to maintain contact with their faculty advisor and to consult with them regularly concerning matters related to the content of their academic program and professional mentorship. It is required that students meet with their faculty advisor (MN students) or PhD committee (PhD students) each Spring to complete the Annual Review document by the identified due date. Information is sent out to students in advance each Spring semester.

The advisor's responsibilities in relation to each graduate advisee are to:

1. Be acquainted with the student's interests/needs
2. Sign any change of status forms
3. Be informed about the student's progress in the program
4. Counsel regarding academic questions or problems
5. Counsel regarding workload and course requirements to achieve a successful academic outcome
6. Conduct the annual review as required by the Graduate School

Faculty advisors are not to recommend program of study changes or changes related to progression/enrollment. Those changes are overseen by the Academic Coordinator.

For PhD students, once a dissertation chair is chosen, that individual also assumes responsibility for faculty advisorship. For MN students, faculty advisorship is identified and provided upon admission, and remains that person's role throughout the duration of the program.

Transferring Credits

Students who have graduate course credits from other graduate programs or institutions may request to transfer those credits to the WSU Graduate School. Those credits may be approved to meet the equivalency of required courses in the WSU Graduate nursing programs, though no more than 50% of the program can be transferred. Students from graduate programs that are online-only may have a limited number of credits accepted for transfer.

To be considered, students must have earned a minimum grade of B and the course credit must be equivalent to the WSU course that would be waived or substituted. The Graduate School uses the oldest transfer date as the start date of the student's timeline, so if transfer credits are used, they must be dated within the appropriate maximum graduation timeline of the date when the student will graduate from WSU.

Students should contact their Academic Coordinator to start the evaluation process. They must prepare a letter of request alongside the course syllabus. From there, the Program Director of the relevant program will evaluate the transfer request. If approved, they will then submit it to the WSU Graduate School for approval of course credit transfers. The Graduate Curriculum Committee may also be involved to provide a secondary letter of support. Ultimately, the WSU Graduate School establishes standards for the total number of credits that can be transferred and makes the final decision on the acceptance of courses.

Grading Policy

The College of Nursing applies a grading scale as outlined by [WSU Academic Regulations](#) and [WSU Graduate School Policies and Procedures Manual \(PPM\), Ch.6](#).

Note that for incomplete grades, students receiving that grade will receive a copy of the [Instructor's Incomplete Grade Agreement](#). This document outlines the reasons for the Incomplete, the work which must be completed for the student to receive a grade, and the date by which the work must be submitted before the grade defaults to a failing grade.

The Graduate School does not count Satisfactory/Fail (S/F) courses towards requirement total credits, except for NURS 700, 702, or 800. Some 500-level courses may be graded as S/F. These can be listed on a Program of Study, but do not count toward the minimum graded (A-F) credits

Minimum GPA

In order for graduate students to be considered in good academic standing, WSU Graduate School and the College of Nursing require students to maintain a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA for all coursework in their Program of Study.

A graduate student who has completed the first semester of graduate study and earns a GPA between 2.75 and 2.99 is eligible for one additional semester of continued enrollment on a probationary status. Upon completion of the probationary semester, and thereafter until graduation, a minimum of a 3.0 cumulative GPA is required to continue in Graduate School. Probationary status is only available to students immediately following their first semester of graduate study and is not available to students who have been provisionally admitted. Students who are provisionally admitted are informed of that status and are admitted with an exception to minimum requirements or other policies as part of their admission.

For most graduate students, the minimum grade that can be accepted for credit is a C (73%) and any student who obtains less than a C (<73%) in a course must repeat that course.

No graded courses of B- or below may be dropped from a Program of Study for an advanced degree, nor can a course be repeated for a higher grade if the student received a final grade of C or higher. Any course listed on the Program of Study for which a grade of C- or below is earned must be repeated for a letter grade, not on a Pass/Fail basis.

All grades earned by a graduate student in courses listed on the Program of Study, except for the first grade for a repeated course, will be averaged into the student's GPA. The repeated course does not replace the grade for the prior course on your transcript; however, only the "passing" grade is used in the GPA calculation. If a course is repeated, it may only be used once to fulfill graduation requirements.

Students are expected to earn an S (Satisfactory) grade for all research credits (700, 702, 800). One U (Unsatisfactory) grade for research credits indicates that the student is not making satisfactory progress. The student will be subject to dismissal from the program if a U grade is earned for research credit for two terms (summer term included). Research credits for which a U has been earned will not count toward degree requirements.

Satisfactory Student Performance

Students must maintain the minimum cumulative GPA as discussed in this handbook. Additionally, please peruse [general requirements](#), [enrollment and leave requirements](#), and specific programmatic requirements below from the Graduate School:

- [Master's Degree Requirements](#)
- [Doctoral Degree Requirements](#)
- [Graduate Student Writing Requirements](#)

Time Limits & Considerations

Maximum time allowed for completion of graduate degrees begins from the earliest course listed that applies toward the degree and is set by the Graduate School. That is as follows:

Master's Degree – 6 years

PhD Degree – Overall, PhD students must complete their degree within 10 years.

- PhD students are required to complete all course work and successfully defend their dissertation proposal (i.e., the preliminary examination) by the end of the 7th year of the program. Additional time may be granted after a request made to, and approval by, the PhD Advisory Committee.
- Defense of dissertation must be completed within three years of the date of satisfactorily completing the preliminary examination.
- A doctoral final exam cannot be scheduled in the same semester as the preliminary exam. At least four months must elapse between the successful completion of the preliminary and scheduling of the doctoral final exam.

A student must register according to the required courses in the Program of Study and stay consecutively enrolled in each term unless on an approved leave of absence with the Graduate School.

Graduate leave is available to those students who must be away from active enrollment for one or more semesters and have successfully completed at least one semester of study. Please note that some courses may only be offered yearly, which will necessitate leave for a full year. Students who wish to request graduate leave must follow the procedures described in [Graduate School PPM, Ch.5](#). Per WSU policy, official leaves of absence, internship leave status, and absences not approved under this policy are included in the time limits to complete a degree.

Students who have resigned from the Graduate School, who fail to maintain continuous enrollment status, whose official leave of absence status has expired, or whose time limit for completing the degree has expired must reapply for admission to the Graduate School using the online application. Such students must pay the non-refundable application fee. Readmission is not guaranteed.

Program of Study - MN

Each MN student must submit a Program of Study. Important details regarding this requirement can be found in [Graduate School PPM, Ch. 6](#) and the form to submit their request can be found online at [Graduate School Forms](#). Students are not allowed to change their Program of Study, or anything related to progression or enrollment without confirmation from their Academic Coordinator. Yearly review of each student's progress will be accomplished early in each Spring semester. Details about this process can be found in [Graduate School PPM, Ch. 6](#).

Unsatisfactory Student Performance

During the semester, if a student is doing unsatisfactory work, the instructor will complete a [Performance Improvement Plan](#) (PIP) form. On the form, the instructor discusses the issue or concern, identifies the objective(s) the student is not achieving, and develops the recommended actions the student should take to resolve the issue. PIP copies may be made for required documentation within a student file, and both the instructor and the student should keep a copy of the PIP for their own records. Students are required to discuss PIPs during their annual review with their faculty advisor.

Clinical activity deemed unsafe will also result in the student completing a clinical incident report. Information on incident reports is found in [Section VII](#) of this handbook.

Students who receive a grade of I, 72% or less (C- or less), or a withdrawal for a course are not considered to have passed that course in a satisfactory manner. Students must complete additional steps to be approved to maintain their standing in the program.

Additionally, students who withdraw from two or more courses with a "W" grade posted on their transcript must demonstrate good academic standing prior to the withdrawals and petition for permission to continue in their degree plan.

To petition to continue, students must adhere to the Graduate Progression Appeal Process section below. The [Graduate Admissions and Progression](#) (GAP) Committee is the governance body that reviews those requests. Students may not register for future nursing courses until completion of GAP Committee review and formal reinstatement in the program.

Graduate Progression Appeal Process

The GAP Committee at the College of Nursing is tasked with acting on matters related to academic progression, academic problems, and reinstatement of graduate students. The committee reviews each student that appeals through the below process:

1. The student should connect with their Academic Coordinator to review the appeal process and make an alternate plan of study if necessary. Coordinators are available to review readability of the progression letter.
2. The student will create a progression letter to the GAP Committee. That letter should include:
 - a. course(s) for which they received an unsatisfactory grade
 - b. a statement providing a perspective of why they did not receive a passing grade, and their plan of action to be successful if recommended to continue
 - c. any other information they would like the GAP Committee to know
3. This letter should be submitted to their Academic Coordinator by the day prior to the scheduled GAP meeting.
4. The GAP Committee will weigh all input and communicate their decision as a recommendation to the Program Director.

The GAP Committee is tasked with determining an outcome to this review, including the potential for dismissal. This determination is based on policy, PIPs, the student letter, and other potential documentation.

Dismissal from the College of Nursing Program

Any student at risk of dismissal from the program will have received a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) form outlining the concerns. If applicable, a Standards of Conduct violation from WSU's [Center for Community Standards](#) will also be included in the student's file.

Reasons for dismissal include, but are not limited to, the following conditions for the student:

- Receives multiple course failures within a semester;
- Engages in a pattern of professional misconduct or a single serious incident of misconduct;
- Engages in illegal or unethical conduct as outlined by the university's Standards of Conduct, the ANA's Code of Ethics, and all relevant clinical site-specific policies (including HIPAA);
- Fails to meet the technical standards of the program;
- Withdraws from or fails to enroll in required coursework without an active approved leave of absence;
- While on leave does not meet requirements to return, including failing to remain in clinical compliance (MN students only);
- Meets the unsatisfactory performance criteria from the aforementioned sections in this handbook;
- Patterns of clinical placement concerns or a single egregious concern (i.e. a background check failure)

The Program Director will meet with the student to review concerns and documentation prior to requesting dismissal. They will also consider if the student is disqualified or eligible to reapply to the program. Examples leading to disqualification may include, but are not limited to, patient safety concerns, unsafe or threatening behavior, IRB concerns, or similar issues.

If dismissal is requested, the Program Director will inform the student with a written email. A copy will be included in the student's file. The Program Director will also inform the student if they are eligible to reapply or disqualified from future applications for admissions.

If dismissal is not requested, the Program Director will provide the student with a written warning via email and include a copy in the student's file. The student may also be required to complete mandatory remediation prior to returning to the classroom or practicum/research/clinical site. Remediation may include, but is not limited to, additional skills assessment, writing a paper, giving a presentation on an assigned topic, etc.

Readmission to the College of Nursing Program

All nursing students who have left the program, whether for personal, medical, academic, or non-academic reasons must follow the process for readmission. Students who have not been disqualified upon departure from the College of Nursing and Washington State University are eligible for readmission to their program. Students may not participate in any classroom or course activities while waiting for readmission or pending a grade appeal for that course.

Readmission to the program will be determined by the availability of seats in that semester. A student will be readmitted when a seat becomes available, with notification going to their WSU email. Priority for seats will be given to students in the following order:

1. Current students who are progressing in good academic standing.
2. Students returning from approved medical leave of absence.
 - a. Students who seek a medical withdrawal from the university should work with their advisor on the process. Please note that under no circumstances should the student submit medical documentation to the college unprompted.
3. All other students, including those who are returning for readmission or from a non-medical leave of absence

If there are multiple students with the same priority level for withdrawal, priority will be given to the student who has been absent from the program for the longer period of time.

Additional remediation requirements will be determined by the Program Director, including consideration of the length of absence from the program.

All students who step out of a program with practicum components will be required to re-affirm, prior to re-enrolling, that they meet the college's [Technical Standards](#).

Graduate School Termination and Reinstatement

Graduate School Termination of Enrollment

The enrollment of a graduate student will be terminated under any one of the following conditions:

- The student has been provisionally admitted and has a cumulative GPA below 3.0 at the end of the first semester of study.
- The student fails to establish and maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 after more than one semester of study.
- The student has failed a preliminary or final exam for the second time.
- The student has failed a preliminary or final exam for the first time with a Graduate School representative present, and a second examination is not recommended by the advisory committee, program chair, or representative; in such cases, the dean of the WSU Graduate School will review the case and make the final determination.
- The student has earned a U (Unsatisfactory) grade for research credits (700, 702, 800) for two semesters (including Summer terms).
- Other reasons for termination might include failure to make normal progress toward degree completion (such as failure to complete coursework on time or multiple incompletes), failure to maintain continuous enrollment, failure to assemble and maintain an approved advisory committee, issues related to academic integrity or student conduct, policy violations, etc.

Only the Dean of the WSU Graduate School or the University Conduct Board have authority to terminate a student's enrollment.

Graduate School Reinstatement

Reinstatement of a provisionally admitted graduate student who falls below a 3.0 GPA following completion of one semester or one summer session, or of a graduate student who falls below 2.75 GPA following completion of one semester or one summer session, will be considered only through a petition from the graduate student to the Program Director. Following a meeting between the graduate student and the Program Director, the Program Director may favorably recommend reinstatement for that student by submitting a memo, via the Graduate Research Management (GRM), to the Dean of the Graduate School, who has final approval.

Reinstatement procedure for a graduate student who has completed two semesters, one semester and one summer session, or two summer sessions and whose GPA is below 3.0 follows the same procedure. The student must meet with the Program Director who, upon favorable recommendation, may petition the Dean of the Graduate School (routed through the GRM) for approval to reinstate the student. If approval to continue is granted, the student will have one semester to increase their cumulative GPA to 3.0. Failure to do so requires termination of enrollment in the program and in the Graduate School.

If the student becomes academically deficient because of two U (Unsatisfactory) grades for research credits, the student must meet with the Program Director, who upon favorable recommendation, may petition the Dean of the Graduate School (routed through the GRM) for approval to reinstate the student. The Program Director must identify the conditions for continuation of study in the petition request. If approval to continue is granted, the student will have one semester to improve research progress.

Further policies regarding general requirements, including incomplete grades, pass/fail, and auditing can be found in WSU [Graduate School PPM, Ch. 6](#)

SECTION IV: ACADEMIC POLICIES & PROCEDURES

This section describes the policies, procedures, and professional standards governing students' progress through the graduate nursing curriculum across all College of Nursing campuses at Washington State University. Academic progress policies apply to all campuses, affiliated sites, and curricular activities related to graduate nursing education.

Students are strongly advised to seek guidance from their Academic Coordinator or the Director of the Center for Student Excellence, regarding any circumstances that impact their ability to participate in the nursing curriculum; and to do so before their academic performance is impacted. Each student has the responsibility to know these policies and use them in their decisions.

University Policies

It is important to distinguish University-wide policies and those specific to the CON. Students must abide by all policies in the [WSU Student Handbook for Community Standards](#) and the [Center for Community Standards](#) website as well as those pertaining to students in the [Executive Policy Manual](#).

Academic & Professional Integrity

All members of the WSU community share responsibility for maintaining and promoting the principles of integrity in all activities, including academic integrity and honest scholarship. WSU's [Academic Integrity policy](#) will be strongly enforced in all College of Nursing programs. Students need to read and understand all definitions of cheating. If a student has any questions about what is and is not allowed in a course, the student is encouraged to seek clarification from the course faculty.

The [Center for Community Standards](#), in conjunction with the academic department and faculty member(s), oversees the academic integrity process. A violation of academic integrity includes (but is not limited to) cheating, use of unauthorized materials or sources, unauthorized collaboration on projects, plagiarism, and multiple submissions of the same work.

More detailed descriptions of cheating, plagiarism, and fabrication can be found in the following Washington Administrative Codes (WAC): [Acts of Dishonesty WAC 504-26-202](#) and [Cheating WAC 504-26-010](#). Additionally, [Violations and Possible Sanctions](#) outlines potential WSU sanctions for Academic Integrity Violations. Students will not have the option to withdraw from the course pending an appeal and may be reported to the Center for Community Standards.

In addition to sanctions that WSU may require of the student, the CON will also provide any of the following sanctions as deemed appropriate by course faculty: re-write the assignment, demonstrate knowledge through a make-up assignment, fail the assignment, be removed from class/clinical setting and/or fail the course. In some cases, the violation may lead to the student's dismissal from WSU College of Nursing.

College of Nursing Policies

College of Nursing students must also abide by the college-specific policies below:

Waiving / Substituting a Nursing Course

Per [Academic Regulation 108](#), colleges and departments may substitute or waive college-level requirements for individual students. Students may request permission to waive a course if they can document successful completion of a similar course, including providing a course syllabus or course description if syllabus is unavailable. The instructor of the potentially waived course will review the syllabus to be assured student learning outcomes were adequately covered in the completed course. The CSE will also confirm that waiving the course will not affect graduation nor academic requirements. Next, the Program Director may/may not approve the waiver request based on course instructor recommendation.

Programs in the Graduate School require a final step where the College of Nursing approval is sent to the Graduate School for final approval. Waiving a course may still result in an outcome where a course of equal credit is required, to ensure that overall program credit total minimums are met.

Campus to Campus Transfer Procedure Policy

Students in the WSU College of Nursing apply to and are admitted to a campus. The number of students admitted to each campus is based on the available seats for both didactic and practicum experiences at that site. In the case of family need, health, or other crises students may seek to petition for transfer to another campus for completion of their studies. Information on that policy [can be found here](#).

Student Employment Policy

Students are encouraged to limit employment while enrolled in classes. Students who must be employed should arrange their schedules to accommodate all clinical and didactic work as well as study time needed to be successful in nursing courses. If a student is absent due to employment requirements, that absence will not be excused.

MN students should not have clinical placements in the departments or floors where they are employed. Students are responsible for notifying the [Clinical Affairs Office](#) should such a conflict arise. Students cannot accept payment for internships/projects while earning credit for coursework within any facility as they are in "student status."

Nursing Buildings & Classrooms

Food and non-alcoholic beverages may be brought into classrooms, offices, and lounges if strict controls on cleanliness and sanitation are observed. Food and beverages may NOT be taken into other learning areas of the buildings such as the Computer Laboratory, the Multimedia Laboratory, or any of the Center for Experiential Learning spaces. If a building or room has a non-food/beverage policy that will supersede this policy.

Children are not permitted in the nursing buildings or classrooms. Under WAC 504-36-020, pets are not allowed in university buildings. [Refer to the legislation here](#) for exceptions, which includes trained service animals.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

Students are to adhere to the [WSU Alcohol and Drug Policy](#) as outlined in the Executive Policy Manual (EP20) as well as any policies related to drug/alcohol screening on the College of Nursing [policy page](#). The College of Nursing will engage in a drug screening process for site requirements or for cause.

SECTION V: STANDARDS OF CONDUCT FOR STUDENTS

Students enrolled in the College of Nursing are subject to standards of performance and ethics of the profession. Violations of conduct include issues related to professionalism, communication, dishonesty about compliance status, anything within [The Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements](#), and/or the standards in this handbook.



Further, as a whole, WSU students must adhere to the general rules and regulations of the Standards of Conduct for Students as set forth in [WAC 504-26](#). Students are responsible for knowing these standards and may be subject to disciplinary action under the procedures outlined in this document and the procedures outlined in the [Violations and Possible Sanctions](#) section of WSU's Student Handbook for Community Standards.

Professionalism

All College of Nursing students must conform to reasonable standards of performance and behavior related to communication, behavior, professional conduct, and technical skills. Students who fail to conform to reasonable standards of performance and behavior in the classroom, online, in clinical agencies, on campus, and within the community may be removed from the program.

Students generally will be provided an opportunity to achieve professional behavior and learn from an error through the process of giving them a PIP, unless one or more of these apply:

- the behavior continues after previous PIPs or opportunities to achieve professional behavior
- the behavior presents a threat to the health or safety of self or others
- the College of Nursing determines that the behavior is sufficiently severe or egregious that the student should not be permitted to continue in the program

Additionally, while in clinical or practice situations, students' primary responsibility is the care of their patients. Students must recognize that the patient's welfare has precedence over a student's personal educational objectives. Students must respect every patient's privacy and dignity and must maintain confidentiality regarding all patient information. Students must never compromise patient safety, which can occur through impairment, lack of diligence, or by providing care for which they lack skills, knowledge, or by completing activities that are not approved by a preceptor or appropriately supervised.

Students will be held to the same standards of conduct and safety outlined in the Washington State law regarding health professions, as defined in the Uniform Disciplinary Act ([RCW 18.130](#)) expected of employees in the patient care areas of health care facilities. PhD students are also held to IRB provisions and requirements related to research participants, research sites, and appropriate behavior.

In addition to [RCW 18.130](#), College of Nursing professionalism expectations prohibit:

- Failure to cooperate with the Washington Board of Nursing or similar out-of-state regulatory bodies
- Disruption or obstruction of teaching, research, or administration
- Unprofessional, inappropriate, or threatening behavior or comments made toward faculty, staff, other university employees, organizational mentors, others involved with teaching, or other students
- Attending class or patient care settings while impaired (e.g., under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or altered mental status)
- Repeated late arrival or early departures from rotational sites without notifying the organizational mentor
- (MN students only): Failure to meet professional expectations set forth by the college or a practice site (such as timely completion of co-curricular and Clinical Passport requirements, advising, required on-boarding activities, trainings, arrival and departure time, dress code, or similar requirements)
- Non-compliance with initial evaluation and/or recommendations of any Washington Recovery Assistance Program
- Non-compliance with the Procedures for Supporting Students with a Potential Impairment
- Non-compliance with the Drug Screening Policy
- Lapse of a student's Washington State Nursing License or other state License when engaging in the practice of nursing
- Violation of the Standards of Conduct (WAC 504-26)

Communication

The College of Nursing uses electronic means to disseminate information and communicate. This information may be important and/or time sensitive. Thus, timely review and response to email messages is vital to success for all members of the College of Nursing. Please see student expectations, etiquette, and procedures [in the policy here](#).

Attendance

Attendance is determined by the faculty of the course. *Unless otherwise stated by the course faculty in the individual course syllabus*, the CON has a mandatory attendance policy regarding all courses and scheduled learning activities.

Students are expected to be prompt and regular in attending all scheduled learning activities. Any unexcused absence may result in a failing grade and/or the student placed on academic or professional probation.

Unless otherwise stated, students are expected to be prompt and regular in attending classes, turning in assignments on time, and in taking exams when scheduled. Instructors may establish additional rules for attendance and make-up exams and must articulate these clearly in writing.

Dress Code

All College of Nursing students are required to adhere to the [dress code policy here](#).

Electronic Communication and Social Media

Electronic systems are governed by the [Electronic Communication Policy \(EP4\)](#) in the WSU [Executive Policy Manual](#). All policies indicate that equipment and services will be used only for carrying out university business and may not be used for private use.

As professional nurses with a unique obligation and responsibility, nursing students must be cognizant of the public nature of social media and other electronic communication and the permanent nature of communicating therein. These technologies may give the impression of privacy, but postings and other data should be considered in the public realm and freely visible by many people. State and Federal regulations related to confidentiality along with HIPAA require that no patient information be made available to the public. These regulations apply to comments made on social networking sites, and violators are subject to the same disciplinary action as with other HIPAA violations. The National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) has an [instructive guide on social media](#) guidelines that we encourage students to regularly review.

Additional guidelines include information from research involving human subjects, [with information here](#).

All Students are expected to comply with the [WSU College of Nursing Social Media Guidelines](#) including:

- Protect confidential and proprietary information
- Do not post anything that could reflect poorly on the College
- Use WSU College of Nursing intellectual properties only with permission from the Marketing Director
- Disseminating official information

Intellectual Property

Students cannot share Canvas course recordings or record a course in session. This is predicated on intellectual property of faculty members through [larger WSU regulations](#).

Non-Integrity Academic Grievance Procedure

Differences of opinion between students and their instructors may arise. Students and their instructors are encouraged to communicate regularly and directly to resolve such differences. An attempt should first be made to resolve the

complaint by an open discussion between the student and the faculty member(s) involved. If either the faculty or the student would like a third party to be in attendance at that open discussion, CSE advisors are available.

If complaints with the instructor directly are not resolved by that open discussion, the student may initiate a formal grievance within 20 business days following the end of the semester. WSU College of Nursing follows the established timeframe and line of communication outlined in [Academic Regulation 104 - Academic Complaint Procedures](#). At each stage of the grievance process, the individual addressed will be given 20 business days in which to respond to the grievance via official WSU email and come to a resolution. Should the response be unsatisfactory, the student can then take the grievance and response(s) to the next individual on the list.

Students must follow the typical “chain of command” when following the grievance procedure: course faculty, then dissertation chair (if applicable), then Program Director, then Department Chair, then the Dean of the College or designee.

If a student has questions on who is next in the line of communication or wants a review of readability of their communication, they can connect with the college’s Director of the Center for Student Excellence. While the Director cannot make decisions to resolve the issues, they are available for process explanation and readability review of the concern. Additionally, the University Ombudsman is available at any stage for advice or assistance in resolving academic complaints.

A copy of all written complaints and a written record of all subsequent actions will be filed in a confidential Academic Grievance File in the College of Nursing Academic Affairs Office as well as in the student’s official file.

Though chairs and college deans (and program leaders and campus chancellors) may resolve complaints about instruction and grading, they may not change a final grade without the consent of the instructor, except as provided by [Rule 105](#).

Additional Grievance Resources

- Students who have exhausted avenues provided by WSU and still have unresolved complaints may contact the [Washington Student Achievement Council \(WSAC\)](#) who has authority to investigate student complaints regarding the University not following published policy or state law.
- WSU is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), whose complaint process is [here](#).
- The University Ombudsman is available at any stage for advice or assistance in resolving academic complaints.



Grievance Process



If the concern is from a student at a campus other than Spokane, the concern will also be brought to the attention of the Campus Academic Director at the same stages as the Program Director.



The formal [Graduate School Grievance procedure](#) is in chapter 12 of the Graduate School handbook, which is to be used following the College of Nursing's grievance process:

In some instances, such as those related to academic and employment issues (e.g. failed examinations, termination of assistantship, dismissal from program, etc.), the student may wish to appeal a specific decision made by the departmental or program faculty.

1. The student must make a formal grievance request to the Dean of the Graduate School in writing, with signature (email is not sufficient). The student must submit documentation describing his/her grounds for a formal grievance to the Dean. Formal grievances must be filed within 15 (fifteen) calendar days following a notice of decision. The original decision will be held in abeyance until the university has rendered a final decision.
2. The Dean will assign these formal grievances to one of the Associate Deans for full consideration and recommendation. If the Associate Dean deems it appropriate, the matter will be referred to an independent Committee on Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities (CGSRR) for consideration and formulating recommendations of action to the Dean of the Graduate School. The CGSRR will operate with due respect to the rights of graduate students, faculty, and administrators including the conduct of interviews, the right of all parties to review and address allegations, and the right to a fair hearing. The CGSRR will deliberate and render a recommendation to the Dean of the Graduate School or the Dean's designee within 60 days of being formed.
3. Recommendations for resolution of formal grievances will be acted upon by the Dean or the Dean's designee. The Dean of the Graduate School will make a final decision. The decision made by the Dean on academic matters is final.
4. An Appeal of the decision made by the Dean of the Graduate School can be made to the Provost if the graduate student believes there was a procedural error or failure to follow WSU or Graduate School policy during the complaint or grievance process. The written appeal to the Provost regarding procedural irregularities must be filed within fifteen (15) calendar days following the notice of the decision from the Dean of the Graduate School in response to the formal grievance. The appeal must be copied to the Dean of the Graduate School. If the Dean of the Graduate School does not receive a copy of the appeal within fifteen (15) calendar days, the student's right to appeal will be waived and the Dean's decision will be final. The Provost will not reopen cases for the purpose of re-investigating the grievance.

SECTION VI: CLINICAL POLICIES

Practicum policies and practicum experiences are an important aspect of education as a Graduate student in the College of Nursing at WSU. It is the practicum settings that provide students an opportunity to apply theoretical and evidence-based knowledge gained in other courses, adding hands-on patient care experiences to develop and advance nursing practice. The emphasis in the Graduate Practicum/experiences is on the development of professional expertise necessary for the student's program.

Clinical Passport – MN students

The College of Nursing calls the combination of proof of licensure, immunization, and certifications (e.g., CPR, BBP, HIPAA etc.) the "Clinical Passport." This combination of requirements is part of our contractual agreement with agencies and therefore is a clinical requirement for MN students. For specific Passport requirements, please access the [Graduate Passport Requirement](#) website.

Vaccine and Clinical Requirements – PhD

PhD students do not automatically need to adhere to the Passport requirements. However, a clinical passport may be needed if they are doing a study in a clinical facility and if they require a passport per the facility research IRB committee. The chair of the student will inform the PhD Program Director, who will then initiate the clinical passport process.

Vaccine and Clinical Requirements – MN

Please note that the [WSU Health Sciences Vaccination and Health Screening Admission Policy](#) applies to MN students. This policy mandates that the College of Nursing will require - as a condition of admission - certain immunizations and health screenings. The only exemption to these required vaccinations is students that have a legitimate medical condition that make vaccination medically contraindicated. See details in the policy linked above.

To provide project opportunities to students, the CON coordinates and executes clinical training agreements with healthcare partners. In these agreements, the CON agrees that placed students will meet specific onboarding requirements. Clinical sites may have varying and more stringent requirements beyond those mandated by the CON for MN students.

The College of Nursing partners with CastleBranch to track student immunizations/tests and other required information needed for clinical compliance. Upon acceptance to the nursing program, you will receive information on how to create a CastleBranch account and how to upload documents to complete all requirements.

Once you upload your documents to CastleBranch, a reviewer will verify your documentation and accept or reject it. If it is rejected, you will receive an email with the reason for rejection and you will be asked to upload the correct documentation. Please take care of these emails immediately as your practicum placement requires 100% compliance to attend. Please check your spam folder or adjust your filter settings to allow for communications from CastleBranch.

It is the responsibility of the student to respond to any verification/credentialing questions by either Clinical Affairs or CastleBranch. All updates for immunizations, tests, and other requirements must be completed by the date given to you from the Clinical Affairs Office. Passport requirements must be current (compliant) for the entirety of the MN program.

A delinquent requirement, including falling into overdue status, will affect your practicum attendance. **Students may lose their placement in the clinical agency, be removed from the placement immediately and will be unable to count any practicum hours that may have occurred during the out of compliance timeframe. . Students are unable to makeup hours while out of compliance.** Failing to adhere to compliance deadlines will affect student course completion and program progression. Any student who does not meet deadlines or falls into overdue status will receive a PIP from the director of clinical placements and affiliations. Students cannot return to project work until onboarding coordinators release the student via email communications to faculty of record, faculty track lead, assigned clinical faculty evaluator, and program director while copying the student. Registration for the following semester will be blocked or cancelled if students do not provide required documentation (for all except RN licensure and influenza immunization which fall under varied schedules). To assist in preventing falling out of compliance, Clinical Affairs staff are available to answer proactive questions about compliance requirements.

MN students must maintain current licensure as a Registered Nurse throughout their enrollment in the Graduate program. Further, students must hold a current, active, unencumbered Registered Nursing license in all states in which you complete any educational activities and practicum experiences



Confidentiality of Patient Records

The following policy on use of patient records has been developed to comply with federal guidelines outlined in the HIPAA regulations. The information below identifies what information is protected under Federal HIPAA requirements:

- Protected health information includes individually identifiable health information (with limited exceptions) in any form, including information transmitted orally, or in written or electronic form.
- “Individually identifiable health information” means health information created or received by a healthcare provider, health plan, employer, or healthcare clearinghouse, which could be used directly or indirectly to identify the individual who is the subject of the information.
- Health information must have all of the following removed prior to use outside of a healthcare setting: name; address (including street address, city, county, ZIP code, or equivalent geocodes); names of relatives and employers; birth date; telephone and fax numbers; e-mail addresses; social security number; medical record number; health plan beneficiary number; account number; certificate/license number; any vehicle or other device serial number; web URL; Internet Protocol (IP) address; finger or voice prints; photographic images; and any other unique identifying number, characteristic, or code (whether generally available in the public realm or not) that the covered entity has reason to believe may be available to an anticipated recipient of the information, and the covered entity has no reason to believe that any reasonably anticipated recipient of such information could use the information alone, or in combination with other information, to identify an individual. Thus, to create de-identified information, entities that had removed the listed identifiers would still have to remove additional data elements if they had reason to believe that a recipient could use the remaining information, alone or in combination with other information, to identify an individual. For example, if the “occupation” field is left intact and the entity knows that a person’s occupation is sufficiently unique to allow identification, that field would have to be removed from the relevant record.

Patient Record Handling

- Students may not make copies (photocopies, photographs, computer printouts, etc.) of any material from a patient record. If students are required to generate a SOAP note or comprehensive assessment note as part of their course requirements, the student must take HIPAA-compliant handwritten notes in the clinical setting to reference later to complete the course requirement. Making a copy of the patient’s record is a HIPAA violation and may result in a course failure and/or removal from the program.
- The student must follow any special regulations for the use of patient records per agency protocol.

Drug Screening Policy

The College of Nursing will engage in drug screening of students. [Please see the policy here.](#)

Technical Standards

Nursing students must meet the appropriate Technical Standards for their program independently, with or without reasonable accommodation, to support successful progress through and graduation from their respective curricula. These requirements pertain to all student conduct regardless of setting (e.g., classroom/didactic, office, on-campus simulation, off-campus practicum, email communication, etc.).

Students are encouraged to review these Technical Standards to become familiar with the skills, abilities, and behavioral characteristics required to complete the programs. Students who have questions about these Technical Standards or who may require reasonable accommodation should contact [WSU Student Campus Accommodations](#) department at the campus in which they are registered.

- MN Technical Standards will be found on the CON website once the program moratorium is lifted
- PhD Technical Standards [may be found here](#)

SECTION VII: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

General Information

Directory for College of Nursing Faculty and Staff

Contact information for all College of Nursing faculty and staff is located at [College of Nursing Faculty & Staff Directory](#).

Academic Calendar

The [Academic Calendar](#) located on the WSU Registrar website provides relevant deadlines for registration, fees, applications, enrollment, exams, holidays, and other important information.

Library Services

[WSU Libraries](#) are dedicated to supporting the research needs of students. Refer to the [College of Nursing Library Services](#) for campus-specific information.

Online Course Access

Nursing courses use Canvas, an online Learning Management System (LMS), to deliver course content. Students will receive LMS access to courses after they have a WSU Network ID and have registered for courses. Access the site to find course syllabi, communications from faculty, and other important information. WSU has a [guide on navigating Canvas](#) as well.

Other student resources and information can be found on the CON [website under Students](#).

Safety Information – MN students

In addition to any facility's or organization's reporting system, the College of Nursing must adhere to the process for two types of incident reports.

Incident reports: harm or near miss involving a patient

Complete the Nursing Commission Incident Report found at: <https://nursing.wsu.edu/nursing-commission-incident-report/>. This critical incident report documents "... events involving a student or faculty member that the program has reason to believe resulted in patient harm, an unreasonable risk of patient harm, or diversion of legend drugs or controlled substances" ([WAC 246-840-513](#)).

1. The incident report must be completed **by the student** involved **within 24 hours of the incident**. The clinical faculty member of that student assists with that report and ensures that it was filed.
2. The faculty and preceptors at the College of Nursing then have 24 hours to report to the Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission (NCQAC), on forms provided by the commission, on the events involving that student or faculty member that the program has reason to believe resulted in patient harm, an unreasonable risk of patient harm, or diversion of legend drugs or controlled substances.

When submitted via the online system, this report is delivered directly to the NCQAC as well as to the designated College of Nursing Program Director indicated on the form. Program Directors review the reports and develop action plans with faculty, both case-by-case and annually.

Incident reports: injury involving a student, staff, or faculty member

Complete the WSU Incident Report found at <http://hrs.wsu.edu/managers/incident-report/>. This form is used throughout WSU to report a workplace injury or illness of a student, staff, or faculty within 24 hours. In accordance with [SPPM 2.24.1 \(Reporting Accidental Injuries and Work-Related Illnesses\)](#), faculty, staff, volunteers, and students are to promptly report all accidental injuries and work-related illnesses to their supervisor for evaluation and possible investigation.



1. Students must immediately report all classroom injuries to their instructor and seek medical treatment, if needed.
2. Faculty will send an email with details of the incident to the Program Director.
3. The **Program Director** will complete and submit an [Incident Report](#) **within 24 hours**.
 - a. NOTE: Major incidents resulting in serious injury (e.g. fracture or amputation), in-patient hospitalization, or death are to be reported immediately, per SPPM 2.24.1.
4. The Incident Report gets routed to Human Resource Services (HRS).
5. HRS will review and forward a copy of the report to the college's Dean.

For injuries occurring at a clinical agency, that agency's incident report form may also be required.

SECTION VIII: APPENDICES

MN: Master's Thesis/Clinical Research Project

Overview

This section describes the differences between projects and theses, selection and role of your committee, information on the specific requirements and format for projects and theses, scheduling and conduct of the final oral presentation/examination, and directions for submission of final project/thesis to WSU.

The culmination of the master's education is a clinical project or thesis that demonstrates integration of learning and use of master's-level scholarly and research skills. Students should work with their Academic Coordinators early in their enrollment in graduate studies to select the option as both options require a minimum of two semesters to complete, and a thesis may take longer. Students will need to select a topic, a committee chair, and two committee members who will assist in the process. Content covered in NURS 504; Evidence Based Practice will help students develop a thesis/project topic.

Thesis Option (NURS 700)

MN students who conduct a thesis are usually interested in obtaining experience in conducting research prior to pursuing doctoral education. A thesis requires that the student conduct a research project, including conceptual framework, project design, Institutional Review Board (IRB) application and review/approval, data acquisition, data analysis, and presentation/discussion of findings. Any student who wants to engage in the thesis route needs to work closely with their faculty advisor early on to plan, as the course may not regularly be offered.

Clinical Project Option (NURS 702)

The clinical project is expected to demonstrate a review and analysis of current research and clinical practice literature regarding a nursing phenomenon, conceptual context, nursing practice, a population-focused topic, educational gap or strategy, or a nursing leadership topic, and recommendations for practice or further research. Completion of this option requires all students complete 3 credits of NURS 702 working with a faculty committee and a possible community person on a MN topic of interest as outlined above. This activity should be completed in the semester of anticipated graduation.

The NURS 702 project course is designed as a cohort model with 3 faculty assigned each semester to guide students in their projects. Students will meet with faculty and cohorts a minimum of 2 times before the actual defense date. The clinical project course can be taken 1 semester before anticipated graduation, yet must also be taken in their final semester. The project course entails a literature or topic search to identify gaps in clinical practice, population health topics, vulnerable or underrepresented population health needs, and education or nursing leadership priorities that could benefit a community, a health care system, or nursing practice.



Summary of Thesis and Clinical Project Options

| Thesis | Clinical Project |
|--|--|
| Requires 6 credits of NURS 700. 2-3 credits of NURS 700 must be taken in the final semester the student will graduate. If the student does not defend, they must retake the credits again that following semester when they will defend. | Requires 3 credits of NURS 702. These 3 credits of NURS 702 must be taken in the final semester the student will graduate. If the student does not defend, they must retake the credits again that following semester when they will defend. |
| Comprised of 3 or 4 chapters. The 4-chapter route has a publishable manuscript as the third chapter. This may add up to 1 additional year to complete. This option has specific regulations from the Graduate School. | Students will build on previous course work towards completion of an evidence-based project or manuscript, involving synthesis of the literature that addresses a nursing practice, educational issue, or policy healthcare improvement project with a focus on planning, implementation and evaluation. A final oral defense is required demonstrating competencies, reflection, and analytic thinking. |
| Not offered regularly – work with your faculty advisor early on if you are planning to go this route. | Offered regularly in Fall and Spring. |
| Both routes require an oral presentation and examination (defense). | |

PhD: Candidacy and Dissertation

The WSU requirements for PhD candidacy, graduation, and all downloadable forms are described in the Graduate School Policies and Procedures Manual. The College of Nursing has established the guidelines described below for progression to candidacy, dissertation completion, and dissertation defense.

There are three major steps undertaken at the conclusion of the PhD student’s required course work. The first is progression to candidacy through successful presentation and defense of the dissertation proposal (preliminary or qualifying examination). The second is completion of the Institutional Review Board documents and carrying out the proposed research. The third step is the writing, presentation, and defense of the completed doctoral dissertation (final examination). Each step is described below in terms of its purpose, elements, format and process, and instructions to students.

Progression to Candidacy

NURS 800 Credits

Graduate School requires all students to take a minimum of 2 credits of NURS 800 every fall and spring semester. Credits are optional during summer session. During Year 1, students enroll in 1 credit of NURS 800 each semester. NURS 800 credits in subsequent semesters are determined by your advising committee. NURS 800 credits during the summer semester is at the discretion of your advising committee with approval from the PhD program director. NURS 800 is graded as S or U. Any student who receives two “U” grades in NURS 800 is automatically dismissed from the university by the Graduate School.

Four Year Policy for Taking Preliminary Exam

PhD students have a maximum of 7 years after program start date (and accounting for dates of transferred credit) to successfully pass their preliminary exams. If a student has not passed their preliminary exams after 7 years, the student may be asked to do a combination of any of the following: retake coursework; meet every semester with dissertation committee; and/or sign a warning of unsatisfactory progression every semester after the 4 years. The student may also be asked to withdraw from the PhD program. Consequences of not completing the preliminary exam within the timeframe will be at the discretion of the advising committee, PhD Program Director, and GAP Committee.



Each student works with a dissertation committee while completing coursework. Students are assigned a primary chair upon admission who will initially work with the student to identify first year courses and additional advising committee members. The dissertation committee should be fully constituted by Year 2 of the PhD program.

Progression to PhD candidacy.

Progression to PhD candidacy is a process, the purpose of which is to demonstrate readiness to complete dissertation requirements for the PhD in nursing. This process is intended to foster and evaluate student abilities related to knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of content within the context of the nursing discipline.

Steps in the process include:

1. Satisfactory completion of coursework as recommended by advising committee;

Progression to candidacy includes several steps and occurs after satisfactory completion of identified coursework, with the exception of any remaining nursing education courses required for fulfillment of either NFLP or Education certificate requirements. "Completion" of courses means that courses are successfully completed, and grades are posted. This ensures that critical study in areas such as scientific inquiry, research methods, concept analysis, and chosen electives is applied in the dissertation proposal.

2. Appointment/approval of the dissertation committee members;

Once the student conceptualizes the dissertation proposal, the dissertation committee is formed. One or more members of the dissertation committee may be changed, based on the dissertation topic and advising expertise needed.

3. Outline of comprehensive dissertation proposal approved by the dissertation committee;

Upon completion of coursework, the student is eligible to present an outline of the dissertation proposal, to be approved by all dissertation committee members. The outline is to be a detailed description of the proposal content, including

Chapter 1: Statement of the Problem, Population of Interest, Study Aims, Significance
Chapter 2: Literature Search Tactics, Theoretical Framework, and Literature Review
Chapter 3: Design and Methodology

Together with the dissertation committee, specific headings and expected content within these chapters will be discussed and outlined. It is at this stage that students position their specific areas of interest, with respect to content and methodology, within the larger body of disciplinary knowledge. Committee members will be looking for a demonstration of comprehensiveness and will offer guidance as to the expectations for the written work.

4. Written dissertation proposal approved by the dissertation committee; and

Chapters 1, 2, and 3 are written and approved prior to the preliminary examination. The proposal is both an academic milestone, and an important pedagogical tool. Students and faculty members should view the proposal as a contract which articulates the boundaries and goals of the student's first large-scale research project that is completed in collaboration with the dissertation committee members. Following approval, major changes must be approved by the entire dissertation committee.



It should be noted that this proposal includes comprehensive information that demonstrates a synthesis and application of disciplinary knowledge. It will become a substantial portion of the dissertation. However, editing is expected as the dissertation progresses, new relevant literature becomes available, and information included in the comprehensive proposal is honed. Students may submit sections or drafts to particular members of their committee for critique as the proposal develops. Work with the dissertation chair to determine the procedure for working with the committee to review chapters. The length of this process and of the proposal will vary depending upon the particular needs of the student and the requirements of the respective committee members. All committee members must approve the completed written proposal.

5. Oral presentation of proposal to dissertation committee and all interested graduate faculty

An oral presentation and defense of the research proposal follows approval of the written work. This constitutes the preliminary doctoral examination. The student will schedule the presentation, ensuring that all committee members will be present. Committee members' signatures and graduate school approval must be sought no later than 15 working days prior to the date of presentation. Work with the PhD Staff Advisor to obtain signatures and to complete the defense scheduling form. Dates for the preliminary and final defenses are established by the PhD Program Coordinator each semester.

The presentation is open to the College of Nursing faculty, WSU faculty, and graduate students. Following a 30-minute presentation, the general audience may engage in questions or comments for 15 minutes, after which they will leave, and the committee will conduct an oral examination. The oral examination consists of questions elicited from all committee members by the committee chair. Each member will ask one to three comprehensive questions for which the student has had an opportunity to prepare. They may provide written comments to the committee chair following the examination and prior to committee deliberation if they wish.

The oral exam proceeds as follows:

1. Committee chair introduces doctoral student, describes process, and outlines events
2. Student gives proposal presentation
3. Audience may ask questions and/or offer comments
4. Break and the general audience departs
5. Committee convenes to engage student in substantive discussion regarding prepared questions
6. Questioning process between committee and student proceeds
7. Committee deliberates, determines feedback and future guidance for student, and votes (10 minutes)
8. Chair invites student back into room and committee relays decision
9. Chair establishes appointment to meet with student and provide direction and feedback for dissertation pursuits, as appropriate

Student Guidelines:

1. Typically, committees prefer the student submit one chapter at a time for committee review although process should be discussed in the initial meeting with the entire dissertation committee.
2. Committee members have 20 working days to review your proposal chapters and revisions. Plan ahead.
3. Schedule your exam once the committee has determined that you are prepared.
4. The preliminary examination should be completed within four years from the start of the program.
5. Once candidacy is awarded, the Graduate School requires the completion of the dissertation study within three years.

Candidacy

After successful completion of the progression to candidacy process, the student becomes a Ph.D. candidate, an acknowledgement that the student is actively engaged in research. The student may refer to themselves as a PhD Candidate in all written materials although current disciplinary convention does not suggest that this is a best practice. WSU does *not* recognize the Ph(c) designation.

Dissertation Completion

Throughout the period of candidacy, the student continues to work collaboratively with the dissertation committee chair and committee members. The project will be completed as proposed with guidance of the dissertation committee.

Steps to completion of the dissertation include

1. All coursework must be completed.
2. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval is needed from WSU and any other necessary organizations. The student writes the IRB, working closely with the committee chair. The WSU IRB is submitted with the committee chair as the Principal Investigator (PI) and the student as co-PI. Other organizations that need to approve the study should be consulted for their requirements.
3. The student may need to obtain funding for the proposed research. The committee and other resources can be consulted for opportunities to submit funding requests. Upon IRB approval and securing funding, if necessary, the student carries out the proposed research. Regular meetings with the chair and committee members will ensure that adequate guidance is received. All IRB requirements such as reporting of adverse events and safeguarding participant privacy should be stringently met. Under no circumstances may the student change the procedures for the implementation of the study without obtaining approval of the committee chair and WSU IRB via the submission of an Addendum Request to IRB.
4. Additional consultation is sought as needed. A regular series of meetings to agree upon a timeline and report progression of the research should be established with the committee chair. Arrangements should be made for the chair to visit and view data collection, intervention, data entry, analysis, or other parts of the research process as desired by the chair.
5. An essential part of the research process is maintenance of the research methods and results. The student is expected to work with the chair and the Office of Research to plan for safe collection, transfer, and storage of research data. All Research office recommendations and requirements should be followed.
6. The student completes the research, a process that may involve adapting recruitment, reporting to agency personnel, completing interim reports to funding agencies, arranging for use of equipment, or production of surveys and other research equipment. Ongoing meetings to report progress and challenges to the chair are expected. Critical problem solving should be evident during this process.
7. During or following data collection and analysis, students should engage with the committee to determine the format for the final written dissertation. The College of Nursing offers two options.

Traditional Dissertation Format

This format follows the standard/traditional 5 chapter format, including



- Chapter 1: Background and problem statement, significance of the problem, philosophical/theoretical/conceptual background of the problem, and research aims/questions/hypotheses
- Chapter 2: Literature review. Optional: Theoretical/philosophical background and conceptualization of the problem (rather than Chapter 1).
- Chapter 3: Design and Methods
 - Chapters 1-3 should be revised from the proposal and stated in past tense.
- Chapter 4: Results
- Chapter 5: Discussion

Manuscript Dissertation Format:

This format includes 3 manuscripts that will be or have been submitted to refereed journals, including:

- Chapter 1: Overview of background and problem statement, significance of the problem, review of literature including philosophical/theoretical/conceptual background of the problem, research aims/questions, design and methods,
- Chapters 2-4 Manuscripts approved by the committee
- Chapter 5: Discussion that synthesizes results, findings, and implications of the entire study.

Editing is an expected part of both formats this process and the time to complete dissertation chapters will vary depending upon the particular needs of the student and the requirements of the respective committee members. Formatting instructions are provided by the Graduate School with additional details available from the PhD program administrative assistant staff and director. All committee members must approve the final written dissertation.

The dissertation is submitted to the committee prior to scheduling the final defense. If the manuscript format is selected, the student is first author of the articles and may request co-authorship from the dissertation committee who have been involved in its formation.

Upon approval of the committee, the student schedules the final presentation of the doctoral dissertation. The committee and Graduate Advisor should be consulted prior to scheduling the defense to facilitate timing. Certain days are set aside at the beginning of each semester for preliminary and final examinations.

Dissertation Defense

The dissertation defense provides the committee, peers, and graduate faculty with the opportunity to learn from, dialogue with, and critique the original research of the candidate. It is the culminating event that follows completion of all course work, completion of research, and the doctoral dissertation. Upon successful completion of the dissertation defense, the student is welcomed as a nurse scientist to the field of nursing and is eligible for the PhD in Nursing degree.

The dissertation presentation is open to the College of Nursing faculty and doctoral students. Students may invite family members, friends, and colleagues if they choose. Following a 30-minute presentation, the general audience may engage in questions or comments for 15 minutes, after which they will leave and the committee will conduct an oral examination. The oral examination consists of questions elicited from all committee members by the committee chair. Each member will ask 1 to 3 comprehensive questions for which the student has had an opportunity to prepare.

- Committee chair introduces doctoral candidate, describes process and outlines events
- Candidate gives dissertation presentation



- Audience may ask questions and/or offer comments
- Break and the general audience departs
- Committee convenes to engage candidate in substantive discussion regarding prepared questions
- Questioning process between committee and candidate proceeds
- Committee deliberates, determines feedback for candidate, and votes
- Chair invites candidate back into room and committee relays decision. Chair establishes appointment to meet with candidate and provide direction and feedback for final submission of materials to Graduate School
- Candidate completes program evaluation

Candidate guidelines:

- Revise proposal chapters 1-3, changing all future tense to past tense and revising the methods to reflect the actual approaches used during the research. Submit entire dissertation when candidate and committee agree that it is ready.
- Committee members have 20 working days to review the documents. Revisions also require 20 day review periods or as determined by your full committee.
- Schedule the final defense once the committee has approved your final submission.
- You have 5 working days to make any final edits to the dissertation and to ensure the digital copy that is uploaded meets all formatting requirements of ProQuest/UMI once the defense is completed. **You are strongly encouraged to have the WSU Graduate School review the formatting of your documents the week before the final dissertation defense.** The chapters turned in to the committee must be in the [final ProQuest format](#).



Glossary

- Center for Student Excellence (CSE) - This College of Nursing department supports students throughout their time in the program. Academic Coordinators and Success Coaches are in this department and the CSE is focused on providing support with class registration, academic success, resource referral, and policy interpretation.
- Clinical Affairs (CA) – This College of Nursing department supports students with immunization questions, CastleBranch and Clinical Passport questions, the medical exemption process, the onboarding processes, and clinical training agreements with partner agreements.
- Graduate Admissions and Progression (GAP) Committee – This College of Nursing committee is comprised of faculty and student representatives that review items related to graduate admission and time in the program. That includes cohort selection for incoming students, as well as reviewing appeals from students who do not progress in a timely manner and wish to retake courses.
- Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) – This form is something that College of Nursing members fill that goes to a student to provide timely feedback and notification of concerns. Concerns can be related to academic courses, clinical experiences, or professionalism. Knowing what concerns are early on allows students to course-correct and ultimately be successful in their program. In some cases, PIPs may be generated due to policy or timeline breaches, but the majority of PIPs are designed to be non-punitive and serve as an early communication tool.
- Revised Code of Washington (RCW) – These are the compilation of all laws and regulations in Washington that are now in force. Institutional Review Board (IRB) - This board assists student researchers and investigators in conducting ethical research that complies with the DHHS, FDA, Washington State regulations and University policies in a way that permits accomplishment of the research activity.
- Washington Administrative Code (WAC) – These administrative codes are regulations of the Washington executive branch and are a source of primary law in the state. They guide many of the policies and procedures that the College of Nursing and WSU itself follow