

Leading with Purpose.



PhD Nursing: Program Manual

Mission of the Program

Within a research-intensive context, the Faculty of Nursing's PhD Program exists to prepare nursing scholars for the 21st century who are able to generate new knowledge and facilitate change to advance healthcare outcomes and nursing within a global context.

Vision of the Program

Students in the PhD Program are engaged in and educated for excellence in the development, organization and evaluation of new knowledge. The program is characterized by rigor, flexibility and relevance: rigor in the quality of scholarship and flexibility within and relevance to the discipline of nursing and the student's career goals and research interests.

The graduate will exhibit competencies in each of the following core qualities:

- Advancing nursing
- Enhancing scholarship
- Mobilizing knowledge
- Extending inquiry
- Leading change

Supervision

Your graduate supervisor is the key person to help you plan your program. You should meet with your supervisor prior to the start of your program, and regularly throughout. Faculty and students share responsibility for maintaining open and ongoing communication.

Please refer to the Faculty of Nursing Graduate Supervision Manual, found on the [Faculty of Nursing's Forms and Guidelines page](#) (*Guidelines, Policies, & Information>General Information*) for further information.

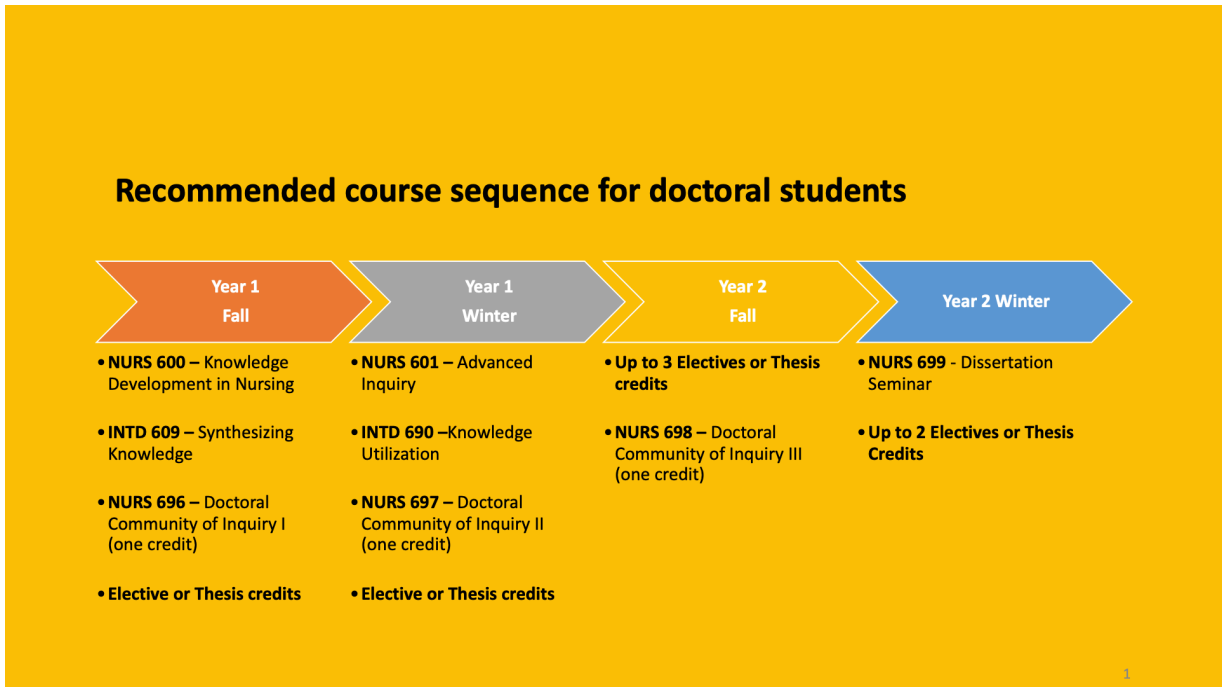
Program Requirements

Students are advised to consult the [GPS Graduate Manual](#) for additional information pertaining to graduate studies at the University of Alberta.

Coursework

For each student, achievement of the doctoral program outcomes will occur through a combination of activities, learning experiences and skills derived from supervision, course participation, scholarly experiences, engagement with faculty and colleagues, and personal reflection. These activities will occur in the Faculty of Nursing and possibly in other University of Alberta / College of Health Sciences faculties.

English is the language of study. All requirements for the degree must be completed within six years from the time a student first registers as a graduate student.



During Year 1, doctoral students should complete the following required courses:

- NURS 600 - Knowledge Development in Nursing
- NURS 601 - Advanced Inquiry
- NURS 609 - Synthesizing Knowledge
- NURS 696 - Doctoral Community of Inquiry I (one credit)
- NURS 697 - Doctoral Community of Inquiry II (one credit)
- NURS 698 - Doctoral Community of Inquiry III (one credit)
- INT D 690 - Knowledge Utilization

Normal full-time studies for doctoral students may be up to 3 courses per term. Please consult with your supervisor to identify any other coursework that you may be interested in taking during your first year.

As you plan your courses/program for your second year, your studies should focus on two areas:

- advanced immersion in the substantive theoretical and conceptual scholarship in the field of your anticipated dissertation project;
- beginning conceptualization and articulation of the research design and methods relevant to your dissertation project.

These focus areas will be addressed in the doctoral candidacy examination, alongside nursing knowledge. By the end of your second year in the doctoral program, you should have a solid grasp of each of the above areas, as you will begin to write your research proposal and prepare for the candidacy examination, which must be completed within 3 years of commencing your program of studies.

Your supervisor (and supervisory committee) should be consulted regarding potential areas of emphasis that are relevant to your emerging research proposal, and their recommendations for elective coursework should be considered.

During your second year, you will have opportunities to explore your passionate areas of interest in courses that are most relevant to your research projects. In addition to the elective courses offered in Nursing, there are numerous ways that elective courses should be accessed:

- Many doctoral students design one or more [independent guided study courses](#) (*Guidelines, Policies, & Information>PhD Program*) that focus on the scholarship or research methods that are most pertinent to your dissertation work. This is your opportunity to immerse deeply in the scholarship that you need to explore to deepen your expertise in your field of inquiry.
- Take a course from other experts in your field beyond our Faculty and University:
 - Many students take graduate courses from other faculties in the College of Health Sciences OR other departments/faculties (Sociology, Political science, Educational psychology, Business, Public health, Community studies, Women's studies, International studies, Indigenous studies). This is your chance to study with interprofessional colleagues and within other disciplinary perspectives. Nursing knowledge draws upon and links to so many other fields in the social sciences and biomedical communities. Build your network and expertise by exploring these opportunities.
 - Would you like to study with an expert in your subject matter area at another Western Canadian university? The University of Alberta participates in the ["Western Deans' Agreement"](#), a long-standing arrangement between universities offering graduate programs in western Canada. This agreement enables graduate students to take courses toward their program from another University with minimal paperwork and no additional tuition.

NURS 699 (Dissertation Seminar) is intentionally timetabled for the winter semester of second year, as experience in recent years has shown this course to be most valuable when taken as students are completing their coursework. Many of the learning activities for NURS 699 will prepare second year students to progress to the oral candidacy examination, and most students will not be ready for this planning at the beginning of the second year.

The Faculty of Nursing offers a number of advanced research methods courses and other electives. In consultation with the supervisor and based on individual program plans, students typically take a total of approximately 24-27 credits of doctoral level courses, which could include research methods and design, statistics, as well as courses in the

student's substantive area. The number and type of courses will vary according to the student's academic background, experience and career goals. Doctoral level courses are numbered 600. Doctoral students may also take 500-level graduate courses offered as advanced focus elective courses in the MN curriculum (NURS 558/559, 568/569, 578/579). (See Graduate [Course listings](#) in the U of A calendar for descriptions under the subject heading Nursing (NURS).

Registration

After consulting with your supervisor and developing an agreed upon plan of studies, you can register online for your other courses using the Bear Tracks link on the University of Alberta website (<https://www.beartracks.ualberta.ca/>)

All PhD students are required to register in at least 9 credits in each Fall and Winter term. The credits may be a combination of coursework and thesis research. (Note: a standard seminar course of 3 hours/week over a 4-month term = 3 credits). Students are registered automatically in THES 906 in both the Spring and Summer terms to maintain full-time registration. For any courses taken in the Spring and Summer terms beyond THES 906, additional course fees will be assessed.

As doctoral students, you are required to maintain full time registration; you are charged a program fee rather than per course. Doctoral students will pay $\frac{1}{3}$ of their tuition in Fall, $\frac{1}{3}$ in Winter, $\frac{1}{6}$ in Spring and $\frac{1}{6}$ in Summer. Full-time doctoral students will not incur extra fees if they enroll in more than 9 credits in the Fall or Winter term.

Over the duration of your doctoral program, you must pay the equivalent of at least three full years of program fees; see [Graduate Instructional and Non-Instructional Fees](#).

Please refer to the following link for information on course and registration information: <http://www.registrarsoffice.ualberta.ca/Registration-and-Courses.aspx>

Examinations

Please refer to the [GPS regulations](#) regarding graduate examinations.

I. Candidacy Examination

All doctoral students are required to pass a doctoral candidacy examination by the end of the third year.

The doctoral candidacy examination is an opportunity for the student to demonstrate the synthesis of their studies as they have integrated course work, explored a range of research and academic experiences, and engaged in scholarly mentorship by faculty and peers during the initial years of their program. The exam consists of a written proposal and oral examination. It follows successful completion of all required coursework and marks an important milestone in the student's preparation to formally begin the research project. The exam is also an opportunity for the student to formally share their dissertation project with the supervisory committee and external examiners, and to learn from the experts who gather to serve as examiners in this process. This process provides a final opportunity to refine the research proposal before progressing to implementation of the research project.

The candidacy examination in the Faculty of Nursing assesses formative doctoral program outcomes in three key areas:

1. Specialized knowledge of the substantive area of inquiry as addressed in the research proposal and informed by an appropriate scope of relevant literature;
2. Critical understanding of historical, philosophical, theoretical, and scientific foundations of nursing knowledge; and
3. Rigorous conceptualization of research methods and design appropriate to the research question.

All of the activities leading up to the doctoral candidacy examination (i.e. coursework, dissertation seminar, community of inquiry learning opportunities, research and teaching assistantships, and colloquia) are an investment in the development of the research proposal and competencies to prepare for implementation of the dissertation project.

Please refer to the Faculty of Nursing [Doctoral Candidacy Examination Guidelines](#) (*Guidelines, Policies, & Information>PhD Program*) for further information.

II. Final Doctoral Examination

Doctoral students typically complete requirements for the degree sometime between 4 and 6 years following commencement of their studies. Program requirements must be completed within six years of the time a student first registers in doctoral studies.

Candidates for the PhD prepare a dissertation based on their research project and are examined orally both on the proposal (at the time of the Doctoral Candidacy Examination) and completed thesis (at the time of the Final Doctoral Examination).

It is the responsibility of the Supervisor and the student to be fully apprised of the [GPS regulations](#) governing the composition of the final examining committee, time lines, and the details of the examination process. The supervisor is responsible for organizing the Final Doctoral Examination.

Every Final Doctoral Examining Committee must have an External Examiner i.e., an arm's length examiner from outside the University of Alberta. Before the final exam is scheduled and the thesis is forwarded to the External Examiner, the supervisory committee members must sign off on the preliminary acceptance of the thesis. The purpose of this process is to ensure the thesis is vetted by the supervisor(s) and all supervisory committee members and to verify that it is of sufficient substance and quality to proceed to the final examination.

The examining committee should conduct a final examination, based largely on the thesis. The student should make a brief presentation about the thesis. The most time should be allotted to the arm's length examiners, including the External Examiner, while the least time is allocated to the supervisor(s). The decision of the examining committee will be based both on the content of the thesis and on the student's ability to defend it.

Please refer to the Faculty of Nursing [Final Doctoral Examination Timeline](#) (*Guidelines, Policies, & Information>PhD Program*) for further information.

Thesis

The thesis is developed and implemented by the student with guidance and direction from the supervisor and supervisory committee members. During the first year of graduate coursework, the thesis outline should be established as it will increasingly become the focus of course assignments and other learning outcomes related to program progression. Students are encouraged to discuss their proposal with other committee members, experts in the area, and other students.

It is expected that the student will write the thesis without substantial assistance from others or Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools. Generative AI is a form of machine learning that uses algorithms to learn from large datasets to then create or generate a diverse array of content (writing, images, music, code etc.) based on user prompts or inputs. Importantly, AI writing tools may contain factually incorrect or outdated information, and generate biased, racist, sexist, or otherwise problematic statements. When generative AI is used, it must be properly referenced. Additional information is available from the [Office of the Provost and Vice-President \(Academic\)](#) and [Centre for Teaching and Learning](#). Academic copy editing for theses, dissertations and publications is available for a fee through the [Academic Success Centre](#) and the [University of Alberta Libraries](#). When students engage editors or other academic services for writing assistance, it is intended that such services will improve the student's writing capabilities to submit better work. Plagiarism is considered to be academic misconduct and will be investigated pursuant to the University of Alberta Code of Student Behavior.

Graduate students have the option to use either a traditional thesis format or a paper-based thesis format. This is a critically important decision and should be explored by the student and supervisor immediately upon entering the graduate program. When the option for the paper-based or traditional thesis is selected, early planning should clearly document the likely scholarly outputs and timelines. Supervisor and student need to weigh the pros and cons of each approach using some of the considerations below:

- Graduate student writing and analytical skills
- Familiarity and comfort with the publication process
- Nature of methodology and scholarly outputs
- Timelines and available resources
- Overall structure of the scholarly work to be reported in the thesis

Please refer to the [FoN Thesis Guidelines \(Traditional and Paper-Based\)](#) (*Guidelines, Policies, & Information>General Information*) for additional information.

Students and supervisors must ensure that the magnitude or scope of the research is such that the thesis can be completed within a reasonable period of time. As students are responsible for the cost of their thesis research, it is also essential that the Supervisory Committee and student review the budget thoroughly before the project is undertaken to ensure that costs are reasonable.

Policies Regarding Thesis Research

Following successful completion of the Candidacy Examination, the supervisor and student are ready to submit the thesis proposal to the Research Ethics Board (HREB). All health research involving human subjects must be reviewed and receive ethical clearance on

behalf of the University before any data collection is initiated and prior to submitting any applications for funding to a funding body and/or health care agency. Ethics review guidelines and forms are available from the [Research Ethics Office website](#).

The student, in consultation with the Thesis Supervisor, may obtain a letter or letters of support in principle from potential agencies where data collection may be carried out. It is emphasized that such documentation from an agency does not constitute a commitment on the part of the agency, nor does it constitute ethical approval; operational ethics approvals may also be required.

Students are typically not listed as Principal Investigators on ethics applications at U of A in the Alberta Research Information Services (ARISE) System. The Supervisor applies on the student's behalf. The exception is REB 1 & 2 where the student is listed as the Principal Investigator and the Supervisor is able to review the application under "supervisor mode."

Institution/Agency Research Review:

In addition to University ethical clearance, a health care agency review of the proposal is required if the sample is to be drawn from or the research is to be conducted in an agency. The student, in consultation with the Thesis Supervisor, should investigate carefully the protocol and time frame of the agency research review process. Normally, the Thesis Supervisor will accompany the student if an appearance before an agency review committee is required. In the case of agencies that do not have a formal review process, a letter of support and/or permission to access respondents or records must be obtained.

Intellectual Property and Co-Authored Papers

Graduate students have [intellectual property](#) rights protected under copyright law and University of Alberta intellectual property policies. Unless they have signed an agreement stating otherwise, graduate students "have the right to own the copyright for their own written or artistic work, or computer software" ([Intellectual Property Guidelines](#) for Graduate Students and Supervisors, 2004, p. 7).

Papers emanating from the thesis may be sole authored or co-authored. The student should be the first author of all papers and hold primary responsibility for the conceptualization of the study, analyses, interpretation and writing. Deviation from this practice should be reviewed by the supervisory committee, and agreement and rationale for such variation must be documented in writing with permission from the student. In co-authored work, documentation should include a description of the respective contribution of all authors.

A discussion on authorship for each of the proposed papers needs to take place early in the course of the development of the research work. Resulting agreements should be documented in an authorship plan that specifies the anticipated co-authors from the supervisory committee, their roles for each publication (as per the guidelines below), as well as journals that will be targeted for submission of manuscripts.

[GPS Guidelines for Authorship](#) state that:

1. all authors should have made a substantial contribution to the conception, design, analysis, or interpretation of data;

2. they should have been involved in writing and revising the manuscript for intellectual content;
3. they should have approved the final draft and be able to defend the published paper.

Those who have made other contributions to the work (such as data collection without interpretation) or only parts of the above criteria should be credited in the acknowledgements, but not receive authorship.

Residency Requirement

The Faculty of Nursing does not have a program requirement for doctoral students to spend a minimum period of residence on campus. Individualized plans for period(s) of on-campus study are based on supervisory expectations and student needs and goals. These plans may be influenced by opportunities for scholarly socialization, networking, and mentorship; as well as research training, funding opportunities, graduate teaching and research assistantships, and student career plans. An agreement for on-campus study must be explicitly negotiated and documented by the graduate supervisor and the student as part of the application and admission process. For students admitted prior to Fall 2023, the [Agreement for Planned Residency form](#) should be completed and submitted to the Graduate Office.

Ethics and Academic Citizenship Requirement

Graduate students are required by the Faculty of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) to fulfill academic activity in academic integrity and ethics education prior to convocation. The Ethics and Academic Citizenship Requirement will consist of two zero-credit, self-paced online courses: [INT D 710: Ethics and Academic Citizenship and INT D 720: Advanced Ethics and Academic Citizenship](#). There are no instructional fees associated with these courses.

Professional Development Requirement

Professional development is the active acquisition of skills, knowledge, and mindset to realize one's strengths and potential in all environments. It sets up individuals for success in achieving their goals while giving them the ability to meet, exceed and adapt to personal, career and societal responsibilities within the context of a changing world. The University of Alberta Professional Development Requirement includes an individualized career plan document called an Individual Development Plan (IDP) and the completion of eight hours of professional development activities inspired by your career plan. Students are required to complete and submit the [Individual Development Plan & Professional Development Completion Form](#) to the Faculty of Nursing's Graduate Office in order to convocate. More information is available on the [GPS website](#).

Field Research Training

Graduate students engaged in field research must complete University of Alberta [Field Research Safety training](#) prior to commencing any field work. This training includes an online eLearning component (2-3 hours), followed by an in-person or online google session (3 hours). See this [FAQ resource](#).

Funding your Education

Awards and Scholarships

The University of Alberta has a wide array of awards, scholarships and prizes to assist in funding your graduate studies.

Awards, scholarships and prizes, which are awarded to outstanding applicants, are funded by a variety of sources including the Government of Canada, Government of Alberta, and the generosity of the university's many donors. Some awards are exclusive to specific programs.

Please spend some time exploring the many scholarship options available to you through the [GPS Scholarships and Awards page](#). View each award's description, eligibility, nominations and application criteria by clicking on the respective award opportunity on the left. For information on holding awards and award policies, please consult the [Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research \(GPS\) Scholarships & Awards Manual](#).

All GPS award competitions are adjudicated by the Graduate Scholarship Committee (GSC), which is a standing committee of the GPS Council. For information on the GSC Policies and Procedures, please consult the [GSC Handbook](#).

The Faculty of Nursing also has awards established through the generosity of donors and alumni. Calls for applications to these awards will be circulated by the Nursing Graduate Office. These awards are adjudicated by the FoN Graduate Awards Committee.

Graduate Assistantships

All graduate students are welcome to apply for a Graduate Assistantship position (Graduate Teaching Assistantship [GTA] or Graduate Research Assistantship [GRA]). Students will be notified by the Nursing Graduate Office of opportunities for these positions as they become available. Qualifications and relevant training and experience for the teaching and research duties are the primary selection criteria used to evaluate applications. Students will typically be hired to work from 3 to 12 hours per week during the Fall and/or Winter term.

Contracts for GTA/GRA's are governed by an agreement between the University and the Graduate Students' Association which provides guidelines for remuneration and hours of work. Graduate Assistantships serve as an apprenticeship for further academic or professional careers. More information is available on the [GPS' Assistantship page](#).

If you have any additional questions regarding Awards, Assistantships or Financial Support, please contact the Nursing Graduate Office ([Student Services Portal](#)).

Graduate Teaching and Learning Program

Although many doctoral students are interested in academic career pathways, many do not have sufficient preparation for the teaching responsibilities inherent in academic roles. The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research and the University Teaching Services have collaborated in developing the [Graduate Teaching and Learning Program](#) to provide opportunities for graduate students to develop knowledge and practical skills to prepare for

careers in post-secondary teaching and to record this achievement on their transcripts.

The University of Alberta has a formal program (non-credit, no tuition fee) that graduate students may complete during their doctoral studies. There are four levels of courses that successful completion of each level is recorded on graduate student's transcripts. Doctoral students are strongly encouraged to consider this program to complement the development of your research skills.