PhD Program in Nursing

Handbook for Students

(Matriculated Fall 2020 and after)

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

School of Graduate Studies (SGS)
and
School of Nursing

Revised August 2024

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Note: Please contact the Administrative Coordinator in the Office of Nursing Science to request any of the forms

listed in this Handbook.

RUTGERS
School of Nursing

Welcome to the Rutgers' School of Nursing PhD in Nursing Science Program!

Congratulations! You are among the select few who have been admitted to a PhD
Welcome to the Rutgers' School of Nursing PhD in Nursing Science Program!

Congratulations! You are among the select few who have been admitted to a PhD program. You are now embarking on one of the most amazing journeys of your life – the journey to become a nurse scientist! Through research, nurse scientists create evidence-based practices, shape health policy, discover innovative clinical interventions, design high-quality patient-centered healthcare systems, and make a myriad of other incredible scientific contributions that improve the lives and health of persons around the globe.

Since 1989, the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) program at Rutgers School of Nursing (SON) has prepared scholars for the expression and communication of the knowledge base in the nursing profession. As a PhD graduate, you will develop the science, steward the discipline, and educate the next generation of nurses. PhD prepared nurse scientists are needed to explore perplexing patient problems; test strategies to improve health, manage chronic illness, reduce disability, and enhance the quality of life; increase patient safety and care quality; reduce health disparities; lead interdisciplinary teams to improve the health care system and to add to the nursing profession's valuable body of knowledge.

This handbook contains guidelines to inform you of the processes and steps needed to accomplish your goal. Always check this information with the current Graduate School-Newark catalog, your advisor, and later, your dissertation chair; all are a source of current information.

Best wishes on this most exciting and rewarding journey!

Charlotte Thomas-Hawkins, PhD, RN, FAAN
Associate Dean & Associate Professor, Division of Nursing Science

PHD PROGRAM MISSION, OBJECTIVES, AND STUDENT OUTCOMES

PhD Program Mission

The mission of the Rutgers University School of Nursing's PhD program is to prepare nurse scientists who will expand the knowledge base of health and well-being, steward the discipline of nursing, lead interdisciplinary research teams, influence health policy, and educate the next generation of nurses and nurse scientists.

The PhD curriculum provides a program of study that focuses on core knowledge and methods, and opportunities to develop a focused area of inquiry. The advancement of nursing science seeks to inform practice and policy, improve the health of individuals, families, communities, populations, and systems, and achieve health equity.

PhD Program Objectives

The objectives of this program are to prepare graduates who will:

1. Articulate the history and philosophy of science and knowledge development and how these influence the evolving nature of the nursing discipline.
2. Apply theoretical knowledge to nursing science and a focused area of inquiry.
3. Acquire methodological and analytic skills to generate findings that contribute to knowledge.
4. Translate and disseminate knowledge through scholarly writing, public speaking, and other modalities of communication.
5. Develop knowledge and skills required for educating the next generation of nurses, educators, and scientists.
6. Address the health of individuals, families, communities, populations, and systems, and contribute to the achievement of health equity through leadership and advocacy.

PhD Student Outcomes

To achieve program objectives, students will demonstrate the following outcomes for each program objective:

1. Outcomes regarding articulating the history and philosophy of science and knowledge development and how these influence the evolving nature of the nursing discipline:
    - Synthesize the historical and philosophical underpinnings of knowledge development.
    - Critically analyze philosophical viewpoints and evaluate their potential for developing nursing knowledge.
    - Articulate the sociopolitical history of nursing and the fundamental ideas inherent in the discipline.
    - Demonstrate knowledge of ethics and scientific integrity principles.
2. Outcomes regarding applying theoretical knowledge to nursing science and a focused area of inquiry:
    - Analyze concepts relevant to the discipline of nursing and evaluate their potential for theory building and testing.
    - Evaluate theoretical/conceptual frameworks and other paradigms for applicability in designing a study.

- Understand emancipatory paradigms that include but are not limited to race, racism, ableism, social determinants of health, feminism, intersectionality, and/or gender theories.
- Develop skills to critically appraise and synthesize literature (e.g., systematic review, scoping synthesis).
- Demonstrate a mastery of the literature pertinent to a focused area of inquiry.

3. Outcomes regarding acquiring methodological and analytic skills to generate findings that contribute to knowledge:
    - Acquire knowledge and skills related to research methods and advanced analytical approaches.
    - Design and conduct an original research investigation in the form of a dissertation.
    - Integrate principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion at all levels of research from conceptualization to dissemination.
    - Adhere to standards of scientific integrity and ethics in the conduct of research.
    - Develop a systematic approach to data management including data transcription, data entry, cleaning, tracking, sharing, and maintaining confidentiality.
    - Utilize appropriate data analysis techniques consistent with the purpose and design of a study.
    - Interpret and synthesize the findings in light of the existing literature and guiding theoretical framework.
4. Outcomes regarding translating and disseminating knowledge through scholarly writing, public speaking, and other modalities of communication:
    - Display aptitude and skills for intellectual critique and scholarly writing.
    - Develop skills for data visualization approaches.
    - Write and disseminate papers through selected peer-reviewed outlets including abstracts, presentations, and publications.
5. Outcomes regarding developing knowledge and skills required for educating the next generation of nurses, educators, and scientists:
    - Employ diverse pedagogical strategies to educate students, clinicians, educators, and future nurse scientists.
    - Develop knowledge and expertise on how to educate students on the processes of critique and constructive feedback
6. Outcomes regarding addressing the health of individuals, families, communities, populations, and systems, and contribute to the achievement of health equity through leadership and advocacy:
    - Engage in professional activities informed by a commitment to generate knowledge to reduce health disparities, improve service delivery, health equity, and health outcomes.
    - Integrate nursing knowledge within the broad social, economic, and political contexts to influence the strategic direction of healthcare policy institutions and organizations.

CURRICULUM: POST MASTER'S/DNP OPTION

The curriculum requires a **minimum of 72 credits**. Nine of these 72 credits are allocated to cognate courses. Three of the 9 cognate credits may be taken within the School of Nursing, and the remaining 6 cognate credits will be taken outside of the School of Nursing. Also included within the 72 credits are 3 credits for the Research Practicum, 3 credits for Dissertation Seminar, and a minimum of 21 credits for the Dissertation Research. See Appendix B for course descriptions. A complete listing of required courses and credit allocations are summarized below:

Philosophy of Nursing Science and Knowledge Development	3 credits
Qualitative Research Methods	3 credits
Statistics for Nursing Research I	4 credits
Theory and Application to Nursing Research	3 credits
Statistics for Nursing Research II	4 credits
Quantitative Methods in Nursing Research	3 credits
Measurement of Health Phenomena	3 credits
Evidence-Based Policy Development	3 credits
Role of Nurse Scholar Seminar	3 credits
Professoriate Role Practicum	3 credits
Research Practicum	3 credits
Advanced Quantitative OR Advanced Qualitative Research Seminars	4 credits
Nursing Cognate	3 credits
Cognates in other disciplines	6 credits
Dissertation Seminar	3 credits
Dissertation Research	21 credits

TOTAL: 72 credits minimum

Note: For students receiving Nurse Faculty Loan Program (NFLP) funds, one education-focused course, Design of Curriculum, must be taken as a School of Nursing cognate.

Full and Part-time Study

Students who meet the admission requirements of the School of Graduate Studies and the School of Nursing and are a good match for the research expertise of faculty at the School of Nursing are admitted as fully matriculated students into the doctoral program and may pursue either full-time or part-time study. The maximum time to complete the program is seven (7) years for full-time students and eight (8) years for part-time students. Students are generally admitted only once a year to begin the program in the fall semester.

3-Year Full-time Sample Plan of Study (Offerings schedule is subject to change).

Fall Semester Year 1	Cr	Spring Semester Year 1	Cr	Summer Semester Year 1	Cr
Philosophy of Nursing Science and Knowledge Development	3	Theory and Application to Nursing Research	3	Measurement of Health Phenomena	3
Qualitative Research Methods	3	Quantitative Methods in Nursing Research	3	Cognate*	3
Statistics for Nursing Research I	4	Statistics for Nursing Research II	4		
Subtotal Credits	**10**		**10**		**6**
Fall Semester Year 2	**Cr**	**Spring Semester Year 2**	**Cr**	**Summer Semester Year 2**	**Cr**
Research Practicum	3	Role of the Nurse Scholar	3	Dissertation Seminar**	3
Advanced Quantitative **OR** Qualitative Research course	4	Evidence-Based Policy Development	3	Cognate*	3
Cognate*	3	Role of Professoriate	3	**Begin Dissertation Proposal**	
		Qualifying Exam			
Subtotal Credits	**10**	**Subtotal Credits**	**9**		**6**
Fall Semester Year 3		**Spring Semester Year 3**	**Cr**	**Summer Semester Year 3**	**Cr**
Dissertation Research**	9	Dissertation Research**	9	Dissertation Research**	3
DEFEND PROPOSAL				**DEFEND DISSERTATION**	
Subtotal Credits	**9**		**9**		**3**
Total Minimum Credits					**72**

4-Year Part-time Sample Plan of Study (Offerings schedule is subject to change).

Fall Semester Year 1	Cr	Spring Semester Year 1	Cr	Summer Semester Year 1	Cr
Philosophy of Nursing Science and Knowledge Development	3	Theory and Application to Nursing Research	3	Cognate*	3
Statistics for Nursing Research I	4	Statistics for Nursing Research II	4		
Subtotal Credits	**7**		**7**		**3**
Fall Semester Year 2	**Cr**	**Spring Semester Year 2**	**Cr**	**Summer Semester Year 2**	**Cr**
Qualitative Nursing Research Methods	3	Quantitative Methods in Nursing Research	3	Measurement of Health Phenomena	3
Role of the Professoriate	3	Cognate*	3	Cognate*	3
Subtotal Credits	**6**	**Subtotal Credits**	**6**		**6**
Fall Semester Year 3		**Spring Semester Year 3**	**Cr**	**Summer Semester Year 3**	**Cr**
Research Practicum	3	Role of the Nurse Scholar	3	Dissertation Seminar**	3
Advanced Quantitative **OR** Qualitative Research course	4	Evidence-Based Policy Development	3	**Begin Dissertation Proposal**	
		Qualifying Exam			
Subtotal Credits	**7**		**6**		**3**
Fall Semester Year 4		**Spring Semester Year 4**	**Cr**	**Summer Semester Year 4**	**Cr**
Dissertation Research**	7	Dissertation Research**	7	Dissertation Research**	7
DEFEND PROPOSAL				**DEFEND DISSERTATION**	
Subtotal Credits	7		7		7
Total Minimum Credits					**72**

* Students receiving NFLP funds must take the Design of Curriculum course as a School of Nursing cognate.

** Minimum dissertation credits: 24

CURRICULUM: POST BACCALAUREATE TO PHD OPTION

The BS to PhD program provides a viable accelerated four-year, full-time pathway for baccalaureate-prepared nurses. The 102-credit program includes an accelerated 30 credit master's degree option, focusing on Nursing Leadership.

1. The 30-credit accelerated master's degree, presented in a hybrid format, will be completed in Year 1 of the program. The master's track will include clinical practicum experiences, and these experiences will be developed in consultation with the Specialty Director for the Leadership Program.
2. If a student decides not to continue with the PhD, they will need to complete the remaining master's program credits if a traditional master's degree in Nursing Leadership is desired.

Post Baccalaureate PhD Program Curriculum (Offerings schedule is subject to change).

Fall Semester Year 1	Cr	Spring Semester Year 1	Cr	Summer Semester Year 1	Cr
Quality & Safety in Healthcare (Theory & Practicum)	6	Organizational Complexity Theory (Theory & Practicum)	6	38:533:580:90 HR Strategy I *(substitute for MSN Managing Human Capital)*	3
Leadership Across the Continuum Theory (Theory & Practicum)	6	Healthcare Economics & Business Practices	3	Information Technology for Evidence-Based Practice	3
		Determinants of Health	3		
Subtotal Credits	**12**		**12**		**6**
Fall Semester Year 2	**Cr**	**Spring Semester Year 2**	**Cr**	**Summer Semester Year 2**	**Cr**
Philosophy of Nursing Science and Knowledge Development	3	Theory and Application to Nursing Research	3	Measurement of Health Phenomena	3
Qualitative Research Methods *(substitute for MSN elective)*	3	Quantitative Methods in Nursing Research *(substitute for MSN Evidence Translation)*	3	Cognate*	3
Statistics for Nursing Research I *(substitute of MSN Epidemiology)*	4	Statistics for Nursing Research II *(substitute for MSN Clinical Inquiry)*	4		
Subtotal Credits	**10**		**10**		**6**
Fall Semester Year 3	**Cr**	**Spring Semester Year 3**	**Cr**	**Summer Semester Year 3**	**Cr**
Research Practicum	3	Role of the Nurse Scholar	3	Dissertation Seminar**Error! Bookmark not defined.**	3
Cognate**Error! Bookmark not defined.**	3	Role of the Professoriate	3	Cognate**Error! Bookmark not defined.**	3
Advanced Quantitative **OR** Qualitative Research course	4	Evidence-Based Policy Development	3	**Begin Dissertation Proposal**	
		QUALIFYING EXAM			
Subtotal Credits	**10**	**Subtotal Credits**	**9**		**6**
Fall Semester Year 4	**Cr**	**Spring Semester Year 4**	**Cr**	**Summer Semester Year 4**	**Cr**
Dissertation Research**	7	Dissertation Research**Error! Bookmark not defined.**	7	Dissertation Research**Error! Bookmark not defined.**	7
DEFEND PROPOSAL				**DEFEND DISSERTATION**	
Subtotal Credits	**7**		**7**		**7**
Total Minimum Credits					**102**

* Students receiving NFLP funds must take the Design of Curriculum course as a School of Nursing cognate *(usually offered in Spring)*.

** Minimum dissertation credits: 24

STUDENT ADVISEMENT

Academic Advisor

Upon admission, each student is assigned an academic faculty advisor whose program of research or methodological expertise is a good match for the student's interests. While the academic advisor should become the research advisor (i.e., dissertation chair), it is not a requirement. If the academic advisor does not become the research advisor, the academic advisor will serve as the student's primary academic advisor until the time when a research advisor (dissertation chairperson) is selected. The academic advisor provides the student with the following guidance:

- Refinement of research interest/focus
- Sequencing and selection of courses consistent with the plan of study
- Approving cognates that inform the student's dissertation research
- Approve any advisee's grant applications before submission
- Supervising the student's timely progression through the program
- Preliminary development of research question(s) and selection of method and theoretical rationale
- Selecting members of the Research Advisory and Qualifying Examination Committees
- Selecting a mentor for the Research Practicum
- Selecting a mentor for the Professoriate (Teaching) Practicum

Should it be necessary to make a change in the academic advisor, the change can be initiated by the advisor or advisee but must be coordinated with the PhD Program Director. Although the Academic Advisor frequently becomes the Dissertation Chairperson, this is not always the case depending upon the student and faculty member's preferences. The Dissertation Chairperson is selected and finalized no later than upon the student's satisfactory completion of the Qualifying Examination Part A.

Cognates

The terms cognate and cognate courses refer to courses that enrich the substantive basis for the dissertation and beginning program of research. Finding the right mix of courses requires a partnership between the student and the advisor. Frequently the nine hours allocated to cognate courses are inadequate and the student will choose to take more courses and increase their total credit hours beyond the minimum requirement. All cognate courses must be approved by the student's advisor or dissertation chairperson.

Research Advisory Committee

School of Graduate Studies (SGS) PhD students are required to form a Research Advisory Committee during the second year. This Committee is intended to provide advice and guidance to the student about their research interest and dissertation focus. The Committee will consist of the Academic Advisor and at least two additional School of Nursing faculty members to be chosen by the student in consultation with the Academic Advisor. A Chair of the committee should be appointed by the Committee and can be the Academic Advisor or any other member. The Research Advisory Committee can be, but is not necessarily, the same as the Qualifying Examination Part A Committee or the Dissertation Committee.

Students are required to meet annually with their Research Advisory Committee, beginning in the fall semester of the second year. The annual Research Advisory Committee meeting is mandatory and the responsibility of the student to initiate. Should a member of the Committee be unavailable, the Chair of the committee should appoint either a temporary or permanent replacement. No student will be allowed to register without documentation of having held their annual Advisory Research Committee meeting within the past 12-month period.

The intended format of the Research Advisory Committee meeting is for the student to discuss: (i) proposed work for the next one-year period; (ii) focus of the Qualifying Examination Part A written paper; (iii) an overview of their progress towards the dissertation focus/project; and (iv) progress since the last Research Advisory Committee meeting. A written report of the student's progress and prospects is to be completed by the Chair of the Committee on the **Annual Research Advisory Committee Meeting Form** immediately following each meeting and distributed to the student, committee members, and the PhD Program Director, and the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) office with all required signatures.

Research Practicum Experience

Each student is required to engage in a 3-credit intensive research experience of at least one semester in length. The purpose of this experience is to allow the student to participate in phases of the research process under the tutelage of an experienced research faculty mentor. This experience precedes the student's independent dissertation research. ("Mentor" will refer to the research faculty mentor for the practicum project; "advisor" refers to the Rutgers School of Nursing PhD advisor. In many instances, this would be the same person). The student works closely with a mentor who is a PhD-prepared faculty member (or non-faculty researcher with comparable credentials such as an NIH Intramural Researcher) who is conducting a program of research related substantively and/or methodologically to the student's anticipated dissertation topic. The student may work with their advisor or another faculty member in the SON, or the student may carry out the research experience in another setting in which state-of-the-science research is being conducted.

In this experience, the student is expected to actively participate in various aspects of the research process with the faculty mentor. Examples of practicum activities may include active engagement as a member of the mentor's research team, mentored experience in the analysis of an existing dataset, or an instrument development project. The student should dedicate at least four hours per week for a minimum of 15 weeks to this experience. Thus, a minimum of 60 hours of research practicum experience is required. Specific activities and products are planned under the guidance of the advisor in collaboration with the mentor and depend on the nature and stage of the research project. The plan must be approved in advance by the student's advisor. A written research practicum plan, signed by the student, advisor, and mentor, specifies the objectives to be attained, experiences and activities for which the student is responsible, the time commitment (at least 60 hours of work), and the deliverable product(s). Upon completion of the experience, the advisor – with input from the mentor – determines the extent to which the objectives have been met satisfactorily and assigns a grade of either Pass or Fail. Documents related to the practicum plan are submitted with the registration form to the Administrative Coordinator in the Office of Nursing Science.

PROGRAM MILESTONES

During the program, the student must:

1. Adopt the 3-year or 4-year plan of study as outlined in this Handbook. Any major revisions to an individual student's plan of study that are approved by the advisor must be submitted to the PhD Program Director for approval.
2. Pass a qualifying examination for admission to doctoral candidacy.
3. Develop a dissertation proposal.
4. Defend and secure committee approval of the dissertation proposal.
5. Obtain IRB approval of the dissertation research protocol.
6. Conduct the dissertation research study.
7. Complete the written dissertation chapters and/or manuscripts.
8. Successfully defend the dissertation, which must be independent and original work.

MANUSCRIPTS AND RESEARCH GRANT PROPOSALS

The PhD program of Rutgers SON encourages PhD students to prepare and submit manuscripts as well as research grant proposals while pursuing their degree. Please bear in mind, however, the following ethical guidelines:

- Never include a co-author on a manuscript without their knowledge and permission.
- All co-authors should have contributed essential ideas or data for the manuscript; participated in writing or revising drafts; and participated in the final approval of the version to be published.
- It is strongly suggested that the student works with their advisor or a designee to prepare the manuscript before submission for publication.
- PhD students should **not** submit a research grant proposal associated with their dissertation research or other activities as a student without the review and approval of the student's Academic Advisor and/or dissertation committee.

IMPORTANT ACADEMIC POLICIES

For students admitted in the fall 2020 semester and thereafter, the PhD in Nursing Program is governed by policies issued by the **School of Nursing (SON)** and the **School of Graduate Studies (SGS)**. Therefore, students should familiarize themselves with the academic policies of both SON and SGS on the following websites:

3. **SON:** https://nursing.rutgers.edu/students/catalog/
4. **SGS: https://grad.rutgers.edu/current-students/policies-procedures-students**

The following policies are particularly relevant to PhD students:

- **Satisfactory Academic Progress:** Students are expected to maintain satisfactory academic progress at all times. Failure to maintain satisfactory academic progress may affect the student's eligibility for financial support and awards, prolong the time to degree, academic warnings, and possible dismissal, if not remedied.

Satisfactory academic progress requires all of the following:

- GPA of 3.0 or higher
- No more than 2 courses (6 credits) with a grade of C or C+
- No more than one grade of "Unsatisfactory" in courses that are graded S/U
- No more than two "Incomplete" grades on record for two semesters, unless there are documented and acceptable reasons for the "Incomplete" grades along with a plan to complete the work
- No more than two "Permanent Incomplete" grades on the transcript
- Failure on a qualifying exam more than once constitutes failure to maintain satisfactory academic progress

Students are expected to complete an audit once a year at the end of the spring semester, which includes courses completed and grades. Academic review includes written warnings to any student who may not be maintaining satisfactory academic progress.

- **A grade of F in a course will result in academic dismissal from the PhD in Nursing Program.**

- **Statement on the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI):** The use of any AI software, such as ChatGPT, is NOT permitted in the PhD program and constitutes a form of cheating, unless explicitly permitted by a course instructor. Faculty may use anti-plagiarism software and/or other tools to detect AI-written student work.

- **Academic Integrity:** Students should be familiar with Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy, which applies to all schools and academic units: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/.

- **Standards of Conduct:** Students should also be familiar with the SON Standards of Conduct posted on our website: http://nursing.rutgers.edu/conduct/index.html, and the University Code of Student Conduct at https://grad.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/2021-07/10-2-11-current%20%281%29.pdf. These policies govern activities such as the use of cell phones and other electronic devices during class, attendance, civility, and other important topics.

- **Academic Warning:** Written warnings are used for students who are not maintaining satisfactory academic progress to outline recommended steps to improve performance. Academic warnings are used in cases of failure to maintain academic standards (grades), more than one grade of U on a course graded as S/U, too many incompletes, or failure on a qualifying examination. Notice of failure to maintain satisfactory academic progress for two semesters may be accompanied by a formal notification in writing that processes for dismissal may be undertaken, such as placing the student on probation. Warnings may, but are not required to, lead to motions to dismiss the student from the program.

- **Program Dismissal Process:** The program dismissal process may be initiated following the second semester of written warnings of failure to maintain satisfactory academic progress, where the second consecutive warning is accompanied by a formal notification that a process for dismissal is being initiated. Recommendations for dismissal must be approved by the Program Director in consultation with relevant faculty, such as the student's advisor or

dissertation committee members. The student is informed in writing:

- that the process for dismissal is being undertaken
- about the availability of counseling and other university services university
- about the process for appealing academic decisions as outlined in: https://grad.rutgers.edu/current-students/policies-procedures-students

- **Grade of Incomplete:** If a student needs to drop a course(s) for valid reasons (e.g., medical conditions or employment changes) after a substantial amount of the semester has gone by, another option to consider would be to arrange with the instructor to receive a grade of Incomplete (IN). Incompletes are expected to be made up within one year. Longer intervals may be requested pending approval by the instructor, graduate director, and SGS. This waiver should be sought before the one-year expiration date. It will not be routinely granted. Students who have more than one Incomplete will be allowed one semester to reduce the number to one (or none), after which they will not be allowed to register for additional courses until these are completed or abandoned. Abandoned refers to a situation in which students have agreed that the course may no longer be completed, and the program has agreed to allow them to continue with *Permanent Incompletes (PIN) on* their records. Responsibility for the monitoring of this process resides with the graduate programs.

- **Transfer of Credits:** https://grad.rutgers.edu/current-students/policies-procedures-students
  - A student may request up to 24 credits from another institution for transfer after completing 9 credits at SON/Rutgers with a grade of B or better.
  - Transfer of credits can only be for graduate-level courses with a grade of B or better
  - Transfer courses should have been taken within the past 6 years
  - Transferred courses must be equivalent to PhD in Nursing core courses, or a cognate approved by the faculty advisor.
  - Research and independent study credits are not accepted for transferred credits.
  - No more than 40% of the required minimum number of course credits for the PhD in Nursing degree can be accepted as transfer credits.
  - In applying for a transfer of credit, the student must provide a transcript of the course grades and the course syllabi to be transferred and complete a transfer of credit form (https://grad.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/2021-02/transfer_credit_application_022707.pdf). All transfer credits must be approved by the PhD Program Director and the Graduate Dean. This form must be submitted to the PhD program director for approval. The Director then submits the transcript and transfer of credit form for review and final authorization by the Graduate Dean. When the transfer is approved, the Registrar's office records the transfer of credits on the student's transcript.

- **Continuous Registration** (requirements, restoration, and readmission): All students are expected to maintain continuous registration while enrolled in SGS. Students who fail to maintain continuous registration are at risk of formal dismissal. Doctoral students who have been admitted to candidacy and who do not maintain continuous registration may apply for "**restoration of active status**" (see form at https://grad.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/2021-01/2020%20active-status-restoration-application%202020.pdf). This application must be approved by the program director and accompanied by a fee of one credit in-state tuition for a maximum of 5 semesters (payable to SGS). All students who have not maintained continuous

registration (including doctoral students who have been admitted to candidacy) must apply for **readmission** (https://grad.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/2021-01/readmission-application-2020_0.pdf) to the School of Graduate Studies before filing for degrees.

- **Matriculation Continued:** Under some circumstances, students may register for "matriculation continued." Matriculation continued is a zero-credit offering that allows students to remain enrolled while not being registered for either courses or research credits. Matriculation continued is not available to students who have completed the qualifying exam (admission to candidacy). A maximum of two semesters of matriculation continued is allowed. International students on visas are responsible for verifying the effect of registration for matriculation continued on their visa status.

- **Leave of Absence:** Unexpected life events may cause a student to interrupt their studies. In this event, the student should contact their academic advisor and the PhD Program Director. Leave of absence (LOA) from studies is available for students who have to temporarily suspend or interrupt studies and plan to re-enroll after the PhD program interruption. Students may request a leave of absence for a period of time not to exceed a total of 12 months. Written notification of the student's intent to return must be submitted to the PhD program director in the SON at least one month prior to the expiration of the LOA.
  - Meet with the PhD program director to determine if an LOA is appropriate.
  - Submit a written LOA request to the PhD program director that includes the reason as well as the start and return dates.
  - Once the PhD program director approves the request, it will be submitted to the SGS Senior Associate Dean for approval

  International students who wish to temporarily leave the United States under this policy must obtain the permission of their advisor, program director, and the SGS 30 days prior to their travel, and should contact the Rutgers Global International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) office to receive advice and most current information regarding their legal status. Taking a leave of absence from the program requires an appropriate student's SEVIS record. The ISSS office will direct students to the process appropriate for their situation. Students granted permission then apply for a new I-20 or DS-2019 to return to the U.S. in a future semester as approved by their program and SGS. Any international student who leaves the United States under this policy without the consent of their Graduate Director is subject to disciplinary action.
  Students NOT returning from a leave of absence within the approved date may be required to reapply to the Graduate School and undergo a new admissions process. See more details https://grad.rutgers.edu/current-students/policies-procedures-students

- **PhD Program Extension of Time (EOT):** Students are expected to complete the PhD program in the 7th (full-time students) or 8th (part-time students) year beginning with the first enrollment in the program. First enrollment is defined by the start of accumulation of credits towards the PhD degree. Semesters of approved LOA and matriculation continued do not count toward accumulated time. Students who have not completed the program in the expected time will be reminded that they will need to complete a formal EOT request to remain in good standing and be allowed to register for courses. The student initiates the EOT request using this form: https://grad.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/2021-03/EOT_June13_2019.pdf.

CRITERIA FOR GRANTING EOT REQUESTS: The SGS deans will look for convincing evidence that: (a) the student, the faculty mentors, and the program have agreed on a realistic plan and timetable for degree completion; (b) the supporting infrastructure is available within the program so that the plan may be completed; and (c) any obstacles to degree completion have been or are being addressed. Evidence of a realistic plan may include a written proposal for the dissertation that has been approved by the thesis committee. In some cases, SGS may ask for additional information from the student or the program. Requests for EOTs from students who are entering year 8 or later, who have received repeated EOTs, will be given very close scrutiny. The program faculty and the individual student share responsibility for creating an environment where the student can accomplish the goals stated in the plan for completion of the degree. Additionally, SGS deans may initiate discussions with programs to evaluate the requirements, mentoring practices, and admission processes if a large proportion of students are requiring EOTs. DENIAL OF EOT: If the program director decides not to approve the EOT, the program may request to SGS that the enrollment be terminated. If SGS deans decide not to approve the extension, enrollment may be terminated.

- **University NetID and email policies:** https://it.rutgers.edu/policies/
  Per Rutgers University policy, all university business (including communications between students and faculty/staff) must be created, stored, processed, and transmitted using official Rutgers email accounts that are HIPAA compliant. All emails between students, faculty, and staff must be transmitted via official SON Rutgers University email addresses (netid@sn.rutgers.edu) using Rutgers Connect (connect.rutgers.edu). Faculty and staff will communicate with students using the students' Rutgers Connect email accounts. It is the student's responsibility to check their Rutgers email account regularly so that important communications from faculty and/or staff are not missed. Also, it is the student's responsibility to update any change of address and contact information in the Office of Nursing Science. The student must notify the Administrative Coordinator, Office of Nursing Science, of their new address and contact information.

- **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion:** Rutgers SON is committed to diversity and inclusion and to maintaining an anti-racist and anti-bias organization. To that end, the School's leadership openly invites members of the community to discuss concerns without fear of retribution. When they do occur, racist and biased incidences can be difficult to report, and some may prefer anonymous reporting means. As such, any SON community member can anonymously submit concerns through the Racism and Bias Reporting Electronic Hotline (https://nursing.rutgers.edu/anti-racism-bias-hotline/). The form requires no personal identifying information, nor will IP addresses be tracked. Submissions will be sent directly to the SON Dean. It is our sincere hope that through open dialogue and understanding, we can continue to grow in tolerance and understanding of one another and the many valuable differences that make us a strong community.

- **Policies prohibiting sexual harassment, gender discrimination, and related misconduct:** https://sexualharassment.rutgers.edu/university-policy-prohibiting-sexual-harassment

- **Accommodation requests for students with disabilities:** https://ods.rutgers.edu/

STUDENT APPEALS

Students in the PhD program have the right to appeal their dismissal or any other disagreement with an instructor, academic advisor, or dissertation committee chair/member. If the appeal pertains to a course grade, the students have the right to know the components of their final grade, based on the course syllabus or the objectives and activities they agreed on at the beginning of the semester for practica, dissertation research, and independent study courses.

If a student perceives that their dismissal, grade, or any other action against them was based on anything other than academic performance, an appeal may be filed. If the appeal is regarding a course failure grade and that course is a prerequisite for the following course(s), the student may not progress to those courses. Students who are scheduled to begin a course before the appeals process is completed may request special permission from the Associate Dean to continue coursework until the appeal process is completed. If the grade is upheld on appeal, they will be required to withdraw from the class(es).

Appeal Process:

1. Before initiating the appeal process, the student should attempt to reconcile the conflict or question with the involved faculty member(s) within three (3) academic business days of receiving the official notification (e.g., receiving their dismissal letter or official grade in Banner or REGIS). If the matter cannot be resolved satisfactorily, the student must meet with the SON's Senior Vice Dean for Administration and Students Services or designee within three (3) academic business days to discuss the nature of the appeal and the initiation of the formal appeals process, if necessary. The student will be guided through the process and submit all required materials, including the Student Appeal Form and any required documentation to the SON Office of Student Services within five (5) academic business days.
2. Documentation should include, but is not limited to, the course syllabus or the objectives/activities that the student agreed on at the beginning of the semester for practica, dissertation research, or independent study courses; email correspondence between the student and faculty member; and a written statement explaining why the student thinks their request meets the criteria for appeal. The Office of Student Services will review the documents for completeness and send all documents to the Associate Dean. The Associate Dean will convene an ad hoc committee comprised of three (3) full members of the PhD Program graduate faculty. The committee will designate one member as the Chair.
3. Members of the ad hoc committee will review the appeal materials and determine, within three (3) academic days whether: 1) the appeal has no merit (i.e., does not meet the criteria for a grievance); or 2) a full hearing is necessary. The ad hoc committee may request additional information from the faculty member or student when needed. If the appeal has no merit, the Chair will notify the student and faculty member in writing of their decision and provide the rationale. The student may reject this decision and continue

the appeal process. If a full hearing is necessary, it will be scheduled as soon as possible, but no later than five (5) academic business days following the decision.

4. **Hearing Process:** The ad hoc committee will meet with the student and faculty to gain additional information that will help them determine whether the appeal meets the criteria for a grievance. The student may have a support person present, but that person will not participate or speak on behalf of the student during the hearing.
5. The merits of the appeal evidence (both evidence submitted previously, and evidence gained during the hearing) will be discussed immediately following the meeting with the student and faculty. The ad hoc committee will decide if: 1) the appeal is justified (meets the criteria for a grievance); or 2) the appeal is not justified. If it is determined that the appeal is not justified, the ad hoc committee Chair will notify the student and faculty in writing within two (2) days. This letter will be sent by email along with postal delivery using certified mail. If it is determined that the appeal is justified, the ad committee will make a recommendation for measures to be taken by the student and faculty member.
6. If either party rejects the decision of the subcommittee, the student may continue the appeal process notification in writing to the Associate Dean and utilize the appeals process within SGS. All materials and decisions submitted previously will be sent to the Dean of SGS who may delegate a process of initial review to one or more senior academic deans within the SGS. If the initial review is not undertaken or fails to resolve the dispute, the student may file a formal appeal with SGS, which will be considered by the SGS Appeals committee according to the procedures specified in the SGS bylaws. Appeals must be filed no later than one semester following the occurrence of the issue that prompted the appeal. In the case of an unsuccessful appeal of a dismissal, students have the right to voluntarily withdraw from the PhD program.

QUALIFYING EXAMINATION FOR ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the Qualifying Examination is to determine whether a student has acquired sufficient mastery of core course content and their field of concentration to warrant admission for candidacy for the PhD degree. The Qualifying Examination is comprised of two parts:

A. **Qualifying Exam Part A**: comprised of 1) a written paper and 2) an oral exam.

B. **Propositional Qualifying Exam Part B**: assesses the student's ability to prepare and defend a dissertation research proposal.

Qualifying Exam Part A

The Qualifying Examination Part A is comprised of written and oral components. Qualifying Exam Part A is focused on a phenomenon/concept of interest that is to be the core of the student's dissertation research and addresses an important area of nursing science. The written and oral components of the Qualifying Examination Part A are designed, primarily, to evaluate the students' comprehensive knowledge regarding this core phenomenon, their ability to articulate and synthesize that knowledge, to articulate the gaps in the science, and to describe the implications for their future directions.

This written component of the exam is a scholarly paper that pertains to a core phenomenon of interest to the student's dissertation research, nursing and healthcare, and nursing science. The paper provides: 1) a description of a core phenomenon of interest and relevant issues/problems associated with the phenomenon; 2) a critical examination of two to three relevant theories that are useful in describing and examining the core phenomenon of interest; 3) a critical synthesis and analysis of relevant studies guided by the theories of interest; 4) a description of the empirical, theoretical, and knowledge gaps that pertain to the phenomenon of interest; and 5) a description of how the theories can be synthesized and integrated to inform future research related to the student's topic of interest. The paper must include one appendix with a well-organized evidence table that summarizes studies included in the literature review. The Qualifying Examination written paper should be **no more than 20-25 pages in length** (exclusive of the title page, references, and appended evidence table) written in 12-point font, be double-spaced, and adhere strictly to APA style formatting. In preparing the paper, students are expected to strictly adhere to the Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/. Students may not use assistance from editors, the RU Writing Center staff, or any other individual. In addition, the use of any AI software, such as ChatGPT, is not permitted in any stages of the writing process and constitutes a form of cheating. The submitted paper must be the student's own work. The qualifying exam committee may use anti-plagiarism software and/or other tools to detect AI-written student work.

The **oral component** of the exam is designed, primarily, to evaluate the student's knowledge regarding this core phenomenon, their ability to verbally: 1) articulate and synthesize that knowledge, 2) articulate the gaps in the science, and 3) describe the implications for future directions. The oral component consists of questions from the Committee about any aspect of the written paper and other relevant core content within the PhD program curriculum.

Requirements
The exam must be taken after the student has completed the following core curriculum courses with an academic cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or better: Philosophy of Nursing Science and Knowledge Development, Qualitative Research Methods, Theory and Application to Nursing Research, Statistics for Nursing Research I and II, Quantitative Methods in Nursing Research, Measurement of Health Phenomena, and Advanced Quantitative or Advance Qualitative Methods. The exam cannot be taken if there is an incomplete in any course.

Typically, students formally complete the written and oral components of the Qualifying Examination during the Spring semester following completion of either the Advanced Qualitative or Advanced Quantitative course. The final version of the Qualifying Examination paper must be formally submitted to the Qualifying Examination committee no later than four weeks before the last day of the Spring semester final exam period, as indicated by the Rutgers University Academic Calendar. The oral examination must also take place during the same semester and occur no later than the last day of the final exam period, as indicated by the University Academic Calendar.

Procedures:

1. The Qualifying Examination Committee consists of three to four SON members: At least two of the members must be Members or Associate Members of the SGS graduate faculty, including the Chairperson.
2. Before the commencement of the written component of the Qualifying Exam, the student will meet with the Qualifying Examination Committee members and its Chairperson. During the meeting, the Qualifying Exam Committee will guide the student in their preparation for the written exam. The students may not ask the committee questions about the paper after meeting with the committee.
3. The committee will appoint a "designated reader" committee member who may review and comment on no more than **one complete draft** of the written examination. No other person may read the written paper before the formal submission of the final written examination to all members of the Qualifying Examination Committee. The "designated reader" will review the draft paper, provide written feedback to the students, and share the feedback with the committee members. Students may not seek further feedback or clarifications from the committee beyond the feedback received on the draft paper.
4. Before the commencement of the written examination, the student will ensure that the ***Qualifying Examination Committee Form*** is signed by the Chair of the Qualifying Examination Committee. The student will submit the form to the Administrative Coordinator in the Office of the Division of Nursing Science. The Qualifying Examination Committee Chairperson is responsible for: 1) scheduling the meeting between the student and Qualifying Examination Committee to discuss the written paper focus/topic, 2) determining the date for submission of the final written examination to the Committee members, and 3) coordinating the grading process and submission of exam grades to the Administrative Coordinator for the Office of the Division of Nursing Science.
5. All members of the Qualifying Examination Committee evaluate the final written paper and oral components of the examination. The grading system for the exam is Pass/Fail, and a

minimum of two out of three members must render a Passing grade for the student to pass each component of the exam.

6. The final written exam paper is read and graded independently by all members of the Qualifying Examination Committee, using the grading rubric for the written exam. The student must receive a grade of "Pass" (score 79.5 or above) on the paper by the majority (i.e., two out of three members or three out of four members) of the Qualifying Examination Committee to pass the written exam and progress to the oral component of the examination. If the Committee renders a grade of "Fail" for the paper, the student will receive written feedback from the Committee. The student has one opportunity to formally resubmit the paper for grading. The resubmitted Qualifying Examination paper must be received by the Qualifying Examination Committee members within the first month of the following semester, which in most cases (ex. Spring examination) will be the following Fall semester. In the event of two failures on the written paper, the student does not move on to the oral exam and is dismissed from the PhD in Nursing program.

7. After successfully completing the written examination, the student should finalize the date and time for the oral examination with Qualifying Examination Committee members. Once finalized, the student will contact the Administrative Coordinator for the Office of the Division of Nursing Science to schedule the oral examination. The student should notify the Qualifying Examination Committee members of the oral exam location.

8. Given that the oral component is an exam, recording of the meeting is prohibited. This includes audio or video recording as well as saved transcript of the meeting.

9. To successfully pass the oral component of the examination, a majority of the Committee members (e.g., 2 of 3) must agree on the grade of "Pass". If the student receives a grade of "Fail", the student has one more opportunity to retake the oral component of the examination. The oral examination retake must occur within the first month of the following semester, which in most cases (ex. Spring examination) will be the following Fall semester. In the event of two failures on the oral component of the Qualifying Examination, the student will be dismissed from the PhD in Nursing program.

10. At the conclusion of the oral examination, the student will be asked to leave the room so that the committee can discuss and deliberate. The Chair of the Committee will lead this discussion and determine if there is a consensus on a Pass or Fail. The student will be asked to return to the room and, with all Committee members present, the Chair of the Committee will inform the student of the Committee's determination and any further instructions as needed.

11. Upon the student's successful completion of the Qualifying Exam Part A, the committee members sign the ***Qualifying Examination Part A - Grade Form*** and submit it to the PhD Program Director. In addition, the student is responsible to ensure that the ***SGS Qualifying Exam - Part A Form*** is completed (https://grad.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/2021-03/QualifyingExamA.2020pdf_000.pdf), signed by their Committee members, and submitted to the Administrative Coordinator for the Office of the Division of Nursing Science, which gets forwarded to SGS for their records.

Written Qualifying Exam Rubric: This written exam is a scholarly paper that pertains to a phenomenon of interest in the student's dissertation research and nursing science. The paper provides:

1. a description of a core phenomenon of interest and relevant problems/issues associated with this phenomenon
2. a critical examination of relevant theories used to examine and explain the core phenomenon of interest and a description of how the theories are useful in understanding the phenomenon of interest
3. a synthesis and analysis of relevant studies guided by the theories of interest
4. an articulation of the empirical, theoretical, and knowledge gaps and how the theories can be integrated to inform future research directions related to the phenomenon of interest

The following is the grading rubric for the written exam.

Criterion	5 Points	4 Points	3 Points	2 Points	0 Points
The core phenomenon of interest and relevant problems/issues associated with the phenomenon are described. Its relevance to nursing, healthcare, and nursing science is summarized.	The core phenomenon is clearly and fully introduced and defined, and its relevance to nursing, healthcare, and nursing science is clearly summarized.	The concept/phenomenon is clearly and fully introduced and defined, but the discussion about its relevance to nursing, healthcare, and nursing science is weak.	The introduction and definition of the concept/phenomenon are weak, but the discussion about its relevance to nursing, healthcare, and nursing science is clearly summarized.	The concept/phenomenon is superficially introduced and defined and its relevance to nursing, healthcare, and nursing science is weak.	Not addressed
	25 Points	20 Points	15 Points	10 Points	0 Points
Pertinent theories that describe and/or explain the phenomenon of interest are examined and presented. How each theory specifically describes and explains the phenomenon is presented	Pertinent theories are examined and presented. Clear theoretical definitions of theory concepts are presented. Fully presents how each theory describes/explains the student's concept of interest.	Concepts in each theory are identified and theoretical definitions for concepts are provided. The relevance of the theory to the student's concept of interest is weak.	Concepts in each theory are identified but theory concepts are weakly defined or not provided.	Concepts in each theory are minimally identified and defined, and the relevance of the concept to the student's concept of interest is weak.	Not addressed.
	25 Points	20 Points	15 Points	10 Points	0 Points
The relevant theory relational propositions or assertions (directional and/or non-directional) from each theory are presented.	Relevant relational propositions from each theory are clearly explained. Directional propositions are clearly specified.	Relevant relational propositions from each theory are clearly explained. The specification of directional propositions is weak or unclear.	A discussion of relevant propositions is vague or incomplete. The specification of directional propositions is incomplete or poorly explained.	A discussion of relevant propositions is vague or incomplete. Directional propositions are not identified/explained.	Not addressed.
	25 Points	20 Points	15 Points	10 Points	0 Points
Describes how the theories were used in existing studies on the phenomenon of interest,	Clearly describes how the theories were used to guide quantitative and qualitative studies, as appropriate.	Presents quantitative and qualitative studies as appropriate. However, synthesis/analysis of relevant findings as	Presents some studies that are relevant to the theories, but the literature review is weak and does not adequately present	Studies are presented that did not apply or test the theories as previously specified. A table of evidence is	Not addressed. The table of evidence is absent or severely lacks depth.

including synthesis and analysis of relevant findings and propositions that were tested. Information about studies included in the literature review are summarized and appended to the paper in a table of evidence.	Presents a clear analysis/synthesis of relevant findings related to propositions tested. A table of evidence is presented.	they relate to theory propositions tested lacks clarity or depth. A table of evidence is presented.	the state of the science. A table of evidence is presented but lacking in depth.	presented but lacks depth.	
	15 Points	13 Points	8 Points	4 Points	0 Points
Describes the empirical, theoretical, and knowledge gaps related to the phenomenon of interest. Describes how the theories can be integrated to inform future research related to the phenomenon of interest.	Fully describes the empirical, theoretical, and knowledge gaps related to the phenomenon of interest. Fully describes how appropriately selected non-relational and relational propositions from the theories can be linked to form an integrated theoretical approach to inform future research related to the phenomenon of interest.	Fully describes gaps related to the phenomenon of interest. Describes how non-relational and relational propositions from the theory can be linked but a description of the application of the integrated theory to future research related to the phenomenon of interest is not clear or weak.	The description of empirical, theoretical, and knowledge gaps as they pertain to the phenomenon of interest is not clear or weak. Fully describes how the theories can be integrated but does not apply them to future research related to the phenomenon of interest.	The description of empirical, theoretical, and knowledge gaps is weak, and the description of how the theories can be integrated and applied to future research related to the phenomenon of interest is weak.	Not addressed.
	5 Points	4 Points	3 Points	2 Points	0 Points
The writing style reflects clarity, precision, logical flow, correct grammar, and APA formatting, and is free of spelling errors.	Strict adherence to APA format; the writing style is consistently clear, concise, and logical. Consistent use of correct grammar and no spelling errors.	Mostly adheres to APA format; the writing style is consistently clear, concise, and logical. Consistent use of correct grammar and no spelling errors.	Mostly adheres to APA format; the writing style is mostly clear, concise, and logical. Consistent use of correct grammar and no spelling errors.	One of the following noted: 1) inconsistent adherence to APA format; 2) writing style lacks clarity, precision, and/or logic; 3) Incorrect use of grammar and/or multiple spelling errors.	All of the following are noted: 1) Poor adherence to APA format; 2) writing style lacks clarity, precision, and/or logic; 3) incorrect use of grammar and/or multiple spelling errors.

Propositional Qualifying Examination Part B

The Propositional Qualifying Exam Part B assesses the student's ability to prepare the written dissertation research proposal and to conduct its oral defense. This aspect of the Qualifying exam must be taken within one year of completion of Qualifying Examination Part A.

1. The student's Dissertation Committee will serve as the Propositional Qualifying Examination Committee. A successful examination requires the signature of all members of the student's dissertation committee.

2. A ***Propositional Qualifying Examination Part B Report/Admission to Candidacy Form***, signed by each member of the Propositional Examination Committee must be signed by committee members and sent to the Senior Associate Dean, School of Graduate Studies, within two weeks of the exam (https://grad.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/2021-04/SGS%20Biomedical%20qualifying%20exam%20application%20B%202021.pdf).

3. Upon notification of successful completion of Qualifying Examination Part B, the Senior Associate Dean confirms that the student has been admitted to candidacy for the PhD degree.

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Overview

Each PhD student shall pursue, under faculty direction, an original investigation of a problem of significance to nursing and present the results of this investigation in a dissertation. The dissertation must be approved by a faculty committee of at least four members. All students must abide by Rutgers University Institutional Review Board (IRB) policies and the guidance/direction of the Dissertation Committee chairperson and committee members during the entire dissertation process. Links to important IRB regulations, policies, and procedures that students must read, understand, and comply with are listed below:

- Policies and Regulations https://orra.rutgers.edu/hspp-policies
- HSPP Toolkit https://research.rutgers.edu/researcher-support/research-compliance/human-subjects-protection-program-toolkit
- Student Handbook: A guide to human subjects protection in research https://research.rutgers.edu/researcher-support/research-compliance/human-subjects-protection-program-toolkit

Policy

1. The dissertation committee is officially constituted after the student passes the written and oral components of Qualifying Examination Part A.

2. To constitute the dissertation committee, the candidate must file the ***Dissertation Committee Form*** through the Office of the Division of Nursing Science after it is signed by all members of their committee. **Once the committee is officially formed, the student cannot initiate changes in the membership without the approval of the PhD Program Director. However, a faculty member may resign from the committee.** In the latter case, the candidate must

select another faculty member in consultation with their committee chair and with the approval of the PhD Program Director.

3. Selection of the Dissertation Committee:
    a. Criteria for Dissertation Chairperson:
        i. Holds graduate faculty status in the School of Graduate Studies,
        ii. Has earned a research doctoral degree (e.g., PhD, DNSc, EdD),
        iii. Has research experience and expertise related to some important aspect of the dissertation, and
        iv. Is available to the student regularly during the dissertation phase.
    b. Criteria for Committee Members:
        i. Three committee members selected in consultation with the dissertation chairperson,
        ii. Members must have a research (e.g., PhD) or clinical (e.g., DNP) doctoral degree, and
        iii. Whenever possible, the four members of the Committee should possess complementary areas of expertise to guide the content and methods of the dissertation**.**
    c. Composition of the Committee:
        i. The Dissertation Committee consists of four members: Chairperson, two SON faculty members, and a member from outside of the SON.
        ii. At least three of the members must be Members or Associate Members of the SGS graduate faculty, including the Chairperson.
        iii. A fourth member is selected outside of the SON. If the outside member does not hold a doctoral degree, a copy of the C.V. must be submitted to SGS for approval. This outside member may be from outside the SON, Rutgers University, and from outside the discipline of nursing.

4. Role of the Dissertation Committee:
    a. Chairperson Responsibilities
        i. The faculty member who is invited to become chairperson of the committee may defer acceptance until the student has submitted a specific area of inquiry or a beginning research problem that the student has identified. The chairperson of the student's research advisory committee may become the dissertation candidate's dissertation chairperson.
        ii. The faculty member who accepts the role of chairperson becomes the student's academic and research advisor.
        iii. During the proposal development phase of the dissertation, the Dissertation Chairperson:
            a. Determines a schedule for submitting work-in-progress to the chairperson
            b. Meets with the student regularly (e.g., every two to three weeks) during the proposal development phase
            c. Provides substantive feedback on the proposal work-in-progress
            d. Determines when the proposal, or individual chapters, are ready for submission to the committee members for their review and feedback

e. Secures consensus from the committee that the student is ready for proposal defense
f. Determines the date for the proposal defense meeting
g. Leads the proposal defense meeting

iv. During the phase of the dissertation in which the student prepares to conduct the study, carries out the research, and completes the written dissertation, the Dissertation Chairperson:
a. Reviews the dissertation study IRB application, protocol, and any other materials prepared by the student prior to their submission to the IRB.
b. Serves as the principal investigator for the candidate's dissertation research IRB protocol - per IRB policy.
c. Meets with the student regularly during data collection to assure compliance with the IRB approved protocol and IRB policies.
d. Meets with the student regularly during the data collection and analysis phases, interpretation of study findings, and preparation of the final dissertation chapters and/or manuscripts.
e. Provides the student with substantive feedback on the work-in-progress.
f. Determines when the draft dissertation is ready for review by the committee members.
g. Secures consensus approval from committee members that the dissertation is ready for public defense by the student. To this end, prior to scheduling the dissertation defense, the committee chair and members must complete and sign the "*Dissertation Defense Readiness*" form indicating that they have reviewed the dissertation and determined that the work has been completed and the student is ready for the defense.
h. Determines the date for dissertation defense and notifies the department administrator, Division of Nursing Science, of the dissertation defense date **at least two weeks prior to the scheduled defense**.

v. At the discretion of the dissertation chairperson, selected findings from the dissertation research can be written in a manuscript format (see the section on the "Alternative Option for Reporting Dissertation Findings in Manuscript Format" in this Handbook). The choice of manuscript option should be negotiated with and approved by the dissertation chairperson.

b. Committee Member Responsibilities
i. During all phases of the dissertation, committee members will:
a. Be available to meet with the student when needed
b. Critique drafts of the dissertation proposal
c. Participate actively in the proposal defense meeting
d. Review and critique drafts of the dissertation chapters/manuscripts and the final completed dissertation document
e. Share critiques and any concerns with the student and dissertation chairperson and provide written comments/feedback to the student
f. Inform the dissertation chairperson of approval/disapproval of student's readiness for defense of the final dissertation
g. Participate actively in the dissertation defense meeting

5. Responsibilities of the Student:
    a. The student is responsible for the careful editing and accuracy of both the dissertation proposal and the final dissertation. The student is also responsible for completing the "***Final Defense Form***" available at (https://grad.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/2021-04/SGS%20Biomedical%20Final%20Defense%20forms%202021.pdf). Prior to the dissertation defense, students must review the SGS checklist for degree completion at: www.gsnb.rutgers.edu/academics/checklist-phd-degree. The chairperson shall not accept the dissertation if items on the checklist have not been met.
    b. The student is responsible for completion of all requirements for the degree and certification of the same. The Registrar's Office must have re-coded the record, and all paperwork must be submitted on time, and proper forms have been provided with all required signatures. It is the student's responsibility to make sure all forms are signed and received by the proper authorities by the posted SGS deadline dates.

6. Registration Process:
    a. Students must register for dissertation research every semester including the summer, as per their plan of study, and upon advisement of the Dissertation Chairperson.

DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

Overview

The candidate is required to submit a dissertation research proposal for review, which should be developed under the supervision of the Chairperson and members of the dissertation committee.

Policy

1. Preparation of the Dissertation Proposal:
    a. The dissertation proposal should include the first three chapters of the dissertation, including the plan for the management and analysis of the data. In addition, the dissertation proposal should include a timeline for completion of anticipated study activities. The proposal is characterized by a logical progression of thought, good literary style, and acceptable practices of scholarly writing.
    b. The dissertation proposal should adhere to the most recent edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA).
    c. The dissertation proposal should be **no more than 50 pages** in length, double-spaced, exclusive of the title page, table of contents, references, and appendices, etc.
    d. The title of the dissertation proposal should include an indication of the research approach (e.g., correlational, experimental, qualitative) and the major variables to be studied. The inclusion of the target population is optional.

2. Dissertation Proposal Defense Meeting (Propositional Exam Part B)
    a. The student, chairperson, and members of the candidate's committee must attend the proposal defense meeting. The chairperson is responsible for recording basic points made during the meeting and the recommendations for revisions, if any.
    b. The student should be prepared to make a formal presentation of the entire proposal (including potential problems that might be encountered and plans to manage such

situations) and respond to questions/comments by the Dissertation Committee members.

c. After the proposal defense, the chairperson will summarize major points raised by the committee and their recommendations for the student's pass/fail the proposal defense.

3. In the case of approval, the ***Propositional Qualifying Examination Part B Report/Admission to Candidacy Form*** (https://grad.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/2021-04/SGS%20Biomedical%20qualifying%20exam%20application%20B%202021.pdf) must be signed and sent to the Program Director within 10 days and to the SGS Senior Associate Dean, School of Graduate Studies within two weeks of the proposal defense.

4. Upon notification of successful completion of Qualifying Examination Part B, the Senior Associate Dean confirms that the student has been admitted to candidacy for the PhD degree.

5. If the student fails the proposal defense, the student must develop a significantly revised or a new proposal. The Dissertation Chairperson will work with the student and the Dissertation Committee to review the new proposal and all prior steps will be repeated.

6. After successful completion of Propositional Qualifying Exam Part B and the attainment of candidacy status, the student must apply for IRB approval from the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) and, if appropriate, to the official research review or IRB committee(s) at the site(s) of data collection. Approval from outside IRBs must be forwarded, along with the completed application form of the cooperating agencies, to the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs of Rutgers Health (formerly Rutgers Biomedical Health Sciences - RBHS). No data can be collected until Rutgers IRB approval has been obtained.

7. Protocol for Communication between Candidate and Chair regarding the Dissertation before Graduation: For federal guidelines involving human subjects, the Dissertation Chair is considered the Principal Investigator of the dissertation research project. Also, any external communication or reporting about the dissertation is a reflection on Rutgers University and the SON. Therefore, the candidate must keep the Chair informed as follows:
    a. Communicate with the Committee Chair before submitting any research grants to fund all or part of dissertation research.
    b. Communicate with the Committee Chair before submitting any abstracts for conferences or publications that will report dissertation findings.
    c. Communicate with the Chair of the Committee before submitting to the public domain any materials that are an integral component of the dissertation.
    d. Determine the appropriateness of copyrighting the dissertation with the inclusion of any instruments (e.g., in Appendix) authored by another (whether copyrighted or not).

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE TRADITIONAL DISSERTATION

Students should adhere to the SGS "Style Guide for Doctoral Dissertation Preparation" available at: https://grad.rutgers.edu/academics/graduation/electronic-thesis-and-dissertation-style-guide. This includes adherence to all the details of style, font, margins, references, tables, figures, and formatting. The Style Guide also prescribes the format of the title page, the abstract, and the vita page. Appendix A of this Handbook contains more detailed guidelines for writing up a quantitative study and a qualitative study.

TRADITIONAL DISSERTATION OUTLINE FOR A QUANTITATIVE STUDY

An outline and component descriptions for quantitative studies are provided. This format is a guide. Additional or different information may be needed in select components depending upon the nature of the study. The Dissertation Advisor and Committee have the final say on the most appropriate outline to match the study. The outline guide is shown below.

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Psychometric Properties of Instruments (if appropriate)
Results of the Hypothesis Testing

CHAPTER V. DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS
Relationship of findings to the extant literature and the theoretical framework
Contribution of findings to current knowledge
Strengths and Limitations

CHAPTER VI. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS
Summary
Conclusions
Implications and recommendations for research, theory development/testing, policy, and practice

REFERENCES

APPENDICES
Well-organized evidence table that summarizes relevant studies included in the literature review
Data collection instruments
Other relevant materials

TRADITIONAL DISSERTATION OUTLINE FOR A QUALITATIVE STUDY

Qualitative inquiry is concerned with modes of systematic inquiry in which knowledge is generated for understanding human beings within the larger cultural, political, and social contexts. The philosophical assumptions underlying these modes of inquiry are steeped in the naturalistic paradigm, which provides an alternative perspective toward the meaning of reality. These assumptions provide the basis for methods that are appropriate for gathering and interpreting data relevant to questions about human behaviors. The primary data sources in qualitative inquiry are texts, which may be field notes, interviews, or any printed or visual data available for reading, reviewing, or hearing. The subject matter of qualitative inquiry centers on understanding the meanings human beings give to past and/or current ideas and experiences. The form and characteristics of the data depend on the focus of the research, the purpose of the qualitative study, and the chosen research method. The presentation of research findings follows the writing convention of the humanistic essay more so than the scientific article. The results generally are offered in an interpretive-narrative writing style, and typically the findings are presented and discussed in appropriate chapters.

Following is a general outline for research based on a naturalistic study. The Dissertation Advisor and Committee have the final say on the most appropriate outline to match the study.

Title Page
Copyright Page (copyrighting is optional)

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REFERENCES

APPENDICES
Well-organized evidence table that summarizes relevant studies included in the literature review
Interview guide and other data collection tools
Other relevant materials

ALTERNATIVE OPTION FOR REPORTING DISSERTATION FINDINGS IN MANUSCRIPT FORMAT(S)

As an alternative option to reporting dissertation findings in a traditional format, the student may choose to write their dissertation research findings in the form of manuscripts (typically 1-2) with the approval of the dissertation committee. The dissertation chair and student will determine which findings are reported in manuscript(s) format and the journal(s) targeted for submission of the paper(s). These manuscripts may replace the corresponding traditional chapters that report and/or discuss the dissertation findings (e.g., chapters 4 and/or 5).

The manuscripts should be in publishable format (i.e., in a "ready-to-submit" version) and should meet the manuscript guidelines established by the targeted journal. Manuscripts should be formatted appropriately, using APA style for references, or conforming to the requirements established by the journal targeted for submission of the paper. In general, these manuscripts should not be submitted for publications prior to the dissertation defense. Exceptions may be made with the approval of the dissertation committee.

When co-authored papers are included in the dissertation, the student must be the first author of the paper. Any manuscripts submitted or published that are part of the dissertation must be appropriately acknowledged in the dissertation, per SGS policy at https://grad.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/2021-07/acknowledgment_of_previous_publications.pdf

Dissertation Defense and Submission of the Completed Dissertation

The final public presentation shall be held under the auspices of the candidate's doctoral dissertation committee and the candidate will be present on campus. The candidate may be questioned by members of the audience in advance of the private questioning by the Dissertation Committee members. This can also occur with some of the committee members online or by telephone.

Prior to scheduling the dissertation defense meeting, the committee must complete and sign the "***Dissertation Defense Readiness***" form. This form indicates that the committee chair and members have reviewed the submitted dissertation and determined that the work has been completed and the student is ready for the defense. This form should be submitted to the PhD Program Director and the Administrative Coordinator for the Office of the Division of Nursing Science. In addition, the dissertation committee chair notifies the department administrator, Division of Nursing Science, of the dissertation defense date **at least two weeks** prior to the scheduled defense.

The candidate must defend the dissertation privately to the Dissertation Committee and otherwise satisfy the committee that they are qualified to receive the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. After the public presentation, the Dissertation Committee will move to a private room to complete the questioning. Afterward, they will ask the candidate to leave during the Dissertation Committee deliberation and voting process.

For one or more negative votes, the candidate fails the dissertation defense. The Committee must make recommendations to the Chair regarding the next steps. The Committee may recommend significant revisions of the dissertation or additional study/coursework in areas of knowledge deficiency, with a specified timeline. The candidate will be given a second opportunity to complete the oral defense. For two failures, the candidate will be dismissed from the program.

Once the Dissertation Committee votes to confer the degree, the proper forms must be signed and the candidate is responsible for returning them to the Office of the Dean, School of Graduate Studies on or before the published deadline date. Important information pertaining to graduation and dissertation including dissertation submission, checklist materials/forms, and graduation/commencement are available at https://grad.rutgers.edu/academics/graduation
After the committee accepts the dissertation, the student makes any recommended final edits to the dissertation and confirms that the dissertation adheres to the approved Rutgers format found at https://grad.rutgers.edu/academics/graduation/electronic-thesis-and-dissertation-style-guide. Dissertations that do not conform to the approved RU format will not be accepted. The approved dissertation must be converted to a PDF document then uploaded online via the RUetd (Rutgers University Electronic Thesis and Dissertation) website, available at https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/submit-your-etd for permanent record.

PUBLICATION OF DISSERTATION AND ACADEMIC DATA

Once the completed dissertation is electronically uploaded to RUetd (Rutgers University Libraries Electronic Thesis and Dissertations) for permanent archiving (https://etd.libraries.rutgers.edu/submit-your-etd), access to the dissertation will be via RUcore repository available at https://rucore.libraries.rutgers.edu/etd/. Additional information is available concerning copyright (https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/research-tools-and-services/copyright-guidance), embargo requests for online publication of the dissertation (https://grad.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/2021-07/procedure_for_deferring_publication_of_dissertations.pdf), and ProQuest publication services (https://www.etdadmin.com/main/home?siteId=1092).

APPENDIX A – DETAILED GUIDE FOR WRITING A DISSERTATION STUDY

QUANTITATIVE DISSERTATIONS

CHAPTER I. THE PROBLEM

Discussion of the Problem
In this section, the problem should be described clearly and concisely. The description of the problem will vary according to the state of knowledge regarding the phenomenon of interest and the type of research approach that will be used in the study. Typically, in a non-experimental study, the dependent variable is discussed as the phenomenon that represents the "overarching problem" and the independent variables presented as real or potential contributors to the problem. In an experimental study, the outcome measure(s) is typically discussed as the overarching problem and the intervention is discussed as a potential strategy that can reduce or ameliorate the problem.

Study Purpose and Research Questions*
The study's purpose should emerge from the above description of the problem. An overarching *problem statement* should be presented using the interrogative form and it should meet the criteria for a good problem statement. For example:

A. *What is the relationship between self-disclosure, interpersonal dependency, and life change events to loneliness in young adults?*
B. *What is the effect of X treatment on the rate of return to functional independence among elderly subject's post knee replacement surgery?*

The overarching research question may then be presented as sub-questions whereby each independent variable is linked to the dependent variable (or variables if there are more than one) in question form. For example:

A. *What is the relationship between self-disclosure and loneliness in young adults?*
B. *Sub-problems may not be appropriate in some cases.*

Significance
In this section, discuss why it is important to society in general and nursing in particular to investigate the research problem. State clearly how the research findings will contribute to nursing knowledge and potentially to nursing practice.

CHAPTER II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

It is understood that the student, to become a content expert regarding the variables under investigation, will do a comprehensive review of the literature on each variable in the problem statement. However, only the literature pertinent to the development of relationships or differences to be tested by the hypotheses should be reported.

This chapter should be introduced in one paragraph that succinctly indicates the organization of the content that will be presented. There are two distinct aspects of discussion in this chapter. The first is a description of the theoretical framework that guides the study. The second aspect of the

discussion focuses on a presentation of a critical analysis of empirical studies pertinent to the present investigation.

Theoretical Framework
The Theoretical Framework provides the theoretical basis for the derivation of the hypotheses. This section of the chapter provides a discussion of the theory(ies), its concepts and propositions, and how the phenomena relevant to the study represent relevant theoretical concepts. The section should end with a summary of the theoretical linkages examined in the study, and a diagram of the theorized model to be tested.

Definition of Terms *
Each variable in the problem statement should be defined conceptually and operationally. In experimental studies, define the experimental intervention(s) (treatment conditions) conceptually in this section and operationally in Chapter III. If the sample to be studied represents a phase of human development or has an acute or chronic illness, these terms also should be defined. For example, if the sample consists of patients who have had an acute myocardial infarction, this term should be defined and documented.

Literature Review
This section presents a critical analysis of an appropriate sample of empirical studies pertinent to the present investigation. Across the studies reviewed, empirical evidence should be provided that demonstrates the extent to which the theorized relationships between study variables are supported or not. Group the studies under appropriate headings (e.g., by theorized relationships). Each segment of studies should begin with a description of the literature search strategy and how the sample of studies was delimited to the final number included in the segment for review and analysis. Critically analyze the contributions of the studies to knowledge about the relationships hypothesized for the proposed study, the methodological or sample-size flaws that may explain conflicting findings, and the problems inherent in definitional and instrument discrepancies. The literature review ends with a "summary of the literature review and knowledge gaps" section that pinpoints the present state of knowledge, gaps in the knowledge, and how this study addresses knowledge gaps. An evidence table is included that summarizes relevant information for each study.

Hypotheses*
Formulate and state research hypotheses that are derived from the theoretical propositions. Where appropriate, each hypothesis should answer a sub-question. An example of a hypothesis statement is *There is an inverse relationship between self-disclosure and loneliness in young adults.* In other cases, the hypotheses derive directly from the overarching research question (problem statement).

CHAPTER III. METHODS

This chapter should be introduced in one paragraph that briefly indicates the research design of the study and the methods that will be presented.

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* *Asterisk indicates that the section should be written in the future tense for the Dissertation Proposal and the past tense for the final Dissertation.*

The Research Setting*

Describe the characteristics of the research setting in which data will be collected. For example, if high school students will be studied, describe the state or region of the country in which the high school is located while maintaining its anonymity. In some instances, the researcher may not be able to describe the specific research setting until after the data are collected. Therefore, the specific research setting should be indicated in the Dissertation Proposal and described more fully in the final dissertation. Also, in some instances, it may be necessary to only describe the specific research setting, e.g., laboratory, and its' location. For analyses of existing datasets, the source of the dataset should be described.

The Sample*

For the dissertation proposal, restate the characteristics of the sample that will be used to investigate the research problem, and the inclusion and exclusion criteria for study participation. Describe the sampling method for bio-behavioral research or experimental research, be precise in listing exclusion criteria for the experimental and control groups. If appropriate to the research design, describe the method of random assignment or matching procedure that will be used. Substantiate from the literature the sample size needed to test the hypotheses. Present the results of a power-calculation to justify the sample size chosen.

For primary studies, indicate the number of subjects approached to participate, the number of subjects who voluntarily participated in the study, the number of subjects who withdrew (if any), and the number of subjects in the final sample, that is, those subjects included in the data analysis. For example:

A. *Of the 270 tenth graders initially approached to participate in the study, 182 students agreed to participate. The responses of 36 students were excluded from the analysis due to the delimitations of the study. Two students withdrew from the study and the incomplete responses of 3 students were discarded. The final sample consisted of 141 students.*

B. *During the duration of the study, 150 persons received the surgery and 75 fulfilled the study criteria. Of these 75, 50 agreed to participate and signed consents. There were 7 dropouts: 3 had post-op complications that prevented the use of the experimental protocol, 2 changed their mind about participating, and 2 died in the post-operative period.*

For analyses of existing datasets, describe the analytic sample. A description should include the number of subjects or cases and the variables in the dataset that will be analyzed. For example, a description of the anticipated analytic sample is described below.

Since postpartum hemorrhage (PPH) occurs in 1% to 5% of women, it is anticipated that there were approximately 1000 to 5000 NJ hospital admission encounters that included a diagnosis of PPH in 2014. It is anticipated that 8 variables in the dataset will be examined as independent variables including race, age, median income, and chronic hypertension, diabetes, gestational diabetes, and. forceps delivery. ICU use (yes/no) will be examined as the dependent variable. Power analysis for chi-square, correlational, and logistic regression analyses were calculated to determine the appropriate sample size to yield sufficient power

* *Asterisk indicates that the section should be written in the future tense for the Dissertation Proposal and the past tense for the final Dissertation.*

for these statistical techniques. Power analyses indicated that an anticipated admission encounter sample of at least 1000 will be more than sufficient to yield statistical power of .80 at a .05 significance level for bivariate and logistic regression analyses.

For the final dissertation, the analytic sample is described as follows:

The analysis sample was comprised of 1988 admission encounters by women in NJ who experienced postpartum after childbirth.

Then, using frequencies and/or percentages, describe the characteristics of the final sample, which must include gender and race. Data collected on additional socio-demographic characteristics of the sample such as age should be described by the mean, standard deviation, and range. If there is more than one group of subjects under investigation, e.g., in experimental and descriptive-comparative studies, describe each group separately. Descriptive statistics of selected characteristics of the sample(s) should be presented in a table. In experimental studies, statistics for each comparison group should be performed to determine if there were statistically significant differences between or among the groups on demographic characteristics.

Instruments*

It is understood that paper and pencil instruments used for the doctoral dissertation have acceptable reliability coefficients (.70 or greater) and sufficient evidence of validity. Biomedical instruments also must be valid and reliable according to accepted practices in biometrics.

Each instrument used to collect data in the study must be addressed in this section; this includes biomedical instruments and technological equipment. If the instrument(s) to be used do not have published reliabilities for the sample that will be investigated, a pilot study should be conducted before the dissertation proposal and the results reported. If a paper and pencil instrument is developed for the investigation, describe in detail the steps used to establish the psychometric properties of the instrument, which should include a pilot.

In this section, treat each instrument separately; use the name of the instrument as a heading. Then, in one paragraph, report the purpose, description, method of administration, scale format, range of possible scores, and scoring procedure for the instrument. Then in one paragraph, report the published reliabilities obtained on the instrument in previous research, focusing preferably on those reliabilities obtained on a sample similar in characteristics to one to be studied in the present investigation. Besides, the student should describe the published evidence of validity obtained on the instrument in previous research, including that evidence obtained on a sample or samples similar in characteristics to the one to be studied in the present investigation.

For biomedical instrumentation describe the calibration procedures, the temperature and humidity specifications, and the step-by-step procedures to decrease reliability problems.

Procedure for Data Collection*

For primary studies, restate the specific research setting in which the data will be collected. Then describe when, how, and by whom that data will be collected. Describe how the constancy of

* *Asterisk indicates that the section should be written in the future tense for the Dissertation Proposal and the past tense for the final Dissertation.*

conditions will be maintained in the specific research setting, whether natural or laboratory. Using published ethical guidelines, discuss how the rights of human subjects will be protected; indicate in the final dissertation that IRB approval was obtained.

For biomedical data collection specify the exact step-by-step procedure for data collection, handling/storage of specimens, and the procedure for the testing and scoring/scaling of the results. For analysis of existing datasets, describe how the dataset will be obtained, who will have access to it, and how it will be stored and secured.

Experimental Operational Definition*
For experimental and quasi-experimental studies, describe how the independent variable will be manipulated. The experimental intervention(s) (treatment conditions) should be discussed in enough detail so that the study could be replicated. When there are two or more treatment conditions, the descriptions should differentiate one from the other(s). Steps taken to assure the validity of content and/or consistency of process should be described for select treatment conditions involving experimental interventions. In quasi-experimental studies, steps taken to control for extraneous independent variables should be discussed. Any equipment used as part of the treatment conditions should be described in detail.

Plan for Data Analysis
For the dissertation proposal, the plan for analysis of the data should be presented in Chapter III. The plan should indicate the statistics that will be used for testing the hypotheses, the level of significance (alpha) at which the research hypotheses will be accepted, and the plan for human subject's protection and/or data security (e.g., IRB approval procedures, identified and/or de-identified data storage and backup procedures, persons who will have access to the data, procedures. This section is deleted from Chapter III in the final dissertation.

CHAPTER IV. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

This chapter should be introduced in one paragraph. Initially, state the purpose of the study in the past tense. Briefly indicate for whom the data were collected, and the instruments used. End the paragraph by stating that the study results are presented in this chapter.

Sample Description
Restate the sampling method(s) used; how the required sample size based on power analysis was substantiated and describe the sample characteristics. Include a table that lists the descriptive statistics for the sample (e.g., mean age, racial distribution, gender distribution, etc.).

Statistical Description of the Variables
In this section, discuss the descriptive statistics (range, median, mean, and standard deviation) obtained on the responses of the sample to the study instruments. A description of the extent to which the study variables approximate a normal distribution is also presented. In correlational studies, these statistics should also be presented in a table. In an experimental study using a pre-test-post-test design, descriptive statistics obtained on the responses to the instrument**(s)** used should be presented in a table.

Psychometric Properties of Instruments
Unless an instrument has been developed for one of the study variables, the psychometric properties of instruments reported in this chapter will involve reporting only the alpha coefficients obtained on the responses of the sample to the study instruments. Briefly discuss the reliability results, using the criterion for acceptable reliability coefficients as a guide. If more than one instrument has been used in the study, present the alpha coefficients in a table.

If an instrument has been developed for the study and factor analysis is performed on the responses of the sample to the instrument in the actual study, present the findings in a table and discuss them in a narrative. For biomedical research, describe the results of reliability tests performed during sample analysis and the results of the calibration studies on the instruments throughout data collection.

Results of Hypothesis Testing
Introduce this section by stating the statistics used to test the hypotheses and, when indicated, whether a one- or two-tailed test was used. Indicate the statistical package used to analyze the data. Then, treat each hypothesis separately, using Hypothesis 1, Hypothesis 2, and so forth, as subheadings. Restate the research hypothesis under the subheading, indicate the results obtained when testing the hypothesis (value and probability level) and whether the hypothesis was supported. Do not interpret the findings, simply report them.

CHAPTER V. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

It is understood that the results obtained when testing the hypotheses are interpreted in this chapter and that meanings are given to the findings in terms of the theoretical relationships that were presented in earlier chapters. Briefly introduce this chapter by restating the purpose of the study and the theoretical relationships developed. Then, discuss each hypothesis separately. Use the following guidelines for interpreting the hypotheses.

1. If the hypothesis is supported, discuss the findings considering the explanatory or predictive level theory that served to develop the theoretical relationship from which the hypothesis was derived. In correlational studies, consider the strength of the relationship in terms of the magnitude of the correlation found, also realizing that correlation does not mean causation. Do not "go beyond the data" with your interpretation. In quasi-experimental studies, consider threats to internal validity as competing explanations for obtained results.
2. If the hypothesis is not supported, discuss the findings first in terms of shortcomings of the theory proposition from which the hypothesis was derived. Consider theoretical reasons for why the hypothesis was not supported. Then, consider methodological problems that might have occurred in the conduct of the study that could have contributed to the non-significant finding. In experimental studies consider the dosage issues, effect size issues, and sample size issues as possible reasons for non-significance.
3. If the hypothesis is significant but the results are opposite to those hypothesized, it is understood that the researcher has critically scrutinized the data analysis procedures before accepting and reporting the finding. The discussion should focus on both theoretical and methodological reasons for this significant finding that was not hypothesized.

This chapter ends with a discussion of the usefulness of the theory that guided the study for understanding the problem examined in the study.

CHAPTER VI. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary
This chapter begins with a summary of the study that summarizes the major components addressed in the previous chapters, e.g., the purpose of the study, the theoretical relationships developed in the study, the hypotheses, a brief description of the sample, the instruments used, the procedures for analysis, and the results. The summary should be no longer than four (4) pages.

Conclusions
Although the findings from the testing of the hypotheses should guide the conclusions drawn, do not restate the findings as conclusions. Based on the findings, make general concluding statements about the theory (new knowledge) developed in the study.

Implications and Recommendations
Discuss the theoretical and practical implications of the findings for nursing. Based on the findings, specify areas for future study. These areas should be enumerated and briefly discussed. Include as appropriate specific changes in nursing practice that should emanate from the study results, policy implications, and directions for further research.

QUALITATIVE DISSERTATIONS

Message to Students: before using this guide, please note the considerations below and discuss them in depth with your faculty committee members.

Qualitative studies may vary quite significantly in format and organization, reflecting traditions and conventions in the social sciences and humanities, where these approaches originated. Theoretical frameworks have a precise location in quantitative studies, for example, but they often appear in multiple locations in a qualitative study. In the introduction, the literature review, the methods section, and/or the analysis, they shape the identification of a problem, the framing of a question, the choice of data-collection strategies, the definition of what constitutes "data," the approach to interpretation, as well as understandings of the meaning, significance, and implications of findings. Likewise, literature review is often not confined to a single chapter in qualitative studies, but rather might appear within an introduction (where it is used to situate a problem in conversation within a body of previous scholarship), within the methods section (where the researcher may engage in fine-tuned explanations that justify choice of data-gathering and interpretive approaches), and also within the discussion section (where the researcher might discuss how the findings could be challenged or interpreted from different conceptual reference points). These are among the challenges you need to consider before committing to detailed guidelines for writing your qualitative study.

As with quantitative studies, qualitative studies must include a presentation of results. But results sections tend to be much lengthier in qualitative studies than in qualitative studies, not least

because of the narrative and textual nature of qualitative data. Instead of having a single "results" chapter (usually Chapter 4), qualitative studies may contain multiple such chapters, each presenting material related to a particular theme, situation, example, instance or aspect of the problem, or historical period. Moreover, research methods in qualitative inquiry are *emergent*, meaning that core elements of study strategy – such as sampling and interviewing – may shift as data are collected and analyzed and new understandings and sub-questions emerge. Unlike in quantitative research, which strives to achieve representativeness and generalizability, sampling in qualitative inquiry is *theory-driven*, frequently evolving over the course of a study as a researcher moves from initial findings to more focused or refined investigation. At times, findings emerge during early stages of research that call for theorizing not initially anticipated in the proposal stage. This adds yet another layer of complications to qualitative inquiry: proposals in qualitative research may provide only partial indications of range of theories and data-collection strategies that might be reported in the final dissertation.

These considerations, as well as others, make it extraordinarily difficult to prescribe a single reporting template for dissertations involving qualitative inquiry. You and your faculty committee members must discuss these matters throughout the development and design of your project. You will need to work closely with your faculty committee members in planning an appropriate reporting framework and anticipate, as much as possible, the areas where plans embedded in the initial proposal may change as the project evolves. Students are faculty together must be clear that the guidelines here provide a starting point for planning, as they highlight some basic elements common to many qualitative studies, but they cannot serve as a definitive template that will be applicable in all situations.

CHAPTER I. THE PROBLEM AND APPROACH

This chapter provides an overview of your study – setting up the context for it, describing the problem it will address, and explaining the reasons why such a project needs to be done. This is where you situate your project in reference to existing knowledge and describe how your work connects to the broader ongoing scholarly conversation about that subject matter. On a practical level, it is a road map: you will end this chapter with a description of what sections will come next.

Discussion of the Problem/Phenomenon of Interest

The problem or phenomenon of interest should be described within its naturalistic setting. This section usually moves from the broad to the specific – explaining the general subject matter, then narrowing in on the specific matter of the study. This section may include introduction to historical, socio-economic, political, policy-institutional, organizational, and/or cultural aspects of the context or phenomenon. In some cases, it may include a description of changes that led to a problem's emergence. This section will also include identification of the specific persons or populations for whom the problem or phenomenon is salient. The most important feature of this section is the gap statement -- a presentation of the gap in current understanding of the problem. You may identify theoretical and conceptual frameworks within which the problem has previously been studied and then point out exactly what is still missing from current understanding. This is the crucial launching point for a dissertation project – specifying what is lacking in previous research on the phenomenon, what problems remain unaddressed by previous research, and what kind of information is lacking that the current project aims to find out.

Study Purpose and Research Questions (Purpose Statement)*

The purpose of qualitative research is to deepen understanding, heighten awareness and add nuance to the understanding of a phenomenon by examining it through novel lenses. The statement of purpose for a particular study should emerge from the above description of the problem and serve as an initial road map for how the project will deepen understanding in the gap area that has been identified. An overarching *purpose statement* is brief and succinct. It usually includes the central inquiry "action" the research intends to take (for example: "explore," "examine," "elucidate," "describe," "uncover," "analyze," "understand," etc.). It also includes the focus of this inquiry's core activity (for example: the "interaction between," the "experience of," the "meaning of," the "process by which," "how they do," "how they make sense of," etc.). It will identify the persons, populations, setting, and/or materials that will serve as sources of information ("operating room nurses," "refugees in a health clinic," "draft legislation documents produced during the war period," etc.), as well as the methodological approach that will be used to generate the information (phenomenology, grounded theory, case study, ethnography, narrative analysis, hybrid or bricolage approaches, etc.). It may also include reference to the exact nature of the data ("content analysis of interview transcripts with," "thematic analysis of documents from," and so on). The structure of the purpose statement may vary depending on the nature of the problem being studied. For example:

A. *The aim of this non-participant-observational ethnographic study is to examine power relationships in the interaction between staff nurses and physicians in the operating room.*
B. *The purpose of this grounded theory study is to describe how cancer patients evaluate risk when choosing experimental treatments and understand how they describe their decision-making processes at different points throughout the trajectory of treatment.*
C. *This case study explores the process by which a group of nursing students acquired interpretive depth when conducting qualitative inquiry.*
D. *This descriptive study aims to explore clinic nurses' experiences with family education in light of recent changes in healthcare coverage policies.*
E. *This phenomenological study explores the lived experience of nursing assistants providing care to residents of a nursing home during Covid.*

The purpose statement in a qualitative study is often followed by secondary and specific aims statements or questions identifying the theoretical framework to be used and/or clarifying specific analytic targets or aspects of the phenomenon that will be investigated. In qualitative studies, researchers often express these statements in the first person. For example:

The aim of this non-participant ethnographic study is to examine power relationships in the interaction between staff nurses and physicians in the operating room. Using the framework of Witz's sociological model of professional closure (1992), I will conduct a series of non-participant observations of operating-room interactions, followed by individual interviews with a purposive sample of twenty clinicians representing different disciplines. My goal is to understand how relationships of power, professional status, and professional scope may be reproduced, reinforced, or challenged during inter-professional encounters. How do physicians and nurses use language, body posture, and positioning in space to communicate matters of authority, responsibility, and deference? How do they negotiate disagreements when and if these arise? What normative understandings do nurses and physicians hold regarding the role and scope of practice for each discipline, and what happens when normative expectations are violated?

Foundational Assumptions
In this section, the core conceptual underpinnings are introduced. The researcher situates the study in reference to classic or landmark previous studies, if any exist. The researcher may situate the project within a philosophical framework – by explicitly clarifying assumptions regarding objectivity and subjectivity and explaining why the selected methodology is the best fit for the research aim. This section is often called "the initial literature review" because it provides a general scan of ideas and concepts that inform the process of the research and will be addressed in greater depth later in the project.

Plan for the Dissertation *(this section is not part of proposal but will be included in the final dissertation, when all the parts are complete)*
This section is an overview of what will come next in the chapters, with brief summaries for each so that your readers understand what will come next. You will explain that Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature on the subject, and, in most cases, you will summarize briefly what the chapter concludes. You will then explain that Chapter 3 presents the methodology. In most cases, you will summarize briefly, including the name of the approach you chose, if applicable (phenomenology, grounded theory, etc.) and a very brief identification of the data-collecting and analysis strategies you used (for example, something like: "I conducted interviews with 15 adolescents enrolled in an experimental treatment program at X setting. To support the longitudinal view of their experiences, interviews were conducted at three time points during the first year of treatment. Recordings were transcribed and subsequently analyzed using a directed content coding approach (citation if applicable).")

Significance
In this section, you will discuss why it is important to society in general and nursing in particular to investigate the research problem. State clearly how the research findings will contribute to nursing knowledge and potentially to nursing practice.

CHAPTER II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In this chapter, your aim is to connect the "what," the "why," and the "how" of your project. This requires expertise and serious engagement with previous scholarship. To become an expert regarding the phenomenon under investigation, you will do a comprehensive review of the literature. This review is integrative and synthesizing. Please note that it should include review of both qualitative and quantitative studies and policy analyses, even though your approach will be qualitative. You must be familiar with those in order to provide a full account of existing knowledge on your topic. You may not necessarily include all of this material in your review, but you will definitely need to be familiar with it. You will be expected to review (a) studies of the phenomenon itself and what is known about it, (b) studies related to the background context, population, and setting, including history and social conditions affecting the population any recent shifts in circumstances, and (c) studies representing the range of theories and theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches that have been brought to bear previously on the subject. These different aspects of your background and context may be presented as sub-sections within the chapter. For example, for a study about power relationships in nurse-physician interactions, you would review, at a minimum, not only the landmark studies about power in nurse-physician interaction, but also literature showing different ways that power has been studied previously in healthcare and other contexts, the literature

from social and behavioral science presenting theories that have been brought to bear on the study of power relationships more generally, and literature illustrating different kinds of conclusions that have been drawn from different methodological approaches used in previous research. Most likely, you will work closely with your faculty advisor and also with a reference librarian so that your literature review is comprehensive and provides a solid grounding for the project.

Please note that a student does not "choose" a single theoretical framework or select a methodology merely on grounds that something has appeared in a previous study or has been utilized in previous research. Rather, you must explore a range of theoretical frameworks and a range of methodological approaches, carefully consider how each has impacted knowledge in the subject area, understand the benefits and limitations of each (as each approach draws attention to different kinds of knowledge and information), and make a case for why a particular theory(ies) or approach(es) will be appropriate for your project. In this section, you will need to demonstrate alignment between your purpose, your research question(s), your theoretical perspective, and your methodology.

The student conducting a qualitative study should expect to explore literature in the social sciences and humanities as well as in nursing and the biomedical sciences, as this literature is likely to be important in providing philosophical, methodological, and/or contextual grounding for the research. The literature review section usually culminates in a succinct statement of the theoretical framework(s) that will inform the study and the specific methodological approach that follows from this choice. The concluding statement of this chapter incorporates the aims and central questions of the research, the theoretical perspective, and the method chosen to address the questions.

CHAPTER III. METHODS

This chapter may be introduced in one paragraph that briefly indicates the methodological approach of the study (grounded theory, phenomenology, ethnography, etc.).

The Research Setting

The student will describe the setting precisely but maintain anonymity (see ethical considerations, below). For example, if high school students will be studied, you will describe the state or region of the country in which the high school is located and any other pertinent characteristics (public or private, urban or rural, and so on).

Sampling

Sampling in qualitative studies is a highly complex matter that requires careful attention, as it is driven by theoretical considerations and the purpose of the research. Sampling in qualitative research is not "representative" – that is, it does not serve as a foundation for claims of generalizability of findings. Rather, qualitative research sampling is purposive and theory-driven, which means you will explain their choice of sampling strategy in reference to how it supports the aims of the study. For example, a sample may be chosen to illustrate *maximal variation* of a phenomenon, or it may be chosen for *homogeneity*. Selection may reflect *extreme cases*, *unusual* cases, *typical* cases, or *politically important* cases. A sample may be chosen to *facilitate comparison*, or to facilitate *contrast*. You may need to ensure that all examples meet a *particular criterion*, or you may need to use a "snowball" approach. You may find that sampling occurs *opportunistically*, based on unexpected external circumstances, such as natural disasters, that create

groupings in situ. The choice of approach must be explained in terms of how it addresses the research purpose.

You will describe sampling procedures as well as sample sizes. If interviews will be conducted, you will describe the population to be interviewed, including its demographic characteristics such as race, age, and gender, as well as inclusion parameters for identifying eligible study participants. Exclusion criteria must be specified and explained in terms of the purpose of the study. If observations will be conducted, you will describe the location, means of entry, frequency and duration, conditions under which observations are conducted, and so on, in detail. If the study involves analysis of documents, you will describe what kinds of documents, how collection takes place, and parameters for collection (how many, years represented, etc.).

In some cases, sampling strategies may change during the course of a study. This happens most often when a student begins with a generalized purposive approach but obtains initial findings that suggest the need for a more focused theoretical strategy. Changes need to be explained in detail in the final dissertation.

You will describe sample size. The question of sample size is a difficult one in qualitative research, since a thoughtful, well-conducted study involving a handful of interviews has potential to generate insights far richer and more substantive than a shallow, superficial study involving a thousand interviews. Many researchers suggest that sampling continue for the duration of a study until "data saturation" is reached – when new cases no longer produce findings significantly different from what the researcher has already identified. The numbers in such cases are variable and often dependent on the quality and nuance of the questions asked in the first place. "Saturation" is a highly controversial concept in qualitative inquiry for this reason, as the meaning and extent of "different" is subjective and context-dependent. There are ethical implications when students claim to have achieved "saturation" prematurely or without sufficient or plausible evidence for the claim. You will work closely with your faculty advisor to determine when sampling sufficiency has been achieved, and you will need to provide explanation of this process in your final dissertation. (See section on Rigor)

Descriptive information about the study sample(s) is often presented in tabular form, even in qualitative research. As with quantitative studies, the student will describe procedures used for recruitment of participants, as well as obstacles to recruitment and implications for the study.

Data, Data Collection Procedures, Instrumentation

"Data" in qualitative research take the form of narrative and text – including transcriptions of verbal communication such as overheard conversations or interviews; field notes; descriptions of situations, actions, objects, or behaviors; and quotations from documents or other products that can be seen or heard such as emails or diaries, etc. In this section, you will describe the exact nature of the data in terms of the purpose it serves in the study.

You will also describe the procedures used to collect the data. If the study involves interviews, the type of interview will be described (one-on-one, group, structured, semi-structured), as will any specific methodological approach to interviewing (ethnographic interviewing, phenomenological interviewing, etc.). Also described will be any technology used to record the interview, the challenges and limitations generally associated with this interview approach (for example, the

benefits and drawbacks of focus group formats, with citations to the literature on this debate), and information regarding when, where, and for how long the interviews are conducted. If interviews are involved, you will describe the steps taken to build rapport and trust, the questions asked, if applicable, and, in some cases, an explanation of how the questions were developed. If an interview guide or list of prompts is used, this will be included in an appendix. In many studies, students develop an initial draft interview guide which is "trialed" on a small population through a process of cognitive interviewing. The guide may then be revised in accordance with responses. Such validation procedures are described in detail.

If the study involves field observations, the student will describe the type (participant, non-participant) and provide a schedule and explanation of what was observed, how, with what frequency and duration, and, if others were present, who they were. In most cases, if field observations are conducted, this section will provide a description of how you presented yourself, explained your role, interacted with personnel, and also how you were perceived in the setting. Students often describe their strategy for writing field notes – such as whether notes were taken in real time or if there was a lag period between observations and note-taking. In many cases, students may describe their efforts to achieve "thick description." Depending on the research question, a structured observation instrument may be used. This may be included in an appendix. Students may in some cases provide a map indicating locations of observations.

Ethical Considerations
In this section, the student describes processes for human subject's protection and/or data security (e.g., IRB approval procedures, identified and/or de-identified data storage and backup procedures, persons who will have access to the data, procedures. This section is included in the proposal but deleted from the final dissertation).

Since the researcher is the instrument of qualitative inquiry, the student will probably include an extensive discussion of the nature of power imbalances, inequality, and biases in the research encounter and explain measures taken to address them.

Data Analysis
Data analysis, often said to be the most challenging element of qualitative research, is not a linear or straightforward process. Rather, it is iterative, with data collection and analysis often taking place simultaneously. Analysis is usually primarily inductive, but deductive approaches may be useful in certain cases. In this section, the student will explain the choices made between these.

Data analysis varies significantly across qualitative studies depending on the methodological approach and research question, but interpretation and analysis are common to all approaches (with the exception of qualitative descriptive approaches). In this section, the student describes coding strategy in terms of how it serves the purpose of the study. This often begins with a description of how notes and transcripts are initially organized, ordered and stored. Large amounts of narrative text are generated during the qualitative research process, and careful record-keeping and accounting are crucial. Students need to demonstrate how these are achieved and provide detailed descriptions. In some cases, students may use data-management software to store and organize their material. In this section, students may specify the software chosen and describe how it was used. If a transcription service is used, the name of the service is provided.

It should be noted that not all students will need to describe an explicitly coding-based approach. Ethnography and intuitive inquiry, for example, are two types of qualitative inquiry that do not always refer to data analysis and interpretation as a process based on coding. Phenomenology also often relies on a more holistic, intuitive, or literary approach to the analytic process. The student will work closely with faculty committee members to determine the appropriate interpretive strategy and how to describe it.

In the completed dissertation, once the data have been acquired, this section will move next to a description of how, when, and at what intervals the collected information was read/viewed/listened to. In most cases, this will be followed by a detailed description of the cycle of coding and categorizing, the steps taken to achieve rigor and trustworthiness in analysis, and the type of coding approach used (thematic, content analysis, etc.). The important task here is to depict an interpretive pathway showing the transformations and generalizations by which individually selected narrative data elements were condensed into higher-order themes and concepts. In some cases, students may be able to produce a table or graphic representation that includes sample quotations and depicts the connections between first-level initial codes, next-level broader categorizations, and, ultimately, larger interpretive themes. This should be discussed with the faculty committee members. If applicable, the student may describe a deliberately focused approach to coding -- for example, coding based on frequency of certain words, coding based on repeating patterns in the structure of sentences or subject position of the speaker in reference to the action being described, coding based on the appearance of metaphors in speech, coding based on significant statements, coding based on the tone or manner in which a message is conveyed, and so on. Whatever the approach, you will describe it in reference to how it serves the purpose of the study.

Memoing

In some cases, a student may describe "memoing," if applicable – the process of tentative note-taking and reflection that creates a record of the researcher's interpretive thought process and how it evolved over the course of the study. Memoing may be incorporated into an audit trail, which can also include researcher notes, comments, and discussions produced during all stages of the study that create a detailed process record of the project from start to finish. Memos may or may not be included in the final write-up of the dissertation. The student will work with faculty committee members to make this decision.

Rigor

Qualitative research establishes its quality and rigor through measures that support its trustworthiness – its dependability, credibility, confirmability, authenticity, transferability, and relevance. In this section, you will explain steps taken at all stages of the study to support methodological soundness and interpretive adequacy. Strategies often described include member checking, searching for negative cases, considering alternative explanations, triangulation, peer review (discussion groups or classroom sharing), use of thick description, prolonged engagement, and practices to enhance reflexivity and self-awareness such as the bracketing interview (for phenomenological studies) and the reflexive memo.

Self-Reflection

In some cases, it is important for the student to write an extensive reflective essay in which your

personal background and life experience are considered in terms of their interplay and impact on the research process, including how you came to choose the topic, why the problem concerned you, your interactions with participants/interviewees, your value judgments, and your interpretation of the data. Issues often included in such essays include gender, race, ethnicity, social class, education, family and living situation, experiences with the healthcare system, and so on. This section is more than a confessional or an exercise in self-disclosure or revelation. Rather, it is a philosophically grounded analysis of how one's own underlying categories of awareness and presentation of self are implicated in the process of research. This section should reflect extensive discussions with your faculty committee.

CHAPTER IV. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

This chapter presents the themes and ideas identified by coding and/or other forms of analysis. Results may be organized in a variety of ways. The structure for reporting results in qualitative research is highly dependent on the methodology chosen. Conventions for a grounded theory study are very different from those for a case study, which are very different from those for phenomenology, and so on. A phenomenological study, for example, may present results organized according to constructs commonly used in phenomenology, such as figure/ground, thrownness/freedom, experience of body/others/time/non-human world, and so on. A grounded theory, by contrast, may present results at least partially in graphic form, focusing on explication of the dynamic relationships among processes and categories. The student will choose the narrative convention appropriate for the methodology, consulting with faculty committee members in making the choice.

A significant amount of narrative material may have been generated. Therefore, the student may decide to present results in multiple chapters instead of a single chapter. Ethnographic studies and historical analyses frequently require more than a single chapter for the presentation of results. You will work with your faculty committee members to make decisions on this issue.

CHAPTER V. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

In this section, the student returns to the original statement of purpose from the beginning of the study and considers the results presented in Chapter 4 in light of the original aim of the project. If questions were posed, they are answered explicitly in this section. In most cases, you will revisit the literature review sections from Chapters 1 and 2 and theorize the findings presented in Chapter 4 based on the theories originally proposed as well as others that might need to be introduced in order to provide additional coherence and insight. The task in this section is to explain how the information described in Chapter 4 adds to, elaborates, provides nuance for, or challenges previous ideas, theories, and knowledge about the phenomenon. The discussion is not merely a re-statement of the results. It must provide new insight. However, as with quantitative studies, the student will take care to avoid interpretive "over-reach" – not to "go beyond" what the data contain. You will work closely with your faculty committee members to achieve interpretive restraint while also aiming for new insights.

If the research did not go as planned, this is explained. If the researcher was surprised by some turn of events or unexpected discoveries, these are explained. Limitations of the study are explored. This

includes a discussion of what the study did not address, what questions remain, and what new questions may arise as a consequence of the new findings.

The chapter in most cases ends with a succinct statement of how the phenomenon of interest may be seen differently as a result of the findings.

CHAPTER VI. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This chapter begins with a summary of the major components addressed in the previous chapters, including the purpose statement, the theoretical framework(s), the methodology, setting, sample and a brief restatement of the procedures for data collection and analysis. The summary is generally brief, spanning fewer than four (4) pages.

Conclusions

In this section, the student makes general concluding statements about the new knowledge developed in the study.

Implications and Recommendations

You will discuss the theoretical and practical implications of the findings for nursing. Based on the findings, you will specify areas for future study. These areas should be enumerated and briefly discussed. Include, as appropriate, specific changes in nursing practice that should emanate from the study results. Also include policy implications and directions for further research.

APPENDIX B – PHD PROGRAM COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Cognate/Elective Courses:

705:545 - **Design of Curriculum (3 credits):** This course will focus on the design and application of principles of curriculum and instructional design in the classroom and clinical settings. Methods and strategies relative to the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains, which are appropriate to the learner, will be discussed. Curriculum design and learning environments will also be highlighted.

705:675 **- Writing for Nurse Scientists (3 credits):** This course develops scholarly writing skills that doctoral-level nurses need for academic success. Students engage in exercises that enhance understanding of the principles and conventions of scientific communication in nursing. Subjects addressed in the course include: writing purpose statements; summarizing; developing abstracts; synthesizing diverse material from a range of sources; identifying gaps in literature; clarifying the research problem; recognizing the structure, style, and purpose of different types of scholarly writing; developing the components of a nursing-science manuscript; using rubrics and other formal tools to assess scholarly writing; building habits of good writing and applying critical feedback in the revision process. Students deconstruct exemplar documents and then practice drafting and revising their own writing. This course is writing- and revision-intensive. Students contribute to the learning experience by sharing their work and providing feedback weekly on the work of others in the class.

Core Courses:

705:676 **- Measurement of Health Phenomena (3 credits) -** This course will provide an overview of the links between theory and measurement, the development of measurement tools, and psychometric testing of instruments. Teaching-learning methods include lectures, discussions, computer lab data assessment using SPSS, and written and presentation assignments. The course focuses on the critical evaluation of the concepts underlying measurement reliability and validity, the construction of measurement tools, the use of measurement in quantitative research, the translation process in measurement, and the adaptation of instruments across diverse population groups. ***Prerequisites: 705:677, 681, 682, 683, 685***

705:677 **- Qualitative Research Methods (3 credits) -** This course is concerned with the principles and modes of qualitative research design. Students will analyze the philosophical underpinnings of qualitative inquiry, the questions best addressed through qualitative approaches, and the application of a range of qualitative methodologies in nursing research. ***Prerequisite/co-requisite: 705:682***

705:678 **- Theory and Application to Nursing Research (3 credits**) - This course focuses on the relationship of theory to nursing research with an emphasis on descriptive, explanatory, and predictive theory analysis, evaluation, and testing. Students are guided to critically analyze concepts relevant to nursing and evaluate their potential for informing qualitative research and guiding quantitative research. Emphasis is placed on developing the skills to understand and evaluate theoretical frameworks and paradigms for applicability in designing a study. ***Prerequisite: 705:682***

705:679 **- Evidence-Based Policy Development (3 credits) -** This course focuses on the leverage of nursing research in the development of evidence- based health policy in the private and public policy arenas. Theoretical bases and strategies for evidence-based health policy development will be analyzed. Leadership skills in the areas of influencing evidence-based policy, garnering grass roots support, and developing a policy message for the media and policymakers will be developed.

Examples of translation of NIH-funded research into health policy decisions at the professional, organizational, state, federal, and international levels will be critiqued, and students will analyze the implications of their proposed research on policy development. ***Prerequisites: 705:677, 678, 681, 682.***

705:681 **- Quantitative Methods for Nursing Research (3 credits)** - This course covers the definition, utilization, and critique of the rigor for quantitative research designs, study development, and analysis of quantitative data for research in the nursing discipline. Students link theory with operational techniques in the design, methodology, and measurement of their phenomena of interest. The course provides strategies and applications for power analysis, sampling, measurement, the logic of causal inference, and research ethics. The course introduces students to the skills needed to design and conduct quantitative studies as well as skills related to dissemination of knowledge from quantitative research. ***Prerequisites: 705:678, 682, 683***

705:682 **- Philosophy of Nursing Science and Knowledge Development (3 credits) -** This course focuses on the historical and contemporary philosophical bases of nursing science through critically analyzing the viewpoints of natural science, integrative science, human science, and ethics that underpin nursing knowledge, theory and research. Students will synthesize the philosophical positions of phenomena relevant to nursing research to further develop nursing knowledge.

705:683 **- Statistics for Nursing Research I (4 credits) -** This course introduces the basics of statistics used in nursing/clinical research to summarize numeric data obtained from primary data collection, surveys, and experiments. The topics include frequency distribution, central tendency, variability, probability theory, and estimation. The student also learns how to test hypotheses for group differences in means (z test, t test, ANOVA, post-hoc) and for association between two variables (correlation, crosstabs, chi-square test). Students will also learn non-parametric tests for group mean differences. A weekly laboratory session is included, to give students hand on experience with various types of software used in data analysis.

705:684 **- Advanced Qualitative Research (3 credits)** - This course is the second of a two-course sequence. Students focus on the practical aspects of the design and conduct of qualitative inquiry. This includes question formulation; emergent design; methodological rigor; sampling appropriateness and adequacy; data-gathering techniques (interviewing, observing, documents collection, etc.); data management and procedural transparency; and data analysis. Students explore the logics of analytic inquiry (inductive, deductive, and abductive modalities of reasoning) and distinguish between interpretive and descriptive forms of analysis. Also addressed are socio-political contextualization, uses of theory, and ethical dilemmas of self as instrument (power and positionality). Students will practice and apply knowledge and skills as they work on a group project. ***Prerequisites: 705:677***

705:685 **- Statistics for Nursing Research II (4 credits) -** This course builds upon the basics of statistics used in nursing/clinical research taught in Statistics for Nursing Research I. Topics include Multiple Regression (Simultaneous and Stepwise/Hierarchical), Curve Estimation/Transformations, Logistic Regression (Binary and multinomial). Additional topics include Structural Equation Modelling/ Path Analysis (Continuous and dichotomous Variables. A weekly laboratory session is included, to give students hands-on experience with the various types of software used in data analysis. ***Prerequisite: 705:683***

705:686 **- Advanced Quantitative Analytical Methods for Nursing Research (4 credits) -** This is a course in advanced quantitative analytical methods. Students taking the course have already had introductory course work in research methods, measurement theory, basic statistics and probability,

and the linear model as applied through multiple regressions. The readings and class time focus on three topics: advances in ordinary least squares (OLS) regression including mediation models, moderation models, and conditional process analysis; multilevel modeling (also known as hierarchical linear model) including longitudinal studies; and path analysis. Topics are enhanced by lab work using statistical packages including IBM-SPSS, R Statistics, and HLM. ***Prerequisites: 705:681, 685***

705:687 **- Role of the Nurse Scholar (3 credits) -** This seminar addresses the responsibilities and activities of a scientist in the health professions including ethical issues; scientific freedom and social responsibility; mentoring; interdisciplinary research and team science; conduct of culturally competent scholarship; peer review; building a systematic program of research; research funding and grantsmanship; scholarly writing, presentations, and publications. ***Prerequisites: 705:682, 677, 678, 681***

705:688 **- Practicum in the Professoriate Role (3 credits) -** This course is required of PhD students preparing for the professorial role. The course focuses on university teaching and the products of scholarship expected of faculty who intend a career in a research-oriented university. The course is individualized to the needs of each student.

705:689 **- Research Practicum (3 credits) -** The purpose of this experience is to allow the student to participate in phases of the research process under the tutelage of an experienced mentor. This experience precedes the student's independent dissertation research. The student works closely with a mentor who is a doctoral-prepared faculty member (or non-faculty researcher with comparable credentials such as an NIH Intramural Researcher) who is conducting a program of research related substantively and/or methodologically to the student's anticipated dissertation topic. The student may work with his/her advisor or another faculty member in the College of Nursing; or the student may carry out the research experience in another setting in which state-of-the-science research is being conducted. In this experience, the student is expected to participate actively as a member of the research team and to produce a tangible scholarly product. Specific activities and products are planned under the guidance of the advisor in collaboration with the mentor, depending on the nature and stage of the research project. ***Prerequisites: 705:677, 681, 685***

705:650 **- Independent Study (1-3 credits) -** In-depth study of a selected area of interest. Requires student to submit a detailed outline describing topical objectives, strategies for achieving objectives, and evaluation criteria for approval prior to registration. Written permission and agreement required from faculty adviser, participating faculty member, and associate dean for PhD program.

705:701 **- Dissertation Seminar (3 credits)** - This seminar provides students with an opportunity to dialogue with peers regarding their progress on the dissertation proposal. The focus of the course is the development of basic skills needed to design a research study. The goal is to apply these to the preparation of the dissertation proposal. The student will earn a pass or fail grade based upon (1) class participation, the completion of weekly assignments to build research design skills, and (3) a final summation of the problem to be studied, the dissertation's purpose, research question, and planned design. ***Prerequisites: 705:676, 677, 678, 679, 681, 682, 683, 685, 687, 689, and (684 or 686)***

705:703 **- Dissertation Research (minimum 21 credits) -** Students develop and complete dissertation research under the supervision of a designated member of the nursing graduate faculty. ***Prerequisite: 705:701 and successful completion of Qualifying Exam – Part A***