

Graduate Program Quality Assurance (QA) Review: 2024-25
Excerpted Report
Faculty of Nursing (FoN)

Graduate Program Review

Programs:	Master in Nursing; Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing <i>Note: The NP focus within the Master of Nursing program underwent a separate QA review process in 2023-24 and has not been included in this report.</i>
Date of Review:	March 20, 2025
Reviewers:	Dr. Sally Thorne, Committee Chair, School of Nursing, University of British Columbia; Dr. Samantha Mayo, External Committee Member, Lawrence Bloomberg Faculty of Nursing, University of Toronto; Dr. Mark Hall, GPS Council Representative & Internal Member, University of Alberta.

Program Strengths
The review committee identified several key strengths of the programs: • The programs attract a high-caliber of students and effectively support their progression to completion. • Both the Master’s of Nursing and PhD programs have a robust student advisement system in place, covering admissions, orientation, onboarding, and program navigation. Staff and faculty specializing in these processes are highly enthusiastic and function as a collaborative team. • Specific to the Master’s of Nursing program, formalized academic development of graduate students within a cohort model, including innovations such as the Community of Inquiry courses and TAG sessions, has resulted in noticeable benefits to students’ academic work. Pedagogical strategies designed to improve efficiencies have clearly kept student learning needs in mind. • Students in both programs take pride in their program’s strong national reputation and expressed satisfaction with the high quality of learning opportunities and experiences. • There is a strong sense of community among students and faculty. • Students value the accessibility of synchronous virtual and hybrid (online and classroom) classes, and the pedagogical approaches and classroom setups are thoughtfully designed.

• The leadership within the Faculty of Nursing and the strong administrative staff team are perceived as building and sustaining a positive culture. • Early-career faculty benefit from mentorship meetings, co-supervision, and co-teaching opportunities that effectively support skill development in teaching and graduate supervision. • Demonstrated intentionality to include Indigenous ways of knowing and access, community and belonging principles into curriculum and student support processes.	
Teaching and Learning Environment	
1. Recommendation: Encourage continued attention to program QA and graduate outcomes, potentially expanding the portfolios within the Graduate Advising team to manage these processes.	
Faculty of Nursing Response: In September 2024, the Faculty of Nursing (FoN) reappointed a Director of QA. The appointee is a PhD-educated faculty member with over 15 years of continuous teaching experience in both the undergraduate and MN (NP) programs and currently serving as a graduate advisor for the MN programs. The Director of QA works across the undergraduate and graduate programs to harmonize evaluation processes and metrics, reporting directly to the Vice Dean, FoN to ensure alignment with institutional priorities and leadership support for key policy and practice changes. A QA Coordinator, with a Master of Science in Analytics, was hired in November 2024 to support the Director of QA. Their combined expertise provides rigorous data analysis, reporting and coordination of QA activities. The Director and Coordinator meet regularly with FoN leadership to provide QA updates, and submit biannual reports to the FoN Council. The Graduate Advising team is actively involved in QA processes, working closely with the QA Coordinator to facilitate communication with students and to contribute data and insights gathered through Graduate Office activities. Survey reports prepared by the QA Director and Coordinator are reviewed by the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, who contextualizes the findings and presents them to the Graduate Executive Committee.	Action Plan: Efforts are underway to establish clear protocols for how QA data is used to inform decision-making across the FoN. In parallel, work is being done to strengthen feedback loops by ensuring that any program changes arising from QA findings are systematically communicated back to the QA unit. This will enable ongoing monitoring, repeated measurement, and continuous evaluation to support evidence-informed improvements.

Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) Response: GPS welcomes and appreciates this recommendation and the Faculty’s action plan.	Action Plan: GPS continues to enhance its use of data analytics to inform ongoing QA. This includes leveraging data on student progression, completion rates, and time-to-completion to identify areas for improvement and best practices. We will provide this data to the Faculty through the GPS Council and the Graduate Leadership Advisory Committee. We also share the data and trends with the Faculty’s dean on an annual basis.
2. Recommendation: Review the course offerings in the FoN and across the CHS with respect to reducing the proportion that are at a general or survey level and exploring student access to courses at a higher level and/or in more specialized research methodology. Working with the CHS to consider opportunities for interdisciplinary course offerings may allow for a wider repertoire of learning opportunities for students as well as increased opportunities to map specialized courses to faculty expertise.	
Faculty of Nursing Response: Working with College of Health Sciences (CHS) partners, the FoN participates in an initiative to strengthen interdisciplinary course offerings and, over the long term, to harness specialized expertise from across the CHS. As part of this effort, the CHS Associate Deans of Graduate Studies are assembling a master spreadsheet of every graduate-level course in each faculty. This shared inventory will reveal unnecessary overlap and highlight fresh opportunities for collaborative, cross-disciplinary learning.	Action Plan: The spreadsheet of all CHS courses will be shared and used to: a) check for redundancies, and where appropriate, reduce potential duplication, and b) share CHS interdisciplinary specialized research methodology courses with nursing graduate students and supervisors. We will also create a targeted strategy to advertise FoN graduate courses that welcome enrollment by students from other faculties to further augment interdisciplinary learning opportunities.
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) Response: GPS recognizes the critical importance of providing graduate students with access to advanced, specialized, and methodologically rigorous coursework that aligns with both cutting-edge research and diverse faculty expertise. GPS supports the Faculty’s plan to compile a list of CHS courses to inform and help Nursing graduate students and supervisors. GPS suggests exploring options for advanced quantitative, qualitative, mixed-methods, and implementation science methodologies that are directly relevant to health sciences research. This could involve developing new courses or identifying existing advanced methodology courses in other faculties that could be made accessible to FoN and CHS students.	Action Plan: The University is in the process of acquiring a Curriculum Management System that will provide systematic and comprehensive coverage of graduate courses. This system will provide the Faculty with opportunities to explore the current and existing research methods courses across the College of Health Sciences and the University.
3. Recommendation: Monitor the impact of accessibility options such as hybrid course delivery.	
Faculty of Nursing Response: The increased adoption of hybrid, hyflex, and online course delivery formats over the past five years reflects both global demand and advancements in educational technology. These delivery models are intended to improve the accessibility of	Action Plan: The FoN QA unit will continue to track and analyze the geographical locations from which students access graduate programs, providing ongoing insight into the reach and accessibility of program delivery. To further assess the impact of hybrid

core academic content, including lectures and seminars, by allowing students greater flexibility in how and where they engage with course materials. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, we have kept various course delivery options including in person, hybrid, and online modalities. We acknowledge that successful graduate education extends beyond access to content alone. Student learning outcomes are closely tied to meaningful engagement with peers, faculty, university services, and broader graduate student opportunities. While technological enhancements may facilitate access to instructional content, it remains unclear to what extent they support or limit access to the full spectrum of graduate-level educational experiences. This warrants further investigation to ensure that alternate delivery methods do not inadvertently compromise the quality or comprehensiveness of students' academic and professional development.	learning, an additional item will be added to the entry survey to determine the number of students who pursue graduate-level nursing education via hybrid course delivery. In collaboration with the FoN Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, the FoN QA unit will also develop and implement a targeted survey to explore how graduate nursing students are able to develop an online presence when they access and engage with peers, faculty, university services, and broader graduate student opportunities. Findings from this initiative will inform efforts to optimize and refine alternative delivery models, with the goal of enhancing student learning, engagement, and overall program accessibility.
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) Response: GPS acknowledges and appreciates the recommendation to monitor the impact of accessibility options such as hybrid course delivery. We also agree with the Faculty's important point that the effectiveness and impact of different modalities must be rigorously monitored and evaluated to ensure they genuinely enhance the student experience and learning outcomes without compromising academic rigor or community engagement.	Action Plan: GPS suggests the following as key metrics that help the Faculty in ensuring enhanced student experience: ● Tracking participation rates in both in-person and online components, forum activity, and interaction with instructors and peers. ● Comparing student performance and achievement of learning outcomes in hybrid courses versus traditional in-person courses. ● Gathering feedback through surveys, focus groups, and direct communication regarding the convenience, effectiveness, and overall satisfaction with hybrid delivery. ● Assessing the impact of hybrid delivery on faculty preparation time, teaching methods, and overall experience, ensuring adequate support and resources are provided. ● Evaluating whether hybrid options are indeed broadening access for students who face geographical, time-based, or other accessibility challenges. ● Monitoring whether flexible delivery options positively or negatively correlate with student retention and timely program completion.

Student Experience	
4. Recommendation: Monitor the evolution of the Community Inquiry course contents as well as the TAG and other student support offerings to minimize redundancies and overlap, so that the value of these activities remains apparent to all students and the community of practice you are developing with the cohort is optimized.	
Faculty of Nursing Response: Community of Inquiry courses are offered in both the MN curriculum (NURS 589, 590, 591) and the PhD curriculum (NURS 696, 697, 698). Regular, systematic review and revision of these courses, together with the Thursday Afternoon Graduate Sessions (TAGS), will ensure both forums stay relevant, complementary, and responsive to students' evolving needs.	Action Plan: We will convene the Community of Inquiry instructors and the Graduate Office to streamline course and TAGS content, eliminate redundancies, and pinpoint gaps that warrant new material. Our review will also ensure content keeps pace with evolving learning contexts and graduate-supervision practices. Graduate students will continue to shape the agenda by proposing session topics that meet their learning needs, and we will collect post-session feedback to track any remaining overlap and to surface emerging priorities.
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) Response: GPS supports the Faculty's action plan and its emphasis on student supervision and student learning needs and experience.	
5. Recommendation: With respect to international and remote students, consider whether some of the skillsets currently emphasized in the Community Inquiry series etc. might be more appropriately situated in an onboarding/orientation series prior to the beginning of the academic year into which they are being admitted.	
Faculty of Nursing Response: We recognize that MN and PhD students begin their programs with widely varied backgrounds, including those studying internationally or remotely. Our aim is to help every learner develop the skills and scholarly mindset needed for success by working with them to pinpoint their learning priorities and connect them promptly to the right resources.	Action Plan: Community of Inquiry instructors and the Graduate Office will identify which key skills should be introduced before students start their programs, through welcome emails or during the mandatory graduate orientation. Incoming students will also be directed to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies orientation resources, including the University of Alberta online modules tailored to graduate and international learners. Orientation offers the first exposure to these competencies, and the Community of Inquiry courses then build on them throughout the program, giving students repeated opportunities to practise and refine their skills as their studies evolve.
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) Response: GPS recognizes the importance of enhancing the pre-arrival and early-stage support for our international and remote graduate students.	Action Plan: GPS recognizes that these student populations often face unique challenges related to cultural adaptation, academic expectations, research methodologies, and navigating a new academic environment. Providing foundational skillsets and orientation

	before their arrival can significantly improve their transition, reduce early-year stress, and foster a stronger sense of belonging and preparedness. GPS orientation sessions in August and January provide community-building opportunities. GPS also requires all graduate students to complete the Ethics and Academic Citizenship course in the first term, providing them with key elements related to academic integrity, research ethics, and an understanding of the Canadian academic and Indigenous context. This course is self-paced and offered online, allowing international students to complete modules from their home countries and remote students to participate effectively.
6. Recommendation: With continued innovations in group advising, virtual/hybrid learning and group capstone projects, continue to monitor for the possibility of new inequities in the learning experience being created between different groups of students (e.g., distance vs. on campus learners).	
Faculty of Nursing Response: The MN Community of Inquiry courses were moved to fully online last year, to ensure that all students had the equal opportunity to engage with each other in a common mode of delivery/engagement. The PhD Community of Inquiry classes alternate between hybrid and fully online for the same reason.	Action Plan: QA surveys will continue to be sent to all incoming (and continuing) graduate students to invite students to share their experiences during courses, capstone, and supervision; responses will be monitored for any potential inequity including on campus vs hybrid, or group capstone vs thesis supervision. Further, through our intended work to evaluate student accessibility (see above), we anticipate that differences may exist between students using different learning modalities. This will provide another interim set of data capable of producing insights into potential group differences leading to inequities between groups.
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) Response: GPS supports this feedback-based decision-making. The key metrics suggested in the above that help the Faculty in ensuring enhanced student experience would be helpful to gather data on differences in learning experiences in relation to different modalities.	
7. Recommendation: With respect to the panel interviews for prospective PhD applicants, continue to monitor this for its effectiveness in supporting the selection of high-quality candidates for admission and potentially sharing insights obtained with the wider academic nursing community. This may be of particular relevance to the selection of international students, given the complexities inherent in language competency expectations within nursing and the differential access to professional engagement/employment opportunities as compared to domestic students.	

Faculty of Nursing Response: While an admission interview has been traditionally used across a variety of graduate programs at U of A, we began this in the FoN for PhD applicants in Winter 2023. The PhD panel interview contributes an important element towards holistic admissions, intended to further diversify our selection of highly skilled and capable PhD students. We have just completed our second cycle of PhD panel interviews. Amendments to interview processes have been ongoing based on early feedback elicited from faculty interviewers, students, supervisors, and observations from the FoN Associate Dean of Graduate Studies.	Action Plan: As the PhD panel interview process continues to unfold, we will continue to monitor the effectiveness of the interview in achieving our intended goals using a variety of data points including student entry and exit survey data, student outcome measures, and faculty perceptions. Depending on the richness of the data and subject to ethics approval, some of this QA data may be used to share insights with the broader academic nursing community.
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) Response: GPS supports the Faculty's approach in continuous evaluation of the PhD applicant interview as a crucial component of the holistic admissions process that offers a qualitative dimension beyond academic transcripts and written applications.	Action Plan: As part of a systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of the PhD applicant interviews, GPS suggests some metrics as follows: • Correlation between interview scores/assessments and student performance in the program (e.g., course grades, research milestones, thesis progress). • Retention and completion rates of students who underwent panel interviews, disaggregated by domestic and international status. • Qualitative feedback from faculty interviewers regarding the insights gained from the interviews that were not evident in other application materials. • Feedback from admitted students on their interview experience and its alignment with their preparedness for the program.
Faculty and Supervision	
8. Recommendation: Continue developing approaches to faculty mentorship to ensure all assistant professors are appropriately supported in their career progress.	
Faculty of Nursing Response: At the time of this self-report, 16 Tenure Track faculty had started since 2019, 15 of whom were hired as Assistant Professors. We are aware and continue to assess and revise our approach to provide mentorship and support for assistant professors.	Action Plan: We will create avenues for assistant professors to meet together, and in mentorship with other faculty, to provide support for graduate supervision and teaching. For example: • We will create regular meeting times for Assistant Professors (and other faculty) to work through the GPS "Graduate Student Supervisory Development Program."

	(Faculty will review the module prior to gathering, and discuss content together with each other). • We will continue to offer Graduate Supervisory Discussion Forums to support supervision and offer mentorship. (Faculty will be invited to complete a survey to identify mentorship and graduate supervision topics for discussion during monthly meetings in the upcoming year.) • Assistant Professors will meet regularly (typically monthly or every second month) with the Associate Dean of Research. • Assistant Professors will meet regularly (typically quarterly) with the Dean and Vice Dean. We will consider other faculty supports that will ultimately build a scholarly community that supports student development, deepen familiarity with curriculum and program changes, promote consistency in expectations for graduate students, share supervisory experiences, and explore current literature on supervisory development and best practices.
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) Response: GPS appreciates the Faculty’s actions in supporting new faculty members by providing regular PD and learning opportunities on supervision and mentorship and such emerging areas in higher education as generative AI. The GPS supervision development training provides new faculty members with opportunities to expand their knowledge in the following areas: • Building and maintaining relationships • Strategies for productive communication • Guiding research and scholarship • Conflict management and resolution • Health and academic productivity • Career and professional development	Action Plan: GPS works closely with the Faculty to ensure that newly hired faculty members complete the Graduate Supervision Development Training program. GPS also collaborates with the Faculty to promote graduate supervision and mentorship culture and best practices among new and senior faculty members.
9. Recommendation: Monitor opportunities to lighten faculty teaching workload in appropriate ways without compromising the quality of the learning experience for students.	

Faculty of Nursing Response: Typically, Tenure Track faculty have a work allocation of 40% teaching, 40% research, and 20% service. The teaching weight is usually 10% per 3-credit graduate course. The Faculty is taking a number of approaches to support faculty workload. Assistant Professors are provided with one teaching release in year 1 and one teaching release in year 2 of their employment. Assistant Professors are also provided with a research start-up fund. This fund can be used for a wide range of expenditures that support the faculty member’s research program, which may reduce their research workload (publication fees, research assistant time, technology, conferences, etc.). In addition, the FoN Research Office works closely with new professors to build support resources into their budgets, to reduce their overall research workload. For example, three Assistant Professors recently pooled their resources to hire one full-time research coordinator. The FoN Research Office provides administrative and research support, including meeting administration, budget development, report preparation, assistance with grant and ethics applications, and data collection coordination, management, and knowledge dissemination, along with supporting recruitment and training of junior research team members.	Action Plan: A Teaching Release Policy and Procedure is under development to adopt core principles and criteria for granting teaching release to faculty members.
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) Response: GPS supports this recommendation and the Faculty’s initiative to develop a teaching release policy and procedure. GPS encourages the Faculty to increase investment in and strategic utilization of graduate teaching assistants (TAs), sessional instructors, and other instructional support personnel to assist with grading, lab supervision, discussion sections, and other course components, to free up faculty time for research and advanced supervision.	
Resources	
10. Recommendation: Adequate teaching spaces and faculty support for intentionally designed high quality hybrid learning will be required if this is to continue as an ongoing approach to accessible learning opportunities.	

Faculty of Nursing Response: The FoN eLearning Support Team has an array of equipment for use by graduate instructors in their hybrid courses. This includes 6 Meeting Owls that allow for a personal learning environment by providing a 360 view of the classroom allowing students online an immersive experience even if they are not physically in the classroom. The eLearning Support Team also provides hands-on training or setup of equipment to provide the best possible experience for a hybrid environment.	Action Plan: The FoN Teaching and Learning Office continually receives and considers feedback from hybrid instructors on the rooms they are assigned and the equipment available to them. This office will continue to be aware of new and emerging technology and equipment that might be of use within the program. The FoN will engage in discussions about optimal modalities for teaching graduate courses. If hybrid continues as an ongoing approach for accessible learning opportunities, we will consult experts in hybrid pedagogy (e.g. eLearning Support Team, the Centre for Teaching and Learning) to provide guidance about how to intentionally design teaching and learning via a hybrid modality.
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) Response: GPS supports the Faculty's action plan in continuing to incorporate emerging technologies in creating accessible learning opportunities. GPS encourages the allocation of appropriate time and resources for faculty to design, develop, and refine high-quality hybrid courses, recognizing that this often requires a greater initial investment of effort compared to traditional course design. As suggested in the action plan, the Centre for Teaching and Learning provides excellent support for faculty members and instructors in designing novel, creative, and accessible teaching and learning environments.	
11. Recommendation: Continue exploring strategies for allocation of space to ensure that FoN protects its capacity to deliver services and supports for which it is responsible.	
Faculty of Nursing Response: As the FoN participated in a space review and found to have one of the most space efficient areas on campus, we do not foresee risk for a space reduction. The FoN's current space allocation meets current and short-term needs. University processes are in place to request additional space, should our space needs expand. The University's space allocation policy is also under review and will be revised.	Action Plan: The FoN assesses its space needs on an annual basis or when a new space request is submitted by a faculty member. We also update our space allocation practices to align with changes made to the central University policy.
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) Response: GPS supports the Faculty's approach in space allocation, which is in line with the University Policy.	

12. Recommendation: Continue to look for opportunities for collaboration among and between Faculties in the CHS, including interdisciplinary co-supervision, interdisciplinary course offerings, strengthened systems for fair allocation of credit for collaborative funded research, appropriate tuition allocation for cross-taught courses.	
Faculty of Nursing Response: Integration of the FoN within the College of Health Sciences has the potential opportunity to emphasize our disciplinary uniqueness within the broader interdisciplinary context. There are opportunities for interdisciplinary co-supervision and committees, but the primary supervisor for a FoN graduate student will be a nursing faculty member. Co-supervision models are strongly supported and essential for new Assistant Professors prior to having a PhD student complete candidacy. Interdisciplinary courses are denoted with the prefix INT D, but students from other faculties are welcome to join FoN courses, where appropriate, with approval of the course instructor. The FoN Research Office works closely with the U of A Research Services Office to track, support, and give credit for collaborative interdisciplinary research. At the UofA, the majority of tuition revenue from courses remains with the faculty offering the course. If a student takes a course offered by the FoN, the majority of the student's tuition for that course comes to the FoN.	Action Plan: Continue to support a culture of co-supervision, which further offers mentorship and supervisory development. The Graduate Office will create course “marketing” materials to advertise courses available to graduate students from other faculties. The FoN Nursing Research Office will track all funded research by faculty in all roles (NPA, PA, Co-Investigator, Decision-Maker, or Collaborator), and will continue to work with the University to strengthen ways in which to denote credit for their work in collaborative research. The FoN will collaborate as recommended to confirm tuition allocation for cross-taught courses.
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) Response: GPS supports the Faculty's approach to collaboration, co-supervision, and interdisciplinary course offering.	Action Plan: We will develop guidelines and best practices for interdisciplinary co-supervision, emphasizing the benefits to student learning, research breadth, and faculty collaboration. This will include practical advice on defining supervisory roles, managing expectations, and navigating intellectual property.
13. Recommendation: Continue monitoring of timely and responsive IT support.	
Faculty of Nursing Response: At the U of A, IT services such as software installation and classroom technology troubleshooting are managed centrally by the Information Services and Technology service unit. In order to remain compliant with the University's operating	Action Plan: The Faculty will explore collaboration and pursue dialogue with IST in order to ensure prompt deskside support.

model, the FoN is not authorized to allocate or assign internal resources for bedside IT support for students or classroom environments. This ensures consistency with institutional protocols and maintains compliance with established administrative structures.	
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) Response: GPS encourages the Faculty to establish and monitor key performance indicators for response times to IT support requests, from initial contact to resolution. This can be tracked across different categories of support (e.g., general inquiries, urgent technical issues, specialized software support) and will provide data to measure the efficiency and quality of IT support, which can be shared with the IT support team to ensure the Faculty receives appropriate support.	
Additional Recommendations	
14. Recommendation: Conduct an alumni survey specifically attending to aspects that may be influenced by some of the fundamental transitions such as residency, virtual learning and reduced direct faculty supervision.	
Faculty of Nursing Response: Since its reinstatement in November 2024, the FoN QA unit has conducted a comprehensive review of current post-graduation data collection practices. This process identified significant gaps in data collection since 2020, primarily due to budgetary constraints. In collaboration with the FoN Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, the QA unit identified key areas for improvement in the existing exit survey. As a result, the survey has been revised to better capture meaningful feedback on the student experience and post-graduation outcomes. In addition, the QA unit, in collaboration with the FoN Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, developed new alumni and employer surveys to gather valuable insights into graduate preparedness, employment outcomes, and workforce integration. These tools complement the exit survey and together provide a more comprehensive foundation for evaluating the effectiveness of program structures and transitional experiences.	Action Plan: The exit survey will be further refined to include targeted questions exploring: • Students’ experiences with hybrid and online learning • The experiences of remote and international students, including access to peers, faculty, university services, and broader graduate student opportunities • Perceptions of group supervision (for those completing a group capstone) To improve exit survey response rates, several strategies will be implemented including updating the survey to reduce the number of questions, providing selectable options where possible, optimizing the timing of survey administration, and using a multi-pronged approach to dissemination. The QA unit will conduct a comparative analysis of supervision experiences before and after the implementation of group capstones to assess its effectiveness and impact.

	The alumni and employer surveys will continue to be leveraged to assess the longer-term outcomes of key program transitions.
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) Response: GPS appreciates the ongoing efforts in the development of new student and alumni surveys.	Action Plan: GPS is currently working on a project conducting focus group discussions with graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, and graduate supervisors on campus to learn about their experiences and stories to inform the development of new resources for students, postdocs, and faculty. GPS also participates in the Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey. Once the data is analyzed, the results related to Nursing will be shared with the Faculty.
15. Recommendation: With regard to the minimum guaranteed funding packages, the Faculty of Nursing may consider permitting students with ongoing professional practice engagements (i.e., “professional student track”) to decline the funding package.	
Faculty of Nursing Response: Guaranteed Minimum Doctoral Funding at U of A will begin in Fall 2025. The option for working professionals to waive a funding package is currently in place. As of June 2025, the FoN defined working professionals as students working $\geq$ 0.5 FTE in professional jobs related to nursing or healthcare. This is outlined on our website in the “Guaranteed Minimum Doctoral Funding: FoN Guiding Principles and Policy Document.”	Action Plan: Definitions of working professionals will continue to be monitored and revised as needed.
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) Response: GPS appreciates the Faculty’s partnership, collaboration, and discussion of the eligibility criteria for the Minimum Guaranteed Funding with the Faculty of Nursing. The eligibility criteria provide clear and transparent guidelines to help and advise PhD applicants and candidates.	Action Plan: GPS has created a funding dashboard and will collect data on the number of Nursing PhD students who receive the minimum guaranteed funding and those who are not eligible to support the Faculty in its strategic decision-making.
16. Recommendation: With regard to minimum guaranteed funding, explore opportunities to establish a dedicated funding pool to cover stipends for cases where faculty research funding is limited or unexpectedly disrupted.	
Faculty of Nursing Response: We acknowledge that requiring Guaranteed Minimum Doctoral Funding is new within the culture of the FoN.	Action Plan: The FoN will continue to discuss what supervisors’ roles may be in contribution towards Guaranteed Minimum Doctoral Funding packages. We will also continue to explore all opportunities to contribute to Guaranteed Minimum Doctoral Funding packages including but not limited to philanthropic commitments, and internal FoN funding for Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA), Graduate Research Assistants

	(GRA), teaching an undergraduate course (called GTA - PI [Principle Instructor]), scholarships, and awards.
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) Response: GPS supports this recommendation and the Faculty’s action plan and appreciates the creative thinking about the different sources of funding that could be explored to support doctoral students.	Action Plan: GPS is available for consultation. As we collect data on the implementation of this standard across all faculties, we will share the different sources of funding that other faculties may use to meet this standard. This will provide comparative insight into how the minimum guaranteed funding operating standard is being implemented. Further, it provides an opportunity for colleagues on campus to share their knowledge and experience in this area.