# STUDENT HANDBOOK

## PhD in Nursing

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Section 1
Academic Calendar
Dates are subject to change. The most recent version of the academic calendar can be found on the university’s website.

Section 2
Introduction
The PhD in Nursing Program

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)* represents the highest level of formal education for a career in research and the scholarship of discovery. It prepares scholars for the expression and communication of the knowledge base in the profession. The PhD graduate develops the science, stewards the profession, educates the next generation of nurses, defines its uniqueness, and maintains its professional integrity. In the academic setting, the PhD is the highest academic degree and is required for success as a scientist in the multiple disciplines represented within educational institutions. In the scientific arena within and beyond the Academy, the PhD is the beginning preparation for the development of independence in scientific pursuit. Post-doctoral study is recommended for depth in a field. Attainment of the PhD requires a strong scientific emphasis within the discipline; an understanding of the science of related disciplines and translation science; dissemination of innovations; and interdisciplinary collaboration. In addition, for the profession to achieve this vision and make the maximum impact on the healthcare system, PhD nursing scientists should reflect society at large.

PhD programs in nursing prepare graduates to master the breadth of the discipline, as well as the depth of a particular area of related science. These programs provide an understanding of the environment within which nurses practice and prepare graduates to further the scholarship of the discipline. The core of the PhD program is an understanding of nursing and the development of competencies to expand science that supports the discipline and practice of nursing. A hallmark of doctoral education is a highly individualized program of study that develops expertise in the core knowledge and methods of the discipline and depth in a selected area of research. In addition, programs should prepare graduates with skills in teaching, leadership, mentorship, and interdisciplinary communication. ([http://www.aacn.nche.edu/education-resources/PhDPosition.pdf](http://www.aacn.nche.edu/education-resources/PhDPosition.pdf))

This handbook provides important information about the PhD program in Nursing Science. It includes policies and procedures established by and specific to the PhD program in Nursing.

This handbook is designed to supplement the University’s Graduate Handbook and Graduate Studies Catalog that contain material related to student rights, academic policies, registration, tuition, fees, financial aid, campus facilities, and course offerings. A full listing of University graduate requirements can be found in the Graduate Studies Catalog, primarily in the
“Regulations, Procedures, and Degree Requirements” section. Students are responsible for being familiar with these requirements. Rules and procedures pertaining to the code of student conduct, confidentiality of academic records, resolution of problems, human subjects’ protection, faculty conduct, and student governance are not reproduced in this handbook. 

http://catalog.umb.edu/

This handbook is subject to change. When updates occur, students will be notified in a timely manner by email.

The current PhD program in Nursing at the University of Massachusetts Boston (UMass Boston) provides study options in two focal areas (foci) through full time or part-time study:

- Population Health, BS-PhD; MS-PhD
- Health Policy, BS-PhD; MS-PhD

University Mission
The University of Massachusetts Boston is a public research university with a dynamic culture of teaching and learning, and a special commitment to urban and global engagement. Our vibrant, multi-cultural educational environment encourages our broadly diverse campus community to thrive and succeed. Our distinguished scholarship, dedicated teaching, and engaged public service are mutually reinforcing, creating new knowledge while serving the public good of our city, our commonwealth, our nation, and our world. There are seven (7) values representing this mission: 1) inquiry, creativity, and discovery; 2) transformation; 3) diversity and inclusion; 4) engagement; 5) environmental stewardship and sustainability; 6) economic and cultural development; and 7) an urban commitment.

Inquiry, Creativity, and Discovery
The University of Massachusetts Boston is an educational institution dedicated to rigorous, open, critical inquiry—a gateway to intellectual discovery in all branches of knowledge, and a crucible for artistic expression. Our campus culture fosters imagination, creativity, and intellectual vitality. Responsive to the call of diverse disciplines, schools of thought, and public constituencies, we expect and welcome divergent views, honoring our shared commitment to expanding, creating, and disseminating knowledge. We celebrate our research culture, with its diversity of methods, commitments, and outcomes. We promote a culture of lifelong learning, and serve as a catalyst for intellectual interactions with scholarly communities, students, alumni, and the public.

Transformation
Our work can transform the lives, careers, and social contexts of all members of our community. We seek to help our students to realize their potential in the pursuit of education. We support our students, faculty, and staff in their efforts to create knowledge, gain new understandings, and assume the responsibilities of leadership and civic participation.
Diversity and Inclusion
Our multi-faceted diversity is an educational asset for all members of our community. We value and provide a learning environment that nurtures respect for differences, excites curiosity, and embodies civility. Our campus culture encourages us all to negotiate variant perspectives and values, and to strive for open and frank encounters. In providing a supportive environment for the academic and social development of a broad array of students of all ages who represent many national and cultural origins, we seek to serve as a model for inclusive community-building.

Engagement
As a campus community, we address critical social issues and contribute to the public good, both local and global. We participate in teaching and public service, as well as in basic, applied, and engaged research, to support the intellectual, scientific, cultural, artistic, social, political, and economic development of the communities we serve. We forge partnerships with communities, the private sector, government, health care organizations, other colleges and universities, and K-12 public education, and bring the intellectual, technical, and human resources of our faculty, staff, and students to bear on pressing economic and social needs.

Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability
We seek to foster a consciousness of nature’s centrality to the human experience and our collective obligation to environmental sustainability. Since our founding, we have emphasized teaching, research, and service activities that promote environmental protection and nurture sustainability, strive for responsible stewardship and conservation of resources, and enhance the natural environment—not least the marine environment around our campus on Dorchester Bay and Boston Harbor.

Economic and Cultural Development
We make significant contributions to the cultural and economic life of a major American city and enhance the Commonwealth’s vital participation in the global community. We educate artists, writers, archivists, nurses, teachers, environmentalists, managers, scientists, scholars, and others whose lifelong efforts enrich the culture and environment of many communities. Through our research, teaching, and service, we work cooperatively with businesses and industries, and with local, state, and federal governments, to strengthen our contribution to the state’s, the nation’s, and the world’s cultural and economic development.

An Urban Commitment
Our work is marked by a particular commitment to urban places, people, culture, and issues, and by an acknowledgement of their complex local, national, and global connections. Our university is located in a great city—Boston—the Commonwealth’s capital and major population center. We are proud to provide an excellent and accessible university education, as well as highly informed research and service, to residents of Boston and other cities, regions, and countries. Partnering with urban institutions and residents, we help to create sustainable and healthy social fabrics, economies, service organizations, and civic and cultural institutions.
College of Nursing and Health Sciences
Our mission is to educate health and fitness professionals from diverse backgrounds to engage in building scholarly community with a special focus on health, and to provide substantial research, professional and community service.

Nursing Mission
The mission of the Department of Nursing is congruent with the missions and visions of the University of Massachusetts Boston and of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences. The mission of the Department of Nursing is to prepare students for comprehensive, theory-guided, evidence-based nursing practice directed toward health promotion, management of health and illness, and restoration and maintenance of the highest possible health-related quality of life. It is recognized that the mission can be accomplished through a firm commitment to:

- Recruiting and supporting students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds.
- Using innovative, evidence-based teaching and learning strategies to meet society’s need for nurses at different educational levels prepared for excellence in practice with diverse populations in various settings.
- Conducting research designed to discover, apply, and integrate new knowledge addressing strategies that enhance health-related quality of life, with an emphasis on diverse urban populations.
- Preparing graduates for participation in society and the global community as educated, socially responsible individuals.

PhD in Nursing Program Goals
The Population Health/Health Policy foci in the PhD Program in Nursing in the CNHS, prepares graduates to explore Population Health/Health Policy research questions affecting populations. Our PhD graduates obtain research skills to study phenomena in these highly related areas in order to attain the highest possible quality of life for populations, by means of nursing activities directed to promote or restore and maintain wellness across the life course and to prevent disease (Fawcett & Ellenbecker, 2015)

Faculty and students engage in research and policy analysis relevant to the health and health care of individuals, families/groups from diverse populations, and communities. Our PhD program focuses on the intersection of nursing, population health and health policy, and prepares its graduates for leadership roles as researchers and educators who:

- Analyze historical, sociological, economic, political, and healthcare perspectives of population health issues and health policies.
- Evaluate health policies that influence the access, quality, and cost of healthcare delivery and nursing practice locally and globally.
- Generate theory-guided qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods research that
advances Nursing Science with an emphasis in population health or health policy.

- Create innovative, evidence-based strategies to shape population health and health policy development at local, national, and global levels based on contemporary nursing and interdisciplinary research.

- Relate new inquiries, activities, and values to role development as a nurse scientist, steward of the discipline, and educator for the next generation.

**Section 3**

**Curriculum**

**Course Requirements**

All students are encouraged to meet with their designated/assigned academic advisor each semester to review course work completed and plan for future course work prior to registration time at the university (usually October/November/ and March/April each academic year). The program director and assistant are always available to help with any questions related to courses and requirements (https://www.umb.edu/registrar/academic_calendar)

**Collaboration with UMass PhD Programs**

The PhD Nursing Program at UMass Boston collaborates with the PhD Nursing programs at the other four UMass campuses and the Exercise and Health Sciences PhD Program at the College of Nursing and Health Sciences at UMass Boston. Previously, we collaborated exclusively with UMass Lowell’s PhD program in Nursing Science and Health Promotion which focuses on disease prevention and higher-level wellness for individuals, families and communities. Because of the collaborative nature of the PhD program in Nursing, some of the required courses are taught on one campus or the other. Students may be required to travel from one campus to the other. Students also may enroll in courses at any of the UMass campuses for elective credits.

Access to faculty and students at UMass PhD programs who have similar research interests or expertise is encouraged. This collaboration enriches and expands the program within the UMass system. When registering for courses at other UMass campuses, students need to fill out an Intercampus Registration Form (available online at http://www.umb.edu/registrar/forms). The form is delivered to the registrar’s office for processing. The completed form should be submitted to the program assistant of the PhD Program for processing with the registrar.

**Electives**

Electives should enhance the student’s competency to complete the dissertation requirement and may have either a content or methods focus. Electives should be chosen in collaboration with your academic adviser or the program director.

Courses offered by the College of Nursing and Health Sciences at UMass Boston, any of the
campuses within the UMass system, or other PhD or Master’s programs on either campus that are at the 600-level or above can be taken as electives. Each course will appear on the student’s transcript with the course title and grade.

Students may take graduate level courses at other universities with the approval of the director of the PhD program. The student must make the request in writing and submit a copy of the course syllabus. Only six (6) credits from other universities may be applied to this program (see section on “waivers”).

**BS-to-PhD obtaining Master’s Degree (En Route Master’s Degree) or Master’s Degree and NP Certification Concurrently with PhD**

**An En route MS degree can be awarded after completion of 30 credits in the PhD program and successful performance on the comprehensive examination.** These courses, along with others, are taken in the first two years of full-time study. Assuming students’ progress in their coursework as planned, they will be awarded the En route MS after successfully completing the comprehensive exam. Students need to submit a degree application form (Appendix B) to the office of the registrar to formally request the MS degree to be awarded upon fulfilling the requirements. Students receiving the En route MS degree will not be eligible for certification in an APN specialty without further didactic and clinical courses.

**Note:** An NP certification is offered if students choose to take an additional 18 credits after successful defense of their PhD dissertation. Please ask the PhD Program director for more details.

**En Route MS Degree**

**30 TOTAL CREDITS**

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<th>Semester</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Credit</th>
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<td>Fall Year 1</td>
<td>NU702, NU700, NU760, NU750</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring Year 1</td>
<td>NU770, NU705, NU745, NU780</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Year 1</td>
<td>Pathophysiology and Pharmacology ONLINE (can take concurrently)</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall Year 2</td>
<td>Health Assessment (in class) followed by the rest of courses on plan of study</td>
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*If students want to complete clinical work to become advanced practice nurses, they can do so at the END of their PhD Program.

**Independent Study**

Students may complete an independent study to fulfill required or elective credits. Independent study credits vary from one (1) to three (3) credits depending on the scope of the project. The independent study should consist of study and work at the graduate level with a
specified written product. The faculty member or external expert who agrees to work with the student in independent study must be a recognized expert in the content area. If the expert is an external scholar a review of that scholar’s CV will occur through the program director and a file will be kept including a detailed contract including goals, objectives, timeline, and number of credits for the intended deliverables of the independent study. The student and faculty member must agree to the UMass Boston number of credits, scope of the work and the amount of supervision required (for example, weekly or biweekly meetings). A written agreement, signed by the student and the faculty member, must be approved by the program director or his/her designated advisor in all cases of independent studies (see Appendix C).

**Policy Internship (3 credits)**

For those students in the Health Policy Focus only.

The health policy internships are designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills of working on the legislative side of the healthcare system. Students with substantial prior public policy work experience may substitute additional coursework for the internship with the approval of the program director. Health policy students can begin their Health Policy internship NU743 after they have completed Health Policy I and II (NU741/NU724). The internship is offered during the spring semester.

The semester prior to the internship students will receive a packet of information with details on their internship. The student will identify a policy health internship that meets standards specified in the NU 743 Internship course syllabus with faculty support. The internship includes a minimum of 120 hours of work. Settings for the health policy include government agencies, health policy think tanks or consulting firms, or health advocacy groups. The 120-hour internship may be completed in one semester or in a manner negotiated by the student, the internship agency, and the faculty member. The student must complete a project pre-approved by the internship agency and faculty and prepare a project report. The project report will be presented at a seminar to faculty and students of the program.

Students must submit a written internship proposal to the faculty the semester prior to registering for internship credits. The proposal must identify the organizational setting, the student’s role and responsibilities (including time commitment), the type and nature of the policy issue or population health problem, and the agency member who will oversee the project and attest to the nature and extent of the student’s work.

**Prior/Independent Learning**

A student who believes that they have previously or independently achieved the knowledge and skills outlined in the objectives of the NU 743 Internship course may prepare a portfolio of work and request that it be evaluated prior to the start of the course. The student will be required to:

- Register for the course.
• Prepare a portfolio of relevant work that provides evidence of knowledge and skills that satisfy course objectives.
• Provide documentation that this is the student’s work or what portion of the work can be attributed to the student.
• Make a written request to the faculty member and program director for evaluation, explaining the basis for the request.

The faculty member who supervises the internship will review the portfolio. If the student’s prior or independent work meets the course objectives, they will receive credit and a grade for the course once s/he has completed attending the NU 743 seminar. If the supervising faculty member determines that the student has only partially met the course objectives, the supervising faculty will offer the student the opportunity to fulfill unmet course objective(s) through structured independent work. If the portfolio review indicates that the student’s prior or independent work does not meet course objectives, the student will be required to complete an internship.

Regardless of the option chosen, students must participate in the internship seminar that will focus on the review and analysis of political, ethical and technical issues that arise in public policy work or population health-related areas.

Preceptorship Agreement
If the student is pursuing the first option “completing an internship”, the student is responsible for securing his/her internship placement. The faculty member must approve all internship experiences before students make a commitment:

- health policy focus students must seek approval by the teacher of record for that specific semester

A Preceptorship Agreement will be signed by UMass Boston and Intern Site Institutions once a viable placement is identified and approved. The student, also known as the “PhD Student Intern” is responsible for providing information regarding the internship site, contact information of the Preceptor and Authorizing Official for the Intern Site to the CNHS Student Placement Office. The student must also present a proof of valid student health insurance plan. The Preceptorship Agreement is the contract that legally binds both UMass Boston and Intern site institutions. The student is required to obtain both Preceptor and Authorizing Intern Site Official’s signatures and return one signed copy of the Preceptorship Agreement to UMass Boston, prior to beginning his/her internship experience at the Intern Site. A pdf email attachment of the Preceptorship Agreement, containing all authorizing signatures is acceptable. Once these steps are completed, both UMass Boston and the person signing for the Internship Site will be in possession of fully signed copies of the Agreement.

Extension to Preceptorship Agreement
If the internship experience needs to be extended beyond the regular semester session
(January-May) in order to complete the course requirements, the student can apply for extension by requesting an Amendment to the Preceptorship Agreement, with the approval of the course instructor and the preceptor. The process for obtaining signatures on the Amendment is identical to the process of obtaining signatures on the initial Preceptorship Agreement and will require both: 1) proof of valid student health insurance plan; 2) Preceptor and Authorizing Official signatures on file.

**Academic Advising**

The program director serves as a general advisor to all students. When entering the PhD program you will be assigned to an individual academic adviser. This is the person who will guide you in choosing courses and staying on target with your curriculum plan up until you pass comprehensive examinations. An individualized course of study for the entire program is developed and placed on file with your academic adviser and in the director’s office. Each semester the plan will be reviewed with the student and revisions will be placed on file. Students taking courses need to meet for academic advising in the spring to plan for fall and in the fall to plan for spring during the designated time by the university calendar periods. Registration holds will be placed on each student and released after advisement is received. Although there is flexibility within the program of study, the program of study is set up to maintain fairness and consistency for each student within the curriculum especially in relation to core courses.

**Academic Review**

At the end of each semester, the program director will review each student’s transcript and assess the adequacy of each student’s progress in achieving university and program objectives. The director in consultation with the Academic Advisers if needed will prescribe a course of action to be completed in order for the student to return to good standing in the program. The program director will inform the student in writing that s/he is not meeting minimum academic standards and what the committee prescribes as corrective action.

**Full and Part-time Status**

Full-time students are expected to take at least nine (9) credit hours per semester. Full-time continuous students should complete all their course work by the third year of study. The university considers graduate students engaged in dissertation research to be full-time students, regardless of the number of dissertation credits for which they register, providing the program director certifies they are working full-time on research.

Part-time students must carry at least six (6) credits per semester in each of the fall and spring semesters. Part-time students should complete their coursework in four or five years.

A student may take up to 15 credits during the fall and spring semesters and up to 9 credits in the summer. Any student who wishes to register for more than the maximum credit load must secure written permission from the program director and approval from the Office of Graduate Studies.
**International Students**

International student are required to register as full-time students (9 credits) each semester and maintain a 3.0 GPA.

International students are permitted to take no more than 3 credits on-line to complete the full-time enrollment requirement. Once the full-time enrollment requirement is met, students can take additional online courses.

For more information visit the International Student and Scholar Office (ISSO) site at [https://www.umb.edu/academics/global/isss/current_students](https://www.umb.edu/academics/global/isss/current_students).

**Honor System**

The examinations will be administered on the honor system. Students are not allowed to consult anyone (other students, faculty, outside professionals, etc.) in completing the examination. Papers and exams are to be entirely the student’s work, without additional assistance. Any violation of this rule will constitute basis for dismissal from the program.

**Section 4**

**Comprehensive Examinations**

**General Information**

The comprehensive examination is designed to determine the student’s ability to think critically and analytically, and synthesize and apply the content of their course work in meeting PhD program goals. Successful completion of Comprehensive examinations admits the student to candidacy for the PhD degree. The comprehensive examination consists of two parts, one written and one oral. To be eligible for the examinations, students must be in good academic standing (GPA 3.0 and carrying at least 9 credits each semester if full-time or 6 credits if part-time) and must have fulfilled any incomplete required course work prior to the examination date.

The comprehensive examinations commence when students in the MS-PhD have completed 45 credits or in the BS-PhD have completed 66 credits.

The process is outlined below:

1. Students select a chair and a secondary member (two individual faculty members) who will review the two papers: one conceptual paper and one methodological paper. An addition standard reader will be assigned by the director of the PhD program as a means of assuring all processes of the examination are consistent for all students (see Appendix G for definition and function of Standard Reader and Checklist).
2. While this is not required, the secondary member should have expertise related to the student’s area of research interest and must be a member of the faculty of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences.
3. Prior to meeting with the chair/secondary member, students must submit a detailed outline of the paper(s). Outlines must be submitted at least 1 week prior to meeting with the chairs. Outlines must clearly indicate where the two papers will differ. One revision of the proposed outline to be submitted to the chairs for final approval is acceptable.

4. **NOTE:** THE FACULTY CHAIR OR COMMITTEE MEMBERS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO GUIDE OR SUGGEST CONTENT TO THE OUTLINE (THIS IS AN EXAMINATION); THE FACULTY WILL ONLY VERIFY THAT THE DIRECTIONS HAVE BEEN FOLLOWED AND THAT THE OUTLINE HAS ENOUGH DETAIL (SPECIFICITY) TO GENERATE COMPLETION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION.

5. A detailed timeline must be provided to the chair, committee members, and the program assistant (see Appendix D).

**Timeline**

**Note:** Timeline for initiating Comprehensive Exam procedures will be determined on an individual basis.

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<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1:</strong></td>
<td>Student and Chair collaborate on creation of the outline for each paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 2:</strong></td>
<td>The Chair approves each outline and shares these with the Committee; the student then writes each paper independently (four weeks).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 3:</strong></td>
<td>Student submits papers to Committee and PhD Nursing Program Office (two-week review).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Pass** – Student works with the PhD Program Assistant to schedule oral exam.

**Conditional Pass** – Revise and resubmit in two weeks; Committee determines Pass or Fail within one week.

**Fail** – Do not progress – if a student fails the written exam, one retake of the written component is allowed within one year at the discretion of the Chair and Committee.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 4:</strong></td>
<td>Student participates in a two-hour oral examination.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Pass** – Proceed to take NU791.

**Conditional Pass** – Retake of the oral exam will be scheduled within one week; Committee will determine pass or fail.

**Fail** – Student will not proceed to NU791; student is permitted one retake of the comprehensive exams within one year at the discretion of the Chair and Committee.

6. A Stage I form needs to be submitted to the program assistant (see Appendix E).

7. Students will work independently after the meeting with their chair.

8. There are two components of the examination: a written and oral component. The written component and oral component BOTH need to be passed to successfully move forward.

9. Students have a maximum of approximately one month (5 week days X 4 weeks = 20 days PLUS 8 weekend days = 28 days total) to complete the papers. One hardcopy and an electronic copy of each paper must be submitted to the PhD program Office by dates determined by the faculty chair(s) and student.

10. Papers should be of publishable quality in terms of organization, format, and clarity of
writing, synthesis, and critical thinking. The student’s original analytic thinking especially in the area of ability to synthesize information is emphasized over extensive compilations and summaries of other literature.

11. Once both papers have been submitted, the chair and the secondary member and Standard Reader will have 2 weeks (10 weekdays and 4 weekend days) to review each paper after which time an oral examination is scheduled if the written component is passed successfully.

12. The oral component gives students an opportunity to clarify any areas in the written component as well as correct any errors made in the written component. It is also an opportunity for the faculty committee to ask further questions about content and process to be assured of the PhD student’s understanding of what they have written.

13. Students are expected to make a presentation of no more than 15 minutes for each paper. Slides and/or handouts are recommended. The remaining time of the comprehensive examination will be devoted to questions and answers.

14. **Faculty are expected to be physically present for the oral examination.** In an extreme emergency or special circumstance reviewed and approved by the program director, a faculty member can conference call into the examination but if this is the case, he or she needs to have copies of the PowerPoint slides before the examination begins.

15. At no time should any component of the oral examination be audio recorded by the faculty or students unless permission is granted by both the faculty members and student.

The Comprehensive Exam form (Stage 1) needs to be completed and filed in the student file, which will include information regarding agreed topic for the exam, secondary member and dates for the oral defense (see Appendix E for Stage 1 form).

An electronic copy in PDF format of each paper must be submitted to the Chair, committee members, and the PhD Program Office by 5:00 P.M. Eastern Time on the due date (agree upon on the timeline), which must be no later than 4 weeks (28 days) following approval of the outlines.

The Stage 2 form is completed in advance by the student and is given to the program assistant so that the Chair has it available the day of the comprehensive examination (see Appendix F). The Stage 2 form is the form that indicates the pass status of the comprehensive examination.

Each paper should be no longer than 15 pages in length (not including references, title page, abstract, figures or tables and written in accordance with guidelines (6th edition) issued by the American Psychological Association (APA, 2009).

**1 inch margins throughout; Font Times New Roman 12; Double-Spaced

***Any paper that does not meet these specifications will be returned to students and comprehensive examinations may be delayed.

- The first paper will be a conceptual paper: a concept analysis, policy analysis, integrative review or state of the science paper on the identified area of inquiry. The specific topic
will be determined by the student in consultation with his/her PhD advisor/mentor (chair and secondary member).

- The second paper will be a discussion of either methods or measurement to the student’s area of research interest, including possible designs, measures and analytical processes that can be applied to this area.

**SEE APPENDIX H FOR QUICK GUIDE TO COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS AND FOR FLOW DIAGRAM OF COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION PROCESS**

**PhD Candidacy and Degree Credentials**
Degree credentials (e.g., AD, BS, BSN, MS, MSN, PhD, EdD, DNP, DNSc) are commonly used and indicate completion of a particular educational program.

The highest degree attained is usually placed immediately after the last name followed by certifications, licenses, and fellowships. All or some of degrees can be used. Terms used to indicate partial completion of a degree or student status such as “PhDc (PhD candidate) or “ABD” (all but dissertation) are fabricated terms and are not to be used.

As an example, the convention should be the following if you are a PhD or DNP candidate: Joanne Doe, MSN, RN (Doctoral Candidate OR PhD/DNP Candidate). (see Appendix I for rationale)

**Section 5**

**Progression**
Successful completion of the comprehensive exam advances the student to doctoral candidacy. The examination is to be passed before the student enrolls in NU791, Integrating Theory and Policy in Dissertation Research. Papers required for the written component of the exam should guide and inform the substantive content and methodology used in preparation of the dissertation proposal (requirements of NU791).

**Dissertation**
The PhD dissertation is an original body of work in which the candidate demonstrates an in-depth understanding of a population health or health care policy research question that is relevant to individuals, groups, or communities. The dissertation should demonstrate the candidate’s ability to effectively meet the goals and objectives of the program.

Although dissertation planning may begin early in the program, the dissertation process normally begins after the student has passed the comprehensive examination and has been admitted to candidacy. **There are five (5) dissertation process forms that need to be completed across the dissertation stages** (see Appendix J).

| Student successfully completes comprehensive | (FT/PT 45 credits in MS-PhD Programs OR FT 66 credits in BS-PhD) |
NU791 and NU899
- Are taken concurrently after successfully completing comprehensive exams
- See advisor for advising on how many credits students should register for NU899 (3 credits or 6 credits).

NU899 Dissertation Research
Dissertation credits represent the work being done in developing and defending a proposal and completing the work of the dissertation. This time varies to completion of the dissertation among students.

Program Fee (CAS 600)
After NU 791 and all NU 899 credits are completed, student should register for the program fee until the dissertation is defended. (See Program Continuation later in handbook).

Dissertation Application
Students should inform program director/assistant when they officially have completed the requirements for the degree BEFORE SUBMITTING THE DEGREE APPLICATION.

There is a difference between finishing the degree requirements and “graduating/graduation”. Students can finish their degree requirements throughout the academic year but commencement/graduation ceremonies only occur once a year in late May/early June. Students will be formerly invited to commencement/graduation by the university.

It is the responsibility of the students to work with their dissertation chair to complete the signature page for the dissertation. This action needs to be completed well in advance of commencement/graduation. It is MANDATORY that signatures be completed on the day of the dissertation defense or at the time when all editing and changes have been agreed upon by the chair and committee.

Dissertation Application Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-March</td>
<td>All dissertation work must be completed by mid-March of the year in which the candidate plans to graduate and a defense scheduled no later than the end of March to comply with April 10th deadline to submit a revised dissertation copy to OGS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-November</td>
<td>For December degree date, these dates are respectively early to comply with December 1st degree date.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>April 10th</strong> for June degree date</td>
<td>The deadline for candidates to submit a copy of their defended and revised dissertation, approved in full for content by the program, to the OGS via the UMass Boston ProQuest/UMI ETD website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>December 1st</strong> for December degree date</td>
<td><strong>December 20th</strong> for a December degree date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>May 15th</strong> for a June degree date</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Dissertation Committee**

The candidate selects a chair and consults with the chair on which individuals may be the best candidates to participate as members on the dissertation committee. The committee must have a minimum of three (3) members and no more than five (5) members. At least two (2) members, including the chair, should come from the Department of Nursing in College of Nursing and Health Sciences. The dissertation committee shall include a member who is external to the candidate’s program. The external member may come either from within the University or outside the University. The graduate program director will be responsible for any additional nominations of committee members where indicated. The candidate, in collaboration with the chair, should provide in writing 1) a one page explanation of the unique contributions or expertise that will be offered by the external member and 2) a CV to the program director. The candidate must submit the names of the committee members and chair to the program director (Stage 2 of the dissertation tracking form). The program director reviews the submission and, if approved, forwards the form to the Office of Graduate Studies for review and approval. CVs for every external member of the committee must accompany the form.

**Qualifications of Chairs and Members of Dissertation Committees**

**Qualifications of faculty to chair dissertation committees:**
1. To qualify to chair a dissertation committee, a faculty member must:
   a. Be a nurse with a PhD degree in nursing or a related discipline.
   b. Have a record of distinguished scholarly publications and/or professional achievement within a period of five years prior to the formation of any dissertation committee that the faculty member chairs.

**Qualifications of faculty and/or outside professionals serving as members of dissertation committees:**
To qualify to be a member of the dissertation committee, a faculty member must have
1. An appropriate terminal degree (typically a PhD or EdD but in some instances a degree such as a JD, MD DBS, DNP, or MBA may be appropriate).
2. A record of excellence in scholarly publications and/or professional achievement within a period of five years prior to the formation of the dissertation committee.
The Dissertation

The candidate is required to use the Standards for the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations booklet to format their dissertation from the moment they begin their dissertation. Failure to format dissertations before deadlines may result in delays to degree completion. Policies and forms for dissertations are available at the UMass Graduate Studies website.

Please see:
https://www.umb.edu/academics/graduate/info_for_graduate_students/graduating_from_umbass_boston/theses_dissertations

HELPFUL HINTS TO FORMAT YOUR DOCUMENT

These hints are designed to help you avoid common mistakes that will take you the most time to correct. In particular, any mistakes that affect pagination can be time-consuming to fix because then you will have to redo your Table of Contents as well. So make sure you follow the margin instructions exactly. Please use the following tips to help you format your document.

PLEASE NOTE: These are not all the guidelines, and you must still read and incorporate all the guidelines in this Standards for the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations booklet.

1. Make sure you use Times New Roman 12 point font. If you use the wrong font, your page numbers will change when you correct this, and your Table of Contents will have to be redone.

2. Check your margins. They should be LEFT 1 1/4", RIGHT 1", TOP: 1", BOTTOM: 1". The left margin must be 1.25" because your document will be bound in an 8” x 11” volume. A too tight left margin will cause you to lose important data. This is a common mistake. If you need to correct margins after submission, all the page numbers will change and you will need to create a new Table of Contents.

3. Page numbers should be positioned at least 1.25" from the bottom of the page (measured from the bottom of the page number to the bottom of the page).

4. The title of each chapter must be 2” from the top of the page, and you should hit return a few times to create some space between the title and the beginning of the text. Use the same spacing between the chapter title and the text in every chapter.

5. Use the orphan/widow control found in most versions of Word. No page can begin or end with a single line of text or a single subheading.

6. Page numbering - Page numbering begins with roman numerals on the Abstract page, which should be page iv. There should be no page numbers on the title page, copyright page or signature page. Continue roman numerals until the first page of your thesis or dissertation, which should be arabic numeral 1.

7. Placement of Tables, Illustrations, and Charts can be tricky. If the table, illustration or chart
fills more than half the page, then it can remain alone on the page. If you have sequential small
tables, illustrations, and charts that can fit two to a page, then do so.

No landscape pages are allowed. They will not fit when the document is bound into an 8.5 x 11
volume. You may place a table or figure on its side on a portrait-oriented page to make it fit. You
may also shrink it to make it fit. But the title must be at the top of the portrait-oriented page, and
the page number must be at the bottom of the portrait-oriented page.

Feel free to contact the format editor with questions or samples of tables/illustrations/charts
placement while you are working and before you submit your document.

8. Lists of Figures and Tables - for titles in the Lists, use only the text up to the first period of the
title as the title, even if the title on the table/figure is longer than that. Make sure the text you use
for your title in the List is identical, word for word, including the words you choose to capitalize,
in the text and in the List.

9. All subheadings in the Table of Contents must be identical, word for word, including the
words you choose to capitalize, to the subheadings in the text.

10. References - don’t split references. Don’t start a citation on one page and finish it on the
next. Keep the entire citation on the same page.

11. Subheadings - this is a common area of difficulty for students and can be time-consuming to
correct. This is how it should work.

The first time the reader sees a subheading in chapter 1, that is the first level subheading.
However you format that first level subheading in chapter 1 is how you must format every first
level subheading in the entire document. So for example, if the first level subheading in chapter
1 is bold, centered, the first level subheadings in all chapters must be bold, centered. Also, in
the Table of Contents, the first level subheading is indented once.

For second level subheadings, these must be formatted differently from the first level
subheadings, and every second level subheading must be formatted the same way in every
chapter. So for example, if the second level subheading in chapter 1 is flush left, italics, then the
second level subheading in every chapter must be flush left, italics. The second level
subheadings are indented twice in the Table of Contents.

For subsequent levels, format each level (3rd, 4th, etc.) in a unique way and use that format in
every chapter as you did for the first and second level subheadings above. Then indent the
subheading one more time per level in the Table of Contents. So the third level subheading is
indented three times, the fourth level subheading is indented four times, and so forth.

This can be confusing, but it has to be done this way. One way to keep track is by listing Ch 1,
first level subheading, second level, etc., and the format of each one on a separate piece of
paper. Then when you do chapter 2 and all other chapters, refer to that list to keep them
straight. That is the method the editor will use to keep track of them.
The candidate will work closely with the chair and other committee members throughout data collection, data analysis and final writing phases of the dissertation. The candidate should expect some repeated iterations of the dissertation to accommodate the committee chairs’ and members’ input and guidance designed to enhance the overall conceptual and methodological quality of the dissertation.

Students register for dissertation credits (NU 899) for 3 consecutive semesters (3 credits each), after they have completed all other coursework. No grade is assigned for the dissertation while it is in process. The students receive a “Y” grade which stands for “year-long course” each semester they are registered for dissertation credits. Once students have defend successfully, the chair of the dissertation committee is required to submit a letter grade using the Change of Grade Form for all dissertation credits to the Registrar’s Office. Candidates cannot be awarded degrees if dissertation grades have not been changed to final grade(s).

The Dissertation Proposal
The dissertation research proposal may be submitted any time after the committee has been approved by Office of Graduate Studies (OGS). All dissertation work follows the format of the most current version of the American Psychological Association Manual for Publication, and any relevant OGS guidelines. Although the length of the proposal will vary with the candidate and the topic, the proposal must include the following elements:

- Format: Times New Roman Font 12, 1 inch margins all around.
- 300-400/word abstract;
- Introduction that clearly states the problem, establishes its significance and how the need for the proposed research advances science and policy, and states the research questions to be examined or the hypotheses to be tested. In addition, historical, sociological, political, and economic aspects of the dissertation should be addressed.
- Clear statement of the conceptual-theoretical-empirical structure that will guide the research if applicable
- Critical review of the literature that synthesizes the current research on the problem, explores related bodies of knowledge that contribute to the understanding of the problem, and explores the theoretical framework of the study.
- Description of the methodology including research design, the study population and sample, a plan to access the study population, human subjects, considerations, data collection methods, and the plan for data analysis.
- Work plan that identifies needed resources, indicates how they will be obtained, and presents a realistic timeline for data collection and analysis.
- References.

Proposal Hearing
The candidate should work closely with the chair of the committee. Together they will decide when to forward the draft proposal to the entire committee for review. The candidate and the chair will review the committee members' recommendations and make necessary adjustments
to the proposal. The chair will schedule a proposal hearing. Two weeks prior to the scheduled hearing, the final draft of the proposal will be delivered to all committee members. All members of the committee are expected to attend the proposal hearing in person or via teleconference.

Following the hearing, the committee meets in an executive session and makes one of three determinations regarding the proposal: 1) A= approve; 2) AR= approve with revisions; 3) N= do not approve. Each member must initial their vote on the Dissertation Tracking Form (Stage 3). In the case of approval, the candidate may proceed with the dissertation, after IRB approval. In the case of approval with revisions, the candidate need only resubmit the revised proposal to the chair and any other specified committee members. Once revised, the chair forwards two (2) copies of the approved proposal to the program director with a letter stating that all revisions have been satisfactorily completed. The program director forwards one copy to Office of Graduate Studies and Research, along with the dissertation tracking form.

**Human Subjects**

Any study that involves human subjects must comply with relevant University and Federal requirements. The campus Institutional Review Board (IRB) must approve all research involving human subjects. Only after the dissertation proposal has been accepted by the committee may the student submit the required documents to the IRB. Data collection, subject recruitment, or consenting of potential subjects cannot start until IRB approval has been obtained. Forms and information about Human Subjects review can be obtained from the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) website, along with forms and timelines.

All research and research-related activity proposed by any member of the UMass Boston community that involves human subjects in any way must be reviewed by the university’s IRB. This requirement is based upon the university’s assurance given to the Federal Department of Health and Human Services that UMass Boston researchers—faculty, students, administrators, staff—are aware of and follow all federal rules and regulations concerning the protection of human subjects in research as contained in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45, Part 46 (45 CFR 46).

UMass Boston has contracted with the University of Miami to provide free online training through the Collaborative IRB Training Initiative (CITI) for members of the UMass Boston community on issues related to the protection of human subjects in research. The CITI modules span a variety of areas including the assessment of risk, informed consent, and research involving special populations such as children or prisoners. The required modules can be completed in more than one sitting at the researcher’s convenience. At the completion of the training, CITI notifies UMass Boston that the training has been completed and the researcher’s name is added to a dynamic database monitored by the university’s IRB administrator, Sharon Wang. See website for contact information https://www.umb.edu/orsp/contact_us.

To register for the CITI training, log on to [http://www.citiprogram.org](http://www.citiprogram.org) and click on the link “Register.” Enter organization full name “University of Massachusetts Boston” from the “Select
Your Organization Affiliation” section. Continue to Step 2. Students will then be asked to select a username and password. Follow the registration prompts until the main menu is reached. Reach the main menu, and select one of 2 basic courses on protection of human subjects, the Biomedical track or the Social Behavioral track to begin the training. The selection of the focus should reflect the primary research activities of the student. Of note, if the student is conducting research at other institutions as part of their academic program or training, they should determine the training requirements of these respective institutions in deciding which course to take. For example, students working on research projects in the academic medical centers will likely be required to take the Biomedical human subjects training.

Questions concerning UMass Boston policy and procedures relating to research with human subjects, or questions concerning the CITI training and how to register for the training should be directed to Sharon Wang, IRB Administrator at (617) 287- 5374 or sharon.wang@umb.edu.

The Dissertation Defense
A dissertation defense will be scheduled only after the committee members agree that the dissertation is sufficiently complete to undergo defense. Two weeks prior to the scheduled defense, the final draft of the dissertation must be delivered to all committee members.

Final copies of the revised dissertation and completed signature page must be provided to the program director and the OGS before the candidate can be certified for the PhD degree. The final dissertation manuscript must conform to Guidelines for the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations at the University of Massachusetts Boston. For most updated version of the guidelines as well as an update on deadlines go to: http://www.umb.edu/academics/graduate/info_for_graduate_students/graduating_from_umass_boston/theses_dissertations. The program has designated the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th Edition) as the appropriate format for organization, tables, illustrations and references.

For the initial submission, students should turn in an electronic copy of their thesis/dissertation via the UMass Boston-ProQuest/UMI ETD website http://www.etdadmin.com/cgi-bin/school?siteld=283.

The ETD submission process streamlines the review and approval process and enhances communication with the T&D (Thesis and Dissertation) Format Editor, Carol Cullen (carol.cullen@umb.edu). The ETD makes graduate students’ research immediately available with publication occurring near the point of submission rather than many months later.

All graduates are required to use the ETD submission site. For more information visit the UMass Boston-ProQuest/UMI site http://www.etdadmin.com/umb.
## Dissertation Stages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage or action</th>
<th>What it means</th>
<th>What is required</th>
<th>Signature required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage One:</strong> Notification of Candidacy</td>
<td>Student successfully completes all required courses and comprehensive exams.</td>
<td>No action needed from student.</td>
<td>Graduate program director (GPD); Office of Graduate Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage Two:</strong> Notification of Proposed Dissertation Committee</td>
<td>With the guidance and advice of the selected chairperson, the chair identifies suggested committee members to the student. This is done prior to the committee’s approval of a student’s dissertation proposal.</td>
<td>Student provides stage 2 form completed to GPD and program assistant.</td>
<td>GPD; Office of Graduate Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage Three:</strong> Notification of Proposal Acceptance</td>
<td>When chairperson determines, a dissertation proposal is sent to committee members (allow 4 weeks to read 28 days). If hearing is successful – student proceeds to conduct dissertation study. IRB application is completed and approval is obtained as needed.</td>
<td>Once date and time are agreed upon, committee and student notifies GPD and program assistant. Student provides stage 4 form completed. Program assistant will provide support in facilitating room request. After committee members sign the form, the chairperson returns the form to the program assistant. The program assistant submits the form to the Office of Graduate Studies.</td>
<td>Dissertation committee members; GPD; Office of Graduate Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage Four:</strong> Notification of Intent to Defend Dissertation</td>
<td>When chairperson determines, final draft of dissertation is sent to committee members (allow 4 weeks to read). When chairperson determines, after polling committee members, schedule defense 2-4 weeks in advance. It is expected that the chair and the committee members be physically present at the defense; extenuating circumstances can be</td>
<td>Student notifies GPD and Program Assistant once date and time are agreed upon for Dissertation Defense. Student provides stage 4 form completed. Program assistant will provide support in facilitating room request.</td>
<td>Dissertation committee members; GPD; Office of Graduate Studies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
January 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage Five: Approval of Dissertation Defense</th>
<th>Notice of dissertation defense must be posted at the College 2-4 weeks in advance.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Report on the results of the dissertation defense.</td>
<td>Notice of dissertation defense must be posted at the College 2-4 weeks in advance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The candidate must pay particular attention to deadlines and the timing of the dissertation defense to allow enough time for a completed manuscript to be filed prior to June or December degree dates. (See below for dates.)</td>
<td>Notice of dissertation defense must be posted at the College 2-4 weeks in advance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any recording of the dissertation defense needs to be approved by the student defending as a matter of intellectual property and privacy.</td>
<td>Notice of dissertation defense must be posted at the College 2-4 weeks in advance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section 6

Academic Policies

Code of Conduct and Academic Integrity
It is the expressed policy of the University that every aspect of academic life—not only formal coursework situations, but all relationships and interactions connected to the educational process—shall be conducted in an absolutely and uncompromisingly honest manner. The University presumes that any submission of work for academic credit is the student’s own and is in compliance with University policies, including its policies on appropriate citation and plagiarism. These policies are spelled out in the Code of Student Conduct. Students are required to adhere to the Code of Student Conduct, including requirements for academic honesty, as delineated in the University of Massachusetts Boston Graduate Catalogue and relevant program student handbook(s). UMB Code of Student Conduct

You are encouraged to visit and review the UMass website on Correct Citation and Avoiding Plagiarism: http://umb.libguides.com/citations

Transfer Credit Policy
University policy states that applicants/students who have completed graduate coursework at other accredited institutions may transfer those credits towards the completion of a graduate degree at UMass Boston. Up to the equivalent of six (6) credits from courses that meet the following requirements:
1. The student received a grade of B or higher
2. The course was not used to fulfill requirements for another degree
3. Course credit must have been earned no more than seven (7) years prior to the student’s matriculation at UMass Boston.

The director of the PhD program in Nursing, Advisers, and the PhD program committee determine what credits are eligible for transfer based on a review of the official transcript and course syllabus at the time of admission to the program. Once enrolled in the PhD program, students can also request transfer credit. Requests should be made to the director and include a copy of the student’s transcript and a copy of the course syllabus.

Course Waiver Policy
A student may seek a waiver from a required course in the PhD program in Nursing if s/he has completed a course with substantially equivalent content at another institution or in another College at UMass Boston. If a course waiver is granted, the student will receive no credits towards degree requirements and must take additional courses to complete the credits required for the PhD degree. Normally, a maximum of 6 credits can be waived toward a degree program. Six (6) credits can be waived for non-degree courses. Courses must have been taken at an accredited institution, no more than seven (7) years prior to matriculation at UMB, and received a grade of B or better.

Course waivers will be decided on a case-by-case basis, through negotiation between the student seeking the waiver and the PhD program director in collaboration with the faculty who teaches the course. All waived courses require written approval of the faculty member and the director. Waivers are completed in triplicate: one copy for the student, the faculty member, and the program director. Appeal of a denied waiver may be made to the PhD program committee.

Advanced Standing
Advanced Standing is awarded to students who are admitted to a doctoral program in the same or related field of study. Advanced Standing may waive a maximum of 36 credits for students upon admission (with the exception of license-eligible programs requiring extensive proscribed credits).

Courses are waived course-by-course based upon equivalency and relevance. Courses must have been taken at an accredited institution, no more than seven (7) years prior to matriculation at UMB, and received a grade of B or better.

The award of Advanced Standing cannot reduce the number of credits below 24 credits as part of the residency requirement including research hours and dissertation credits. Students who fail to complete their doctoral program cannot apply their Advanced Standing master’s courses for an additional master’s degree from UMass Boston (see Appendix A for Application).
**College Stationery**
College official stationery (pre-printed) is for official college business only. Student recommendations, student communications, letters to other agencies where administrators, faculty, and staff are representing the college or department as an agent of the university are acceptable.

Stationery is NOT to be used for individual grants, personal benefits and is NOT to be used by students for any reason. A generic Word template for letterhead may be used after being reviewed with the PhD Program Director. (See appendix L for UMass Boston Generic Letterhead).

Quinn Graphics provides print services to faculty, staff, and students. Click on the link below for a description of their services. [https://www.umb.edu/quinn_graphics/services](https://www.umb.edu/quinn_graphics/services)

**Statute of Limitations (SOL)**
The College of Nursing and Health Sciences specifies that a student must make satisfactory progress toward completion of a degree within the Statute of Limitations for the degree.

*Each PhD Nursing student must complete all degree requirements within eight (8) calendar years of entering the program.*

The PhD Faculty have decided that after January 1, 2019, students will only be granted a 6-month SOL extension with the program director and the Dean of Graduate Studies approval. The request must be put in writing with a rationale. But for now students can take up to 9 months to complete their dissertation defense if supported by their chairs and the director (i.e., this time frame will realistically allow for completion). [https://www.umb.edu/editor_uploads/images/registrar/Graduate_Statute_of_Limitations_Extension_Form_S17.pdf](https://www.umb.edu/editor_uploads/images/registrar/Graduate_Statute_of_Limitations_Extension_Form_S17.pdf)

**Leave of Absence (LOA)**
The University requires that a student seeking a leave of absence (LOA) must petition the program director who will provide justification for the request to the Dean of Graduate Studies.

An approved LOA extends the statute of limitations for degree completion by the length of the leave. The university requires that each matriculated graduate student maintain continuous registration until the degree has been formally awarded. If the student does not register for courses or dissertation credits during any semester, the student must pay the current fee per semester, referred to as the program fee, in order to maintain continuous registration. [https://www.umb.edu/editor_uploads/images/registrar/Graduate_Leave_of_Absence_Request_Form_SP16_V2.pdf](https://www.umb.edu/editor_uploads/images/registrar/Graduate_Leave_of_Absence_Request_Form_SP16_V2.pdf)
## Grading Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**INC**  
A grade of Incomplete (INC) is not automatically awarded when a student fails to complete a course. Incompletes are given at the discretion of the instructor. They are awarded when satisfactory work has been accomplished in the majority of the course work, but the student is unable to complete course requirements as a result of circumstances beyond his/her control. The student must negotiate with and receive the approval of the course instructor in order to receive a grade of incomplete.

**IF**  
Received for failure to comply with contracted completion terms.

**W**  
Received if withdrawal occurs before the withdrawal deadline.

**AU**  
Audit (only permitted on space-available basis)

**NA**  
Not Attending (student appeared on roster, but never attended class. Student is still responsible for tuition and fee charges unless withdrawal form is submitted before deadline. NA has no effect on cumulative GPA.)

### Required Grade Point Average

Students are required to receive a grade of B or better in all courses. A student who fails to earn a grade of B or better in any course will be placed on probation. The student who does not meet the benchmark of a B or better must retake the course where this occurs. Failure to achieve a grade of B or better through re-taking the course will result in a referral to the PhD program committee with consideration of dismissal from the program.

### Program Continuation

All degree-seeking graduate students must maintain continuous registration also known as a program fee, until the degree sought by the student is formally awarded. Students can register for program fee (CAS 600) on the WISER online registration system. Continuous registration must also be maintained even when a student is on a leave-of-absence from the program.

Continuous registration requires a fee be paid to maintain matriculation. If for any reason a student does not register for courses or dissertation credits, he/she must maintain continuous registration per semester ($225.0 is the current fee).

https://www.umb.edu/bursar/tuition_and_fees#program_fee

Failure to register prior to the registration deadline for the semester in which the student is registering for may result in in late fees and be classified as an inactive student.
Late Fees
At any time if fees for courses, dissertation credits or continuous registration are considered late by university dates established as “last day for registration” a $100 late fee will be billed to students.

Incompletes
A grade of “Incomplete” is not given automatically. A student must request a grade of “Incomplete” and receive approval from the instructor. The program requires that the student and faculty member complete an “Incomplete Grade Form,” which will specify the incomplete work and an agreed upon timeframe for completion (see Appendix K). Both the student and the faculty member must sign the form and retain a copy. A third copy is filed with the program director.

University policy requires that all coursework must to be completed a year to the date the incomplete was issued or it will automatically convert to an IF (incomplete failure) which will affect a student’s GPA. After a grade of “IF” is recorded, the student must re-register for the course, pay for it again, and complete all its requirements in order to receive credit and a grade. Receiving an IF may be grounds for immediate dismissal from the program.

To change INC to a grade, faculty must fill out the paper “Change of Grade form” found at the Registrar’s Office. The only signature required is the professors. Submit to it to the Office of Registrar for processing. INC forms are to be picked up and submitted by faculty and NOT students.

Students with incomplete work in more than one course will not be allowed to enroll in courses until all incomplete work has been satisfactorily completed. Students with ANY incomplete are not eligible to take comprehensive examinations (see comprehensive examination guidelines).

Funding Opportunities
There are a wide variety of scholarships, grants, and funding opportunities available to our PhD students. These opportunities include:
1) Eligibility for university research and teaching assistantships that may include tuition remission and health insurance benefits*
2) Scholarships funded by the federal government
3) Loans
4) Professional traineeship grants
5) Competitive scholarships
6) Grant funding from Sigma Theta Tau, the International, the Honor Society of Nursing**
7) Other professional societies and clinical agencies

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) offers funding for graduate students to attend
conferences and to support their dissertation expenses. Students may wish to consult with the Office of Graduate Studies and Research or the Financial Aid Office regarding their eligibility for further need-based assistance.

* Research assistantships allow you to work with faculty from both departments in the CNHS. Students have the opportunity to discuss their specific research interests while assisting faculty active “hands on” research experiences at all stages of development. Teaching assistantships may lead you to help an experienced teacher in a class (TAI) or teaching a class as the lead teacher (TAII).

**Department of Nursing Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International is called Theta Alpha Chapter. Leadership, Scholarship, and Dissertation funding and awards are available annually and are bestowed in the Spring at the annual induction event.

CNHS Grant/Scholarships

The CNHS grant/scholarship proposal submission timeline must be followed by all PhD nursing student who are applying for grants/scholarships. All students must work with the Associate Dean for Research to process the budget and review criteria of grants/scholarships and create a plan to acquire the appropriate signatures in a timely manner. See appendix M for timeline.

Graduate Assistantships

Graduate Assistantships are in the form of research and teaching assistantships (RA/TA). The assignments may require a commitment of 4.5 (0.25 FTE) to 18 (1.0 FTE) hours per week, depending on the percentage of assistantship held, for the entire semester. Students serving as RAs or TAs receive a 100% tuition waiver, and Educational Operations fee waiver pro-rated according to the percent of assistantship held. In addition, an annual stipend pro-rated based on the percent of assistantship held is given to a student. Graduate assistants who elect the health insurance coverage will receive a pro-rated credit toward the cost of the insurance according to the percent of their effort. [Note: Fees or tuition charges for courses offered by the College of Advancing Professional Studies (CAPS) are typically not waived — i.e. all online courses. An exception will be made for PhD required courses offered only online and without a classroom section. Please, inform the program assistant if charges for such courses appear on your billing statement.] Any questions about the assistantship benefits should be directed to the PhD program assistant.

Graduate Assistantships Definition, Eligibility & Time Commitment

**Teaching Assistant I (TAI)**: A graduate student who is primarily assigned to instructional support activities.

**Teaching Assistant II (TAII)**: A graduate student that is an instructor of record for a lecture section of a course and has independent responsibility for its teaching and grading.

**Research Assistant (RA)**: A graduate student who performs work primarily related to academic research or other similar work

**Administrative Assistant (AA)**: A graduate student who performs work of an administrative or technical nature usually in non-academic areas
**Assistantship Eligibility:** 1) matriculated in PhD program, 2) good academic standing (GPA≥3.0), and 3) international students hold an F-1 Visa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FTEs for Assistantships</th>
<th>Number of Hours</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 FTE</td>
<td>18 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.75 FTE</td>
<td>13.5 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.50 FTE</td>
<td>9 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.25 FTE</td>
<td>4.5 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Section 7**

**Communication with Students**
Program information will be communicated to students via umb email and student on site mailboxes or bulletin boards in the PhD Student Lounge. The PhD Student Lounge is in Science Building, 3rd floor, room 301-47. The lounge is shared with EHS PhD students.

**Student with Disabilities**
Any individual with a physical or mental impairment that substantively limits some major life activity and needs accommodation must provide documentation of the disability to the director of the Ross Center for Disability Services. Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with Disability Services (CS 2-2010) or to call 287-7430.

**Resources and Technical Assistance**

**5 Campus PhD Program** URL for your reference. [http://nursing.massachusetts.edu/](http://nursing.massachusetts.edu/)
This helpful e-space to gain information about courses offered, faculty, and general program information across all of our PhD in Nursing Programs in the UMass System. Although you should be working closely with your academic advisers to know what courses you need to take for the next active semester, you can explore this URL together to explore elective possibilities or perhaps substitutions for course with the director’s knowledge.

All these services are more fully described on the Information Technology website [https://www.umb.edu/it](https://www.umb.edu/it) and the Healey Library website [https://www.umb.edu/library/help](https://www.umb.edu/library/help)

For help with Blackboard, call the help desk at 617.287.5220. or visit [https://umb.umassonline.net/](https://umb.umassonline.net/).

**Zotero** and **Mendeley** are citation tools and free to all UMass Boston students, faculty, staff and alumni. They are web-based citation management tools that facilitates collecting and organizing references and formatting research papers. The library provides [online documentation](http://nursing.massachusetts.edu/) to help identify the features between Zotero and Mendeley.
**WHO Writing House** is the College of Nursing and Health Science dedicated writing assistance center. WHO offers writing tutoring on-campus and online. To book a tutoring appointment, please visit [www.mywco.com/WHO](http://www.mywco.com/WHO). Directions to the Writing House: Take Wheatley stairs or elevator to third floor. Turn left and follow the blue and white WHO signs.

**Graduate Writing Center** provides on-to-one conferences for writing support to students.

**IT Service Desk** helps with issues related to computer hardware, software, printing or the network. ([https://www.umb.edu/it/getting_help/contact/](https://www.umb.edu/it/getting_help/contact/))

**IT Training Portal** offers workshops for the UMass Boston community. ([https://www.umb.edu/training/](https://www.umb.edu/training/))

Students are expected to check their university e-mail on a frequent and consistent basis to ensure that they are up-to-date with all official communications generated by the program, the College of Nursing and Health Sciences or the university.

**Student Doctoral Lounge Space Policy**
A space on the third floor of the Science Building, the PhD Lounge is set aside for the use of PhD students from Nursing and EHS. The PhD Lounge (S 301-45) stores nursing and policy journals and provides a space for doctoral students to study, meet, and socialize. The PhD Student Lounge is furnished with five desktop computers and a network printer, a small conference table, and book shelves. The computers provide Internet access and are equipped with software including the Microsoft Office suite of programs and statistical software packages (SAS, SPSS and STATA) as well as N-VIVO for qualitative analysis of data. To access the PhD Lounge, please contact PhD program assistant to obtain the code for the electronic lock on the door.

**General Space Policies**
- Do not leave any personal belonging in the Doctoral Lounge.
- When using the Doctoral Lounge, please clean up after yourself.

**Furniture/Office Equipment:**
- NO equipment or furniture may be removed from the Doctoral Lounge. Furniture must be returned to its original configuration.
- Designated desktop computers are for use by students.
- The microwave must be wiped down after every use.

**Food and Beverage:**
- Food and beverages are allowed in the Doctoral Lounge.
- Do not leave food in fridge over the weekend.

**Additional Lounge & Study Space For CNHS Doctoral Students**
Upper Level
- Atrium Lounge
- Bookstore

1st Floor
- Harbor Lounge
- Terrace
- Food Court Dining Room
- Skylight Park (Outdoors Area)

2nd Floor
- Harbor Lounge
- Mezzanine

3rd Floor
- Harbor Lounge
- Point Lounge

Healey Library
- Quiet Study (6th Floor)
The sixth floor is the only designated quiet area in the library building.
- Group Study (8th Floor)
Group study is encouraged on the eighth floor. There are ten study carrels of various sizes that can accommodate groups of two to eight people.

Other Places of Interest
- Several couches and tables on the second and third floors overlook the harbor.
- The Healey Library Cafe on the second floor contains a bar and several tables.
- The fourth floor has several long tables with overhead lamps.
- The fifth floor has a large study table near the University Archives gallery displays.
APPENDIX A. ADVANCE STANDING APPLICATION

Advanced Standing Form for Course Waivers
Offices of Graduate Studies, Graduate Admissions and the Registrar

Advanced Standing is awarded to students who are admitted to a doctoral program with relevant graduate level coursework or a master’s degree in the same or related field of study. Advanced Standing may waive a maximum of 36 credits for students upon admission (with the exception of license-eligible programs requiring extensive proscribed credits). Courses are waived course-by-course based upon equivalency and relevance. Courses must have been taken at an accredited institution, no more than seven (7) years prior to matriculation at UMB, and received a grade of “B” or higher. The award of Advanced Standing cannot reduce the number of credits below 24 credits as part of the residency requirement including research hours and dissertation credits. Students who fail to complete their doctoral program cannot apply their Advanced Standing master’s courses for an additional master’s degree from UMass Boston.

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE STUDENT:
Please attach unofficial transcripts of all coursework *(Note that official transcript must be on file)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name: ___________________________</th>
<th>UMS#: ___________________________</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Term of Registration/Acceptance:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program/Plan:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous Institution(s):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Previous Degree(s) Awarded/Date(s):     |                                   |
| Dates Enrolled:                         |                                   |

Student Signature: ______________________ | Date: __________________________ |

To Be Completed by GPD:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UMB Graduate Program Required Course, Elective Course or other Degree Requirement to be waived</th>
<th>Waive (W) Course (Course Information from previous institution)</th>
<th>Institution/Semester</th>
<th>Number of Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXAMPLE: Sociol 601</td>
<td>UPenn, Spring 2014</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To Be Completed by GPD (continued):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UMB Graduate Program Required Course, Elective Course or other Degree Requirement</th>
<th>Waive (W) Course (Course Information from previous institution)</th>
<th>Institution / Semester</th>
<th>Number of Credits</th>
</tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

Waived Course: Needs (W) may or may not have credits (Courses in this section will be waived, meaning the student is exempt from taking the course or fulfilling the requirement).

GPD Comments:

GPD Printed Name: __________________________ Graduate Program: __________________________

GPD Signature: ___________________________ Date: __________________________

One copy to Department / One copy to Graduate Studies / One copy to Registrar
APPENDIX B. EN ROUTE MS DEGREE

GRADUATE DEGREE APPLICATION

Part I: Candidate Information – Complete only Part I

Student Name:
(Please print clearly as you wish it to appear on your diploma. Name must be the same one we have on file.)

Student Number: ______________________ Email address (required): ______________________

Degree: (Circle One) MA MS MEd MFA CAGS EDS PhD EdD DNP MPA

Plan/Major: ______________________ Subplan/Track (if applicable): ______________________

Anticipated degree date: May 20 ___ August 20 ___ December 20 ___

List only graduate courses to be counted towards your degree at UMass Boston.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEPT/COURSE NO.</th>
<th>COURSE TITLE</th>
<th>SEM/YR TAKEN</th>
<th>CREDIT</th>
<th>GRADE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Transfer Credit: ON AND OFF CAMPUS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTITUTION</th>
<th>COURSE TITLE</th>
<th>SEM/YR TAKEN</th>
<th>CREDIT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</table>

For courses taken at another institution an official transcript and a transfer credit approval form must be on file in the Registrar’s Office before transfer credit will be granted.

To the best of my knowledge the information given above is correct and complete.

Signature of candidate: ______________________ Date: ____________
APPENDIX C. INDEPENDENT STUDY (INTERNAL FORM)

Nursing PhD Independent Study Form

Nursing PhD Independent Study Agreement Instructions and Guidelines:

1. Identify a faculty member with whom you would like to work.

2. Plan out what you want to accomplish with the Independent Study; this is a learning opportunity. Prepare ideas before approaching the faculty member so you can make a meaningful proposal.

3. After the faculty member agrees to advise you, you must complete this form. The form must be signed by both you and the faculty adviser, and each page must be initialed by you and the advisor.

4. After the form has been signed by you and the faculty advisor, you will need to have the form signed by the PhD department chair. Keep a copy of this form!

5. Signed forms must be delivered to the Graduate Programs Office.
Nursing PhD Independent Study Form

Date:

Semester to begin Independent Study:

Semester to complete Independent Study:

Student Name: _________________________________________________________

Student ID#___________________________________________________________

Student Email: _______________________________________________________

Faculty Advisor: ______________________________________________________

Faculty Advisor Email: ________________________________________________

Number of Credits: ________ Degree Program: _____________________________

Academic rationale for pursuing an Independent Study:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
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Project Objectives and Goals:
January 2019

Description of Project and Methodology:

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
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_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

Expected Outcomes:

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

Method of Evaluation and Assessment of Outcomes:

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

Approval Signatures (3 signatures required for enrollment)

Student: ____________________________________________    Date: __________
Faculty Advisor: _____________________________________    Date: __________
PhD Program Director: ________________________________   Date: __________
Template
Comprehensive Exam Timeline

- **Wednesday May 4th**: First meeting to discuss the first draft of the two outlines

- **Wednesday May 11th**: Second meeting for the final draft of the two outline.

- **By Friday May 13th**: Outlines approval

- **Saturday May 14th**: Start writing the papers

- **Sunday June 11th**: Submit the two papers

- **By Saturday June 25th**: Receive the feedback from the committee

  ![If conditional pass]

- **Sunday June 26th - Sunday July 10th**: Revising the two papers

- **Sunday July 10th**: Submit the revised papers

- According to the guidelines: Oral Presentation (within 1 week): **Monday July 11th - Monday July 18th**

*However, after discussion with the chair and considering the availability of all the members of the comps committee;*

**Monday August 8th**: Proposed Oral Presentation Day
APPENDIX E.  COMPS STAGE 1 FORM

PhD Comprehensive Examination Form

Student’s Name:  
ID#:  

Stage 1 – Topic and Readers

Exam Readers:
The student will select one Chair of the Committee (for both papers).
1. The Chair must be a tenure stream faculty member in the Department of Nursing.
2. The student and Chair will select the secondary member.
3. The PhD Program Chair will select a standard reader. This person will sit on all comprehensive committees in a given cycle

Conceptual paper: Literature Review/Policy Analysis/Concept Analysis
Proposed title:

Methods: Measurements/Methods
Proposed title:

Chair --------------
Member --------
Standard Reader -------

Exam Duration:
Due Date for Written Papers: 
Oral Defense date:

(One hardcopy and an electronic copy of each paper must be submitted to the Chair, committee members, and the PhD Program Office by 5:00pm EST on the due date. The oral component of the exam usually will be scheduled within 3 weeks of paper submission.

Approved by Graduate Program Director __________________________ Date _______
PhD Comprehensive Examination Form

Student’s Name: ID#: 

Date: 

Stage 2 - Oral Examination

Committee members/Readers vote on the comprehensive examination. ("P" = Pass; “R”=Revise & Redo or "F" = Fail)

Conceptual paper: Literature Review/Policy Analysis/Concept Analysis
Proposed title:

Methods: Measurements/Methods
Proposed title:

Chair -------------- ___________________________

Member --------- ____________________________

Standard Reader -------- ________________________

Note: Students must pass the written and oral components of the comprehensive/qualifying examinations prior to enrolling in Nursing 791.

Approved by Graduate Program Director ____________________________Date ___/___/_____
**APPENDIX G. STANDARD READER PILOT SPRING 2017-2018**

**Standard Reader Pilot Spring 2017-2018**

**Role:** The **Standard Reader** assists in assuring standardization in the comprehensive examination process by assessing consistency in the examination process and assuring students meet program objectives.

**Program Objectives:**

- Analyze historical, sociological, economic, political, and healthcare perspectives of population health issues and health policies.
- Evaluate health policies that influence the access, quality, and cost of healthcare delivery and nursing practice locally and globally.
- Generate theory-guided qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods research that advances Nursing Science with an emphasis in population health or health policy.
- Create innovative, evidence-based strategies to shape population health and health policy development at local, national, and global levels based on contemporary nursing and interdisciplinary research.
- Relate new inquiries, activities, and values to role development as a nurse scientist, steward of the discipline, and educator for the next generation.

**Description of Process/What to Expect:** The Standard Reader receives the approved outline and both papers of students taking the comprehensive examination after the students have successfully met the requirements to take the examination (see current Handbook). The Standard Reader participates in the process of reading/reviewing the written portion of the examination by offering input related to progress decisions (pass, conditional pass, no pass, eligible for oral examination) after the written examination. The chair of the committee can utilize the Standard Reader to break a tie in decision making if needed but is the final decision maker in the decision for the student to move to the oral examination. The Standard Reader provides written comments for each paper to the students and the committee. In addition, it is expected that all committees follow “Ten Common Practices” expectations during the entire comprehensive examination process and particularly at the oral examination to enhance fairness across all involved students and committee members. A checklist of the Ten Common Practices will be given to each comprehensive examination committee chair in addition to the completion signature documents (see below). Both need to be completed and placed in the student’s file.

**Ten Common Practices**:

1. It is the student’s responsibility to supply hard copies of papers if requested.
2. The examination, written and oral, begins and ends on time. Students are encouraged to come to the oral examination 30 minutes before the scheduled time to set up and get comfortable.
3. All students have faculty on their committees reviewing their materials for the designated time frame as stipulated in Handbook (2 weeks).
4. The oral examination begins by first welcoming the students and asking the students to let the group know if there is anything the students would like to address about their papers before the oral examination begins [brinksmanship=letting the students correct or change ideas at the beginning of the process before being influenced by faculty conversation].
5. The chair reviews the process of the examination and a member of the committee is designated as a time-keeper for presentations and question period and time limits are discussed; if the students have no questions, the examination begins.
6. If the students go over time, they will be stopped to keep the process moving and fair to all (*ideally in a two-hour period for each paper, 15 minutes presentation 45 minutes discussion)
7. If slides are not appropriate (spelling, grammar, set up) these issues are addressed
8. All students are asked to leave the meeting room for deliberations
9. Paperwork (Stage 1 Form-see Handbook) for the PhD Program is completed in the same way for all candidates and handed in with Ten Common Practices checklist
10. Students do not supply food or beverages of any kind or gifts to the committee before or after the examinations components (water is made available by CNHS).

*Faculty are expected to be physically present for the oral examination. In an extreme emergency or special circumstance reviewed and approved by the program director, a faculty member can conference call into the examination but if this is the case, he or she needs to have copies of the PowerPoint slides before the examination begins. At no time should any component of the oral examination be audio recorded by the faculty or students unless permission is granted by both the faculty members and student.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Practice</th>
<th>Check</th>
<th>Signature/Initial</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. It is the student's responsibility to supply hard copies of papers if requested</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. The examination, written and oral, begins and ends on time. Students are encouraged to come to the oral examination 30 minutes before the scheduled time to set up and get comfortable</td>
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<td>6. If the students go over time, they will be stopped to keep the process moving and fair to all (*ideally in a two-hour period for each paper, 15 minutes presentation 45 minutes discussion)</td>
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<td><strong>7.</strong></td>
<td>If slides are not appropriate (spelling, grammar, set up) these issues are addressed</td>
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<td><strong>8.</strong></td>
<td>All students are asked to leave the meeting room for deliberations</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>9.</strong></td>
<td>Paperwork (Stage 1 Form-see Handbook) for the PhD Program is completed in the same way for all candidates and handed in with this checklist</td>
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<td><strong>10.</strong></td>
<td>Students do not supply food or beverages of any kind or gifts to the committee before or after the examinations components (water is made available by CNHS). All committee members are expected to be physically present for the oral examination. In an extreme emergency or special circumstance reviewed and approved by the program director, a committee member can conference call into the examination but if this is the case, they need to have copies of the Powerpoint slides before the examination begins. At no time should any component of the oral examination be audio recorded by the faculty or students without permission</td>
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APPENDIX H.  QUICK GUIDE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON
PhD Program in Nursing
Comprehensive Examination
QUICK GUIDE

The Comprehensive Examination consists of two parts:

1. Two written papers: 1) a conceptual paper (review and synthesis of the literature, concept analysis, or policy analysis); and 2) a methodological paper (methods or measurements).

2. Oral examination.

Committee Structure – three members:

1. The student will select one Chair of the Committee (for both papers). The Chair must be a tenure stream faculty member in the Department of Nursing.

2. The student and Chair will select the secondary reader.

3. The PhD Program Director will select a standard reader. This person will sit on all comprehensive committees in a given cycle.

4. The student will submit the Comprehensive Examination Form Stage 1 with the list of the proposed committee members to the Program Director.

Outlines

1. The student and Chair may meet on two occasions to discuss and finalize the outlines for the two papers. The outline for each paper needs to be detailed enough for the Chair to be able to follow the logical flow of the papers. Following approval by the Chair, the outlines serve as an agreement regarding the content to be included in the paper, and the outlines will be shared with the Committee members. The student will then work independently to write the two papers.

2. The outlines should identify the content and content organization for each paper. Each outline is limited to no more than 3 double-spaced pages. Guidelines are available for each type of paper.

ALL STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO DO THE FOLLOWING:

SUBMIT A TIMELINE TO THEIR CHAIR AND PhD PROGRAM ASSISTANT (SEE BELOW AND APPENDIX E on PhD Handbook).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline</th>
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<td><strong>Note:</strong> Timeline for initiating Comprehensive Exam procedures will be determined on an individual basis.</td>
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</table>

| Step 1: | Student and Chair collaborate on creation of the outline for each paper. |
| Step 2: | The Chair approves each outline and shares these with the Committee; the student then writes each paper independently (four weeks). |
| Step 3: | Student submits papers to Committee and PhD Nursing Program Office (two week review).  
  Pass – Student works with the PhD Program Assistant to schedule oral exam.  
  Conditional Pass – Revise and resubmit in two weeks; Committee determines Pass or Fail within one week.  
  Fail – Do not progress – if a student fails the written exam, one retake of the written component is allowed within one year at the discretion of the Chair and Committee. |
Step 4: Student participates in a two-hour oral examination.

- **Pass** – Proceed to take NU791.
- **Conditional Pass** – Retake of the oral exam will be scheduled within one week; Committee will determine pass or fail.
- **Fail** – Student will not proceed to NU791; student is permitted one retake of the comprehensive exams within one year at the discretion of the Chair and Committee.

**PhD Program Handbook**

**Mission**

*Prepare graduates of the PhD Program in Nursing for careers as educators, policy analysts, and researchers in population health and health policy.*

**Program Goals**

The health care policy and the population health foci at UMass Boston prepare graduates to respond to the need for effective and humane policy that will guide health care at the local, state, and national levels. Faculty and students engage in research and policy analysis relevant to the health and health care of individuals and families from diverse populations and/or urban communities. The program focuses on the intersection of nursing, health policy, and population health, and prepares its graduates for leadership roles as policy analysts, researchers, and educators.

Upon completion of the PhD program, students will be able to:

1. Analyze historical, sociological, economic, political, and healthcare perspectives of population health issues and health policies from a nursing disciplinary lens.
2. Evaluate health policies that influence the access, quality, and cost of healthcare delivery and nursing practice locally and globally.
3. Generate theory-guided qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods research that advances Nursing Science with an emphasis in population health or health policy.
4. Create innovative, evidence-based strategies to shape population health and health policy development at local, national, and global levels based on contemporary nursing and interdisciplinary research.
5. Relate new inquiries, activities, and values to role development as a nurse scientist, steward of the discipline, and educator for the next generation.

**Comprehensive Examination**

The Comprehensive Examination is designed to determine the student’s ability to think critically and analytically and synthesize and apply the content of their course work in addressing PhD program goals of the focus in which he or she is enrolled. Successful completion of the Comprehensive Examination admits the student to candidacy for the PhD degree.

The Comprehensive Examination consists of two parts: written and oral. To be eligible for the examinations, students must be in good academic standing and must have fulfilled any incomplete required course work prior to the examination date. **The comprehensive examinations commence when students in the MS-PhD have completed 45 credits or in the BS-PhD have completed 66 credits**
PhD Program in Nursing
Comprehensive Examination Process

1. **Committee**: There will be one Committee for each student. The Committee is responsible for reading both papers: one conceptual paper and one methodological paper. Committees will consist of three members: one Chair, a second member selected by the student and Chair, and a third member selected by the PhD Nursing Program Director. Although not required, the Committee Chair should have expertise related to the student’s area of research interest. The Committee members must be members of the faculty of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, and the Committee Chair must be faculty in the Department of Nursing.

2. **Types of Papers**: After discussion and negotiation with his or her Chair, the student will select the types of papers and topics to be addressed for the Comprehensive Examination. The Chair provides guidance and consultation to the student in selecting the topics for the papers and in projecting the overall development of the topics in the outlines.

3. **Outlines**: After meeting with the Committee Chair, the student will create detailed outlines for the two papers. Each outline is limited to no more than 3 double-spaced pages. The outlines should identify the content and content organization for each paper and must clearly indicate how the two papers will differ. The student must write and submit two papers, both of which must reflect the student’s ability to think critically and analytically, as well as his or her ability to synthesize the published literature about the topic. The topics for the papers will be related to the student’s area of research inquiry; the student, in consultation with his or her Committee Chair, will determine the specific topics. The first paper will be a conceptual paper: a review and synthesis of the literature, concept analysis, or policy analysis. The second paper will be a discussion of methodological issues relevant to the student’s area of research inquiry: methods or measurements.

4. **Outline Approval and Writing the Papers**: In accordance with the timeline developed by the PhD Program Committee, once the Chair approves the outlines and they are shared with the Committee members, the student will work independently to write the papers.

5. **Two Papers**: The papers will be evaluated in terms of accuracy of content, clarity of writing, critical thinking, content organization, and appropriate format. The student’s original analytic thinking is emphasized over extensive compilations and summaries of literature. Each paper must be between 15-20 pages, excluding title page, abstract, references, any tables and/or figures, and appendices. The format for each paper must adhere to the American Psychological Association Manual (6th ed.) guidelines. Students have a maximum of four weeks to complete the two papers.

6. **Paper Submission**: One hardcopy and an electronic copy of each paper must be submitted to the Chair, committee members, and the PhD Program Office by 5:00 P.M. Eastern Time on the due date, which must be no later than 4 weeks following approval of the outlines.

7. **Paper Review**: Once both papers have been submitted, the Committee members will have two weeks to review the papers. The written paper will be assigned one of three grades: Pass, Conditional Pass (Revise and Resubmit), or Fail. Students who are given a “Conditional Pass” will be given comments from the committee describing why revisions are deemed necessary and will be given two weeks from the time they receive the comments to submit revisions. If a student receives a grade of Pass, the student will work with the Program Assistant to schedule the oral examination. If a student receives a grade of Fail on one or both papers, the student will not progress to the oral examination. The student may retake the Comprehensive Examination within one year.

8. **Oral Examination**: The oral component of the Comprehensive Examination will focus on questions relevant to the two written papers as well as questions regarding overall objectives of the PhD program. Questions will be developed by the Committee members and reflect the PhD program objectives and overall content of the coursework in the program. Students are expected to make a 15-minute in-person presentation of each of their papers to the Committee. Slides and/or handouts are recommended. The
remaining time of the Comprehensive Examination will be devoted to questions by Committee members and answers by the student.

9. **Outcome of Examination:** The Committee will meet in closed session immediately following the oral examination of each student. The Committee members’ final evaluation of the student is a consensus. Examination results are: Pass, Conditional Pass, or Fail.

   - **Pass** indicates the student has successfully completed the Comprehensive Examination written and oral parts and is admitted to candidacy.
   - **Conditional Pass** indicates that one component (one or both written papers or the oral examination) of the Comprehensive Examination must be retaken.
     - If one or both papers receive a Conditional Pass, students will have 2 weeks to submit the required revisions. The Committee will then have 1 week to review the paper(s) and determine the outcome: Pass or Fail.
     - If the oral examination receives a Conditional Pass, a retake will be scheduled within 1 week. The Committee will then determine the outcome: Pass or Fail.
   - **Fail** indicates the student did not successfully pass both components of the Comprehensive Examination and may have the option to retake the Comprehensive Exam one additional time.

10. The Committee Chair completes **Comprehensive Examination Form Stage 2** and forwards it to the PhD Program Office.

   - If the student passes the Comprehensive Examination, the PhD Program Director completes and forwards the Stage 1 of Dissertation Tracking Form (Notification of Candidacy) to the Office of Graduate Studies.
   - If the student fails the Comprehensive Examination, one retake is allowed at the discretion of the Chair and other Committee members. The student should meet with the Committee Chair to determine an approach for addressing deficiencies and to identify a time frame for retaking the examination.
   - If a student fails the Comprehensive Examination, and the Committee recommends the student not be offered the opportunity to retake the exam, he or she will be presented to the PhD Program Committee for consideration of dismissal from the program.

11. Both the written papers and the oral examination must be passed before the student enrolls in **NU791**, Integrating Theory and Policy in Dissertation Research. Papers required for the written component of the Comprehensive Examination should guide and inform the substantive content and methodology used in preparation of the dissertation proposal.

12. **Academic Integrity/Honor System:** The examinations will be administered on the honor system. Students are not allowed to consult anyone (other students, faculty, outside professionals, or any other person) in completing the Comprehensive Examination. After acceptance of the proposed outlines by the Committee Chair, papers are to be entirely the student’s work, without additional assistance including the assistance of technical writers or editors. Any violation of this rule will constitute the basis for dismissal from the program.
Guidelines
Review and Synthesis of the Literature

Overview
This document provides guidelines for students writing their review and synthesis of the literature paper as partial completion of the PhD Comprehensive Examination. Reviewing and synthesizing the literature allows the student to explore and articulate the current state of the knowledge and priorities for future research in relation to a socially and theoretically significant research topic. In keeping with the goals of the PhD Nursing Program, students will analyze the current knowledge regarding a population health or health policy issue. The review will be a synthesis of what is known and what gaps exist in the literature, concluding with a recommendation for future research.

General Instructions
Students are expected to submit a detailed outline of no more than 3 double spaced pages to the Committee Chair before beginning the paper. The paper must be between 15-20 pages excluding title page, abstract, references, any tables and/or figures, and appendices. The paper format must adhere to the American Psychological Association Manual (6th ed.) guidelines.

Outline
The outline should identify the content and content organization for the paper.

Critical Elements of the Paper
The paper should contain the following:

- Abstract: Write a clear and concise abstract.
- Research problem: Clearly identify the population health issue or health policy.
- Background/Introduction: State the social and theoretical significance of the population health issue or health policy. Identify and describe the conceptual model of nursing used to guide the review.
- Methods: Describe the search strategy, databases used, keyword search terms, and the inclusion and exclusion criteria.
- Results: Report and display in a PRISMA or similar diagram the results of the literature search, including types of literature selected for the review. Synthesize the research findings in narrative form. Include a table with details of the literature reviewed. Link the theoretical concepts identified in the literature with relevant concepts of the conceptual model used to guide the review in a narrative and a diagram.
- Discussion: Identify the gaps in the literature and the utility of the conceptual model used to guide the review.
- Conclusion: Identify the descriptive, explanatory, or predictive middle-range theory that emerged from the review and synthesis of the literature, including the theory concepts and propositions.
- Recommendations: Identify recommendations that have clear implications for research (knowledge development), and/or translation of research findings to practice (practice improvement) and/or policy (policy formulation or implementation).

What to Avoid, Writing Style

- Students should keep in mind that they are not reporters; they are research analysts. The paper content must go beyond descriptions of the literature reviewed to include a detailed analytic discussion and critique.
- Any overlaps between the review and synthesis of the literature paper and methodological paper should be kept to a minimum. Each paper is to be distinct from the other. Quote only when you want to strengthen your argument through another writer’s work. The Committee members expect to read the student’s analysis and interpretation of
the literature (main findings and gaps). Please keep in mind that publication does not guarantee high quality work, that methods can be misapplied or results misinterpreted, and that all literature has limitations.

- The paper should be written in an objective, scientific, and professional way without colloquialisms. It is expected that the student fully edit the paper before submission to Committee members, including improvements in clarity, correction of typographical errors, and avoidance of redundant sentences, paragraphs, and concepts.

References


http://www.cochranelibrary.com/


See also *Journal of Advanced Nursing* author guidelines for systematic literature review papers: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1365-2648/homepage/systematic_review_or_other_type_of_review_paper.htm
Guidelines
Concept Analysis Paper

Overview
This document provides guidelines for students writing their concept analysis paper as partial completion of the PhD Comprehensive Examination. In keeping with the goals of the PhD Nursing Program, students will analyze the current knowledge regarding a concept that is relevant for population health or health policy. A concept analysis paper is a report of an in-depth exploration of a concept. A concept analysis is a first step in communicating meanings, understandings, and feelings to create a shared definition of the concept.

General Instructions
Students are expected to submit a detailed outline of no more than 3 double spaced pages to the Committee Chair before beginning the paper. The paper must be between 15-20 pages excluding title page, abstract, references, any tables and/or figures, and appendices. The paper format must adhere to the American Psychological Association Manual (6th ed.) guidelines.

Outline
The outline should identify the content and content organization for the paper.

Critical Elements of the Paper
The paper should contain the following components:
1. Abstract: Write a clear and concise abstract.
2. Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to present an analysis of [name the concept].
3. Background: State the need for the concept analysis by addressing the social and theoretical significance of the concept. (Do not write that no one has done an analysis of the concept as the need.) Identify and describe the conceptual model of nursing that guided the concept analysis.
4. Data Sources: Identify the databases used, the years of literature searched, the search terms used, and the inclusion and exclusion criteria.
5. Review methods: Identify the approach to concept analysis used.
6. Results: Identify the number and types of papers used for the analysis, the attributes of the concept, the antecedents to and consequences of the concept, and the definition of the concept.
7. Discussion: Link the attributes of, antecedents to, and consequences of the concept with relevant concepts of the conceptual model used to guide the concept analysis in a narrative and a diagram. Identify the descriptive, explanatory, or predictive middle-range theory that emerged from the concept analysis, including the theory concepts and propositions. Evaluate the utility of the conceptual model used to guide the concept analysis.
8. Conclusion: State the implications of the concept analysis for research (knowledge development), and/or translation of research findings to practice (practice improvement) and/or policy (policy formulation or implementation).

What to Avoid, Writing Style
- Students should keep in mind that they are not reporters; they are research analysts. The paper content must go beyond descriptions of the literature reviewed to include a detailed analytic discussion and critique.
- Any overlaps between the concept analysis paper and methodological paper should be kept to a minimum. Each paper is to be distinct from the other. Quote only when you want to strengthen your argument through another writer’s work. The Committee members expect to read the student’s analysis and interpretation of the literature about the concept. Please keep in mind that publication does not guarantee high quality work, that methods can be misapplied or results misinterpreted, and that all literature has limitations.
- The paper should be written in an objective, scientific, and professional way without
colloquialisms. It is expected that the student fully edit the paper before submission to Committee members, including improvements in clarity, correction of typographical errors, and avoidance of redundant sentences, paragraphs, and concepts.

**References**


Guidelines  
Policy Analysis Paper

Overview
This document provides guidelines for students writing their policy analysis paper as partial completion of the PhD Comprehensive Examination. The policy analysis paper provides an opportunity for the student knowledge of the policy process and the ability to conduct a policy analysis.

General Instructions
Students are expected to submit a detailed outline of no more than 3 double spaced pages to the Committee Chair before beginning the paper. The paper must be between 15-20 pages excluding title page, abstract, references, any tables and/or figures, and appendices. The paper format must adhere to the American Psychological Association Manual (6th ed.) guidelines.

Outline
The outline should identify the content and content organization for the paper.

Critical Elements of the Paper
1. Introduction: What is the issue, problem or policy you are examining?
2. Background of the Health Policy: Identify and describe the social significance of a health policy that addresses an individual health condition or a population health issue. Identify and describe the conceptual model of nursing that guided the analysis of the health policy, including associated guidelines for health policy analysis. Describe (a) the historical roots of the problem, (b) the sociological forces that have shaped the problem and the past attempts by society to address the problem (if there are past attempts), (c) the political forces that have resulted in the current status of the problem (if any), and (d) the economic forces or factors that have shaped the current health policy.
3. Agenda Setting: Explain how or why the health policy addresses an individual health condition or population health issue that is on the national agenda? Identify relevant stakeholders: who and why are some stakeholders support to the health policy and who and why some other stakeholders are opposed to the health policy? Discuss how important stakeholder support or opposition is to implementation or continued implementation of the health policy.
4. Policy Alternatives: Consider alternatives to the health policy. Are there other policies or solutions that would be better to address the individual health condition or population health issue? What other solutions have been tried? What do we know about the success of this and other health polices from the findings of empirical research?
5. Implementation: What agencies, organizations, or branches of government would most likely be or already are involved in implementing this health policy? What barriers to implementation exist? What has or would facilitate success of implementation of the health policy?
6. Evaluation: If the health policy has been or will be enacted into law, how would you determine its success? Describe the process a researcher might use to explore, describe, or test the outcomes of the policy, including intended and unintended consequences.
7. Discussions and Conclusions: Summarize the key points of the analysis. Evaluate the utility of the conceptual model used to guide the health policy analysis. Describe the role that doctorally prepared nurses have in facilitating any needed refinements in the health policy and how these nurses can influence implementation or continued implementation of the health policy. Identify the relevant concepts and propositions of the middle-range theory that constitute the health policy.

What to Avoid, Writing Style
- Students should keep in mind that they are not reporters; they are research analysts. The paper content must go beyond descriptions of the literature reviewed to include a detailed analytic discussion and critique.
- Any overlaps between the health policy analysis paper and methodological paper should be kept to a minimum. Each paper is to be distinct from the other. Quote only when you want to strengthen your argument through another writer’s work. The Committee
members are expecting to read the student’s analysis and interpretation of the literature about the health policy. Please keep in mind that publication does not guarantee high quality work, that methods can be misapplied or results misinterpreted, and that all literature has limitations.

- The paper should be written in an objective, scientific, and professional way without colloquialisms. It is expected that the student fully edit the paper before submission to Committee members, including improvements in clarity, correction of typographical errors, and avoidance of redundant sentences, paragraphs, and concepts.

References


Overview
This document provides guidelines for students writing their methods paper as partial completion of the PhD Comprehensive Examination. In keeping with the goals of the PhD Nursing Program, students will analyze methodological issues associated with a specific population health issue or health policy.

General Instructions
Students are expected to submit a detailed outline of no more than 3 double spaced pages to the Committee Chair before beginning the paper. The paper must be between 15-20 pages excluding title page, abstract, references, any tables and/or figures, and appendices. The paper format must adhere to the American Psychological Association Manual (6th ed.) guidelines.

Outline
The outline should identify the content and content organization for the paper.

Critical Elements of the Paper
The paper should contain the following components:
1. Abstract: Write a clear and concise abstract.
2. Background/Introduction: Identify and describe a concept or middle-range theory that addresses an individual health condition or a population health issue. State one or more relevant research questions about the concept or theory.
3. Data sources: Identify the databases used, the years of literature searched, the search terms used, and the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Describe the numbers and types of literature retrieved.
4. Results: Critically analyze and evaluate the methods that have been used to study the population health issue or the health policy, with emphasis on (a) philosophical paradigms evident in the literature reviewed, (b) specific types of qualitative, quantitative, and/or mixed methods theory-generating and/or theory-testing research designs, (c) strategies for selection of populations and/or samples, and (d) data analysis techniques. Evaluation of the methods should include consideration of (a) historical evolution of the research designs, strategies for selection of populations and/or samples, and data analysis techniques, (b) the extent to which the research designs allowed the research question(s) to be answered, (c) appropriateness of the strategies used for selection of populations and/or samples, and adequacy of sample sizes, and (d) appropriateness of data analysis techniques and validity of the statistical conclusions.
5. Conclusion: Discuss the advantages, disadvantages, and limitations of the research designs, strategies for selection of populations and/or samples, and data analysis techniques found in the literature.
6. Prepare a brief (no more than 2 pages) proposal for an ideal research design, population or sample selection, and data analysis techniques for one research question about a concept or middle-range theory that addresses an individual health condition or a population health issue. The content of the proposal should emphasize the advantages and avoid or minimize disadvantages and limitations of the research designs, strategies for selection of populations and/or samples, and data analysis techniques found in the literature.

What to Avoid, Writing Style
- Students should keep in mind that they are not reporters; they are research analysts. The paper content must go beyond descriptions of the literature reviewed to include a detailed analytic discussion and critique.
- Any overlaps between the methods paper and conceptual paper should be kept to a minimum. Each paper is to be distinct from the other. Quote only when you want to strengthen your argument through another writer’s work. The Committee members expect to read the student’s analysis and interpretation of the literature about the concept. Please keep in mind that publication does not guarantee high quality work, that methods
can be misapplied or results misinterpreted, and that all literature has limitations. 
• The paper should be written in an objective, scientific, and professional way without colloquialisms. It is expected that the student fully edit the paper before submission to Committee members, including improvements in clarity, correction of typographical errors, and avoidance of redundant sentences, paragraphs, and concepts.

References


Guidelines Measurement Paper

Overview
This document provides guidelines for students writing their measurement paper as partial completion of the PhD Comprehensive Examination. In keeping with the goals of the PhD Nursing Program, students will analyze measurement issues associated with a specific population health issue or health policy.
General Instructions
Students are expected to submit a detailed outline of no more than 3 double spaced pages to the Committee Chair before beginning the paper. The paper must be between 15-20 pages excluding title page, abstract, references, any tables and/or figures, and appendices. The paper format must adhere to the American Psychological Association Manual (6th ed.) guidelines.

Outline
The outline should identify the content and content organization for the paper.

Critical Elements of the Paper
The paper should contain the following components:
1. Abstract: Write a clear and concise abstract.
2. Background/Introduction: Identify and define a concept of middle-range theory that addresses an individual health condition or population health issue; the appropriate middle-range theory should guide the examination of the selected concept’s measurement.
3. Data sources: Identify the databases used, the years of literature searched, the search terms used, and the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Describe the numbers and types of literature retrieved. The literature should include the original reports of development of the instruments and reports of the use of the instruments for research and practice purposes.
4. Results: Identify, describe, critically analyze, and evaluate existing qualitative and/or quantitative research instruments that have been used to measure the middle-range theory concept. Summarize the information found in the literature about the trustworthiness (involving credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability) of any sources of data collection and instruments (e.g. research tools such as focus group or interview guides, document data) used to obtain qualitative (word) data and the psychometric properties (types of reliability and validity) of any instruments used to obtain quantitative (numerical) data. Description of the research instruments should include the number and type of items; methods used to analyze word data; and rating scales, scoring procedures, and interpretation of scores for numerical data. Evaluation of the research instruments should include consideration of (a) historical evolution of the research instruments, such as refinements in each instrument and/or use of newer instruments over time, (b) extent to which existing estimates of trustworthiness and/or psychometric properties are adequate, (c) cultural equivalence of any instruments used for studies of population or samples from diverse cultures, and (d) consistency of the measurement with translation from concept into measure (theoretical or conceptual system to research or operational system).
5. Conclusion: Discuss the overall strengths and weaknesses of the existing research instruments found in the literature.
6. Prepare a brief (no more than 2 pages) proposal for an ideal approach to the development of a new research instrument or to further development and testing of an existing research instrument that will measure the middle-range theory concept within the context of a conceptual model of nursing. The content of the proposal should emphasize the strengths and avoid or minimize weaknesses of the existing research instruments found in the literature.

What to Avoid, Writing Style
- Students should keep in mind that they are not reporters; they are research analysts. The paper content must go beyond descriptions of the literature reviewed to include a detailed analytic discussion and critique.
- Any overlaps between the methods paper and conceptual paper should be kept to a minimum. Each paper is to be distinct from the other. Quote only when you want to strengthen your argument through another writer’s work. The Committee members expect to read the student’s analysis and interpretation of the literature about the concept. Please keep in mind that publication does not guarantee high quality work, that methods
can be misapplied or results misinterpreted, and that all literature has limitations.

- The paper should be written in an objective, scientific, and professional way without colloquialisms. It is expected that the student fully edit the paper before submission to Committee members, including improvements in clarity, correction of typographical errors, and avoidance of redundant sentences, paragraphs, and concepts.

References


APPENDIX I. RATIONALE


Why a designation used by some students is seen as unethical

By Amy Novotney

September 2016, Vol 47, No. 8

Print version: page 36

A few months ago when University of Louisville counseling psychology professor Mark Leach, PhD, read an email from a psychology student on a listserv he belonged to, he noticed that the sender had put "PhD(c)" after her name. He reached out to her right away.

"I contacted her because the "c" stands for candidate, but is not officially recognized and has the potential to mislead the public," Leach recalls.

The PhD(c)—also sometimes written as PhD-c or PhDc—has been popping up more often over the last several years in curricula vitae and email signatures. The designation is meant to indicate that the person has completed all of his or her requirements for a PhD except for the dissertation—akin to "ABD" (all but dissertation) that many also use.

Students say the term's use has become common among their colleagues, leading others to think that it is an appropriate way to highlight one's career path. But many psychologists say it's important to understand how these designations might be perceived outside of their use in casual conversations between psychologist friends and colleagues.

"Within academic circles we understand it, but my concern is that as soon as you send something out in an email, it can go anywhere in the world," Leach says, including into the hands of nonpsychologists and nonacademics.

The concern is that this designation comes off as deceptive and has the potential to mislead others regarding training and experience and undermine the public's trust in psychologists, says Lindsay Childress-Beatty, JD, PhD, of APA's Ethics Office. In fact, APA Ethics Code section 5.01—Avoidance of False or Deceptive Statements—specifically addresses the issue of designations, stating that "Psychologists do not make false, deceptive, or fraudulent statements concerning (1) their training, experience, or competence; (2) their academic degrees; (3) their credentials..."

"Would the general public be able to make the distinction between someone in training using these designations and a psychologist who has completed the degree?" she asks. Probably not. Many consumers don't understand the psychology field and the training and credentials necessary to become a psychologist. "The responsibility falls on psychologists and psychology students to educate them by accurately portraying their degrees and qualifications," Childress-Beatty says.

Using PhD(c) and ABD is also a bad idea because these letters can be confused for other degrees, points out Nabil El-Ghoroury, PhD, of the American Psychological Association of Graduate Students. For example, ABD could easily be mistaken for a doctorate of business administration, he says.
Rather than using PhD(c) and ABD next to one's name, he recommends that students use "advanced graduate student" to describe themselves and include a sentence in their cover letters that explains they have completed all their coursework but are still writing their dissertations.

"That's what a cover letter is for," he says. "But when it comes to your resume, email signature or even an online application, only list the degrees you've earned because we all have a responsibility to be ethical and to protect the public."
University of Massachusetts - Boston
Dissertation Tracking Form

Stage 1 - Notification of Candidacy

Graduate Program Directors should complete and forward the appropriate portion of this form to the Office of Graduate Studies at each stage of the dissertation process. Signed copies will be returned when notification of each stage is received and approved, if required, by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Submit when a student has passed the preliminary or comprehensive examination and is ready to begin working on a dissertation proposal.

Graduate Program:

Student Name and ID:

Date of Admission to program:

Date of Admission to Candidacy:

Major Advisor:

Approved by Graduate Program Director

_________________________________________  Date________________________

(signature)

Received by Dean of Graduate Studies

_________________________________________  Date________________________

(signature)
University of Massachusetts - Boston
Dissertation Tracking Form

Stage 2 - Notification of Proposed Dissertation Committee:

Student Name and ID:

Department/Program:

Submit for approval by the Dean of Graduate Studies. This must be done prior to the
committee's approval of a student's dissertation proposal.

Proposed Dissertation Committee. If a committee member is external to the university, please
attach a CV and indicate their relationship to the candidate. If you would like to nominate a
member outside your program to be the Dean of Graduate Studies representative*, please
indicate with a check mark in the appropriate column. The Dean’s initials will indicate approval of your
nomination.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Committee</th>
<th>Dept/Affiliation</th>
<th>Approved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dean, OGS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chair:

Member:

Member:

Member:

Approved by Graduate Program Director

Date:

Approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies

Date:

*According to the 1997-99 Graduate Catalog, "Each dissertation committee must have one
external member designated by the Dean of Graduate Studies as the Dean’s representative. At
the option of the program, the Dean’s representative may serve as a working member from the
inception of the committee, or may participate only at the time of the defense. In either case, the
Dean’s representative is a voting member of the committee and must sign the dissertation.
University of Massachusetts - Boston
Dissertation Tracking Form

Stage 3 - Notification of Proposal Acceptance

Student Name and ID:
Department/Program:

Submit when a student's dissertation proposal has been accepted. Attach a copy of the approved proposal.

Title of Accepted Dissertation Proposal:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dissertation Committee</th>
<th>Dept/Affiliation</th>
<th>Proposal Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chair:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dissertation Committee and their vote on the proposal. ("A" = approve, "AR" = approve with reservations, or "N" = do not approve)

Approved by Graduate Program Director: ____________________________ (signature)
Date: ____________________________

Received by the Dean of Graduate Studies: ____________________________ (signature)
Date: ____________________________
University of Massachusetts - Boston
Dissertation Tracking Form

Stage 4 - Notification of Intent to Defend Dissertation

Student Name and ID:

Department/Program:

Proposed Date of Dissertation Defense:

Final Dissertation Title:

Date of Dissertation Defense (if different from above):

A student's readiness to defend a dissertation must be approved by all parties listed below, and adequate time must be allowed for review of the dissertation by the Dean of Graduate Studies or a representative. Notice of the defense shall appear in the "Mass Media" and "The University Reporter".

Final Dissertation Committee

Chair:

Member:

Member:

Member:

________________________
Approved by Dissertation Committee Chair Advisor – signature/date

________________________
Approved by Graduate Program Director – signature/date

________________________
Received by the Dean of Graduate Studies – signature/date
University of Massachusetts - Boston  
Dissertation Tracking Form  

Stage 5 - Results of Dissertation Defense  

Student Name and ID:  

Department/Program:  

Date of Dissertation Defense:  

Report on the results of the dissertation defense, include the committee's vote.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action by the Committee:</th>
<th>Approve</th>
<th>Disapprove</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Dissertation Committee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dept/Affiliation</th>
<th>Vote</th>
<th>Initials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chair:  

Member:  

Member:  

Member:  

Approved by Dissertation Committee Chair Advisor – signature/date  

Approved by Graduate Program Director – signature/date  

Received by the Dean of Graduate Studies – signature/date  

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APPENDIX K. INCOMPLETE FORM (INTERNAL FORM)

INCOMPLETE CONTRACT FORM

For use by faculty in the College of Liberal Arts, the College of Science and Mathematics, the College of Management, and the College of Nursing and Health Sciences

Student’s Name: ___________________________ SS#: ________________________

Dept / Number: ___________________________ Semester and Year: ______________

Instructor: ________________________________

1. Date of conference ________________ (If for some reason a conference has not been possible, please explain why.)

2. Please list a description of the work to be made up, a plan and a timetable. Include the date that has been agreed upon for completion.

3. Please provide instructions for your department to follow, including details on the student’s progress in the course up to the date of the conference, in case you are not in residence at the time of completion.

NOTE: If an INC is not made up by the end of the grading period two semesters later, it becomes an IF. This will only be changed under extraordinary circumstances.

It is the RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT to ascertain that the instructor is satisfied that the work has been completed.

_________________________________________ ________________
Signature of Instructor Date

_________________________________________ ________________
Signature of Student Date
Month XX, XXXX

Mr. Quatur Q. Aliquam  
Address Address Address 
Address Address Address 
Boston MA 02116

Dear Mr. Aliquam:


Nam et unda necus rem quis si bearum quid quatur aliquam negro cum que re, aut faccunque niatqui debis seriae sus min ex et harcilles idisto molore velique perram eatiati sus ea cupitur, ut od eitectem. Officiant mo volupta tiscil iuriscii lluptas sunt veadant aciusda ndentios quam

Eossumt eunumpa ricipur, odcias ut vitionsserrum iduntotam quis re volum quam re, tempore intelquio beroritiam lui ipit opts esto maximped magni doluptat. 

Tis sequiam caso quibus.

Sincerely,

Firstname Lastname  
Professor of Uducu Ndasimus
APPENDIX M. CNHS GRANT/SCHOLARSHIP PROPOSAL SUBMISSION TIMELINE

CNHS Grant Proposal Submission Timeline

Intent to Apply:
- Notify Associate Dean for Research, Department Chair and send the web link to the grant announcement.
- Submit a completed Pre-Proposal Submission Form to the CNHS Office of Research.

Budget Review Meeting:
- Schedule planning meeting with Associate Dean for Research, CNHS Research Office Grant Admin.
- Draft budget and budget justification according to the grant guidelines.
- Discuss your proposed FTE & that of CNHS co-i's and students or RA's, with your Department Chair.
- Plans for in-kind support or cost-sharing must be approved early.

Final Application Package Due at ORSP:
- CNHS Research Office obtains signatures required on Proposal Routing Form and works with ORSP on final submission.
- Budget and Justification finalized and approved
- PI's and co-i's complete and sign COIs
- Submit all required documentation according to the guidelines of the application to the CNHS Research Office.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6-8 Weeks Prior</th>
<th>5-6 Weeks Prior</th>
<th>4 Weeks Prior</th>
<th>12-15 Business Days</th>
<th>5 Business Days Prior</th>
<th>Application Deadline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Proposal Concept Discussion:
- Work with Assoc. Dean for Research: study aims and proposal
- Communication with program officer
- Collect supporting documentation for subcontracts/consultant
- Contact supporters and/or partners for letters of support/commitment.

Submit Completed Draft Proposal:
- Send proposal narrative, budget and budget justification to Associate Dean for Research, CNHS Grant Admin, Department Chair, and CNHS Dean.
- PI Reviews & signs proposal routing form

Congratulations on submitting your proposal!
Please make sure CNHS Research Office has a copy of all application final documents as well as letters or emails.

4/25/2019