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Health

Nursing PhD Program

Nursing PhD
Program Policies

Nursing PhD Program Policies

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SCOPE OF POLICIES

The following policies of the Nursing PhD Program are supplemental to those of the UTMB Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS) and apply to all students enrolled in the program.

The Nursing PhD Program policies posted in this handbook are approved by the program faculty with voting privileges granted through the GSBS Bylaws and the Nursing PhD Program Bylaws pertaining to GSBS and Program Membership. Policies herein are accepted by the GSBS as the Nursing PhD Program Policies.

The Bylaws and Academic Policies of the UTMB GSBS, Amended 2014, are found on the school's link: http://gsbs.utmb.edu/_pdf/BylawsandPolicies.pdf.

PROGRAM PURPOSE AND PHILOSOPHY

The Nursing PhD program is designed to prepare scholars and researchers capable of advancing nursing practice and education. Focused on health promotion, human response, and healing, students have the opportunity to study in the areas of biobehavioral research, vulnerable populations, and contemporary pedagogies. These areas of inquiry characterize the conceptual basis of the program and provide the structure for students to develop a plan of study to gain in-depth knowledge in a specific area of research. The unique function of nursing includes caring for individuals, sick or well, assessing their responses and health status, and assisting them with the performance of activities they would perform unaided if they had the necessary strength, will, or knowledge.

Nursing functions must be based on the systematic development of knowledge about humans in interaction with their life situations. The Nursing PhD Program addresses knowledge development that incorporates philosophical and ethical inquiry, the evaluation of interventions, and the development and testing of theories to expand the science of nursing and nursing practice.

Using an online delivery modality, a combination of theoretical and evidence based approaches provide stimulating interactions in an environment conducive to scholarly exchanges and student development.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The program prepares nursing scholars to:

- Create conceptual systems that reflect synthesis, coherence and the extension of knowledge about health promotion, human response, and healing within nursing and related disciplines.
- Design, conduct, communicate and evaluate research that contributes to a body of knowledge in nursing science.
- Test, generate and extend knowledge about nursing practice that includes health promotion, human response, and healing into clinical settings.
- Collaborate with others on the integration of conceptual, practical, and ethical knowledge of human health in the organization, implementation, and evaluation of health care practices and policies.
- Provide leadership to improve the health care environments of the world.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The program, offered in collaboration between the GSBS and the School of Nursing, has the availability of world-class clinical facilities that provide the opportunity for students to conduct research with multi-cultural populations. Small class sizes foster individual student attention with timely progression of students from entrance to degree completion.

The program offers two tracks – post masters (MSN to PhD) and post baccalaureate (BSN to PhD). The MSN to PhD track is 63 credits. The knowledge required to explicate the focus areas includes a foundational core, a nursing core and a supporting core. The foundational core consists of philosophy and concepts/theory, designed to assist students in examining and synthesizing knowledge, and research comprised of quantitative and qualitative methods. The nursing core, focused on health promotion, human response and healing, provides the direction for the study of nursing knowledge. The supporting core consists of ethics and elective/independent study. Knowledge specific to the students' areas of study is gained through electives or independent studies. The foundational, nursing and supporting cores, in concert with the research core, provide the essential knowledge needed for students to explore original ideas that culminate in the dissertation.

The BSN to PhD Track is 87 credits. This track focuses on education, and includes the same curriculum as the MSN to PhD Track. In addition, 24 credit hours are incorporated into the track which includes 18 master's credits and 6 additional doctoral credits. These courses emphasize contemporary pedagogies and prepare researchers capable of advancing nursing practice and education.

NURSING PhD COURSE LISTING

Listed below in numerical order are the required courses for MSN to PhD students:

Required Courses - MSN to PhD

COURSE NUMBER		CREDIT HOURS
GNRS 6340	Doctoral Research Seminar	3
GNRS 6341	History and Philosophy of Science in Nursing	3
GNRS 6346	Quantitative Research Methods	3
GNRS 6347	Ethics in Health Care and Research	3
GNRS 6348	Qualitative Research Methods	3
GNRS 6350	Clinical Investigation in Nursing	3
GNRS 6351	Qualitative Data Management	3
GNRS 6352	Survey of Instrumentation Methods	3
GNRS 6357	Nursing Science I	3
GNRS 6358	Nursing Science II	3
GNRS 6361	Quantitative Data Management	3
GNRS 6400	Concepts and Theories in Nursing	4
GNRS 6402	Advanced Statistics	4
GNRS 6039	Research Practicum (9 credits required)	3
GNRS 6088	Independent Study (3 credits required, additional credits may be earned)	3
MEHU 6101	Ethics of Science	1
GNRS 6099	Dissertation (9-credit minimum required)	9
	Program total	63

Listed below are the required courses for the BSN to PhD students:

(These courses are in addition to the courses listed above for the MSN to PhD students.)

Required Courses - BSN to PhD

COURSE NUMBER		CREDIT HOURS
GNRS 5309	Educator: Foundations of Adult Learning	3
GNRS 5311	Educator: Program Evaluation	3
GNRS 5322	Educator: Curriculum Design	3
GNRS 5312	Educator: Learning Environment	3
GNRS 5320	Educator: Teaching Practicum	3
GNRS 5310	Educator: Advanced Clinical	3
GDNP 6325	Health Care Policy	3
GDNP 6337	Information in Transformational Health Care	3
	Program total	87

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Faculty members for each course are assigned by the Program Director and posted prior to the registration period for each forthcoming semester. Course description may be found at <http://gsbs.utmb.edu/pdf/GSBSBulletin.pdf>. See Appendix A for GNRS 6088 Independent study guidelines and GNRS 6039 Research Practicum guidelines.

ADVISING PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

In accordance with the policies of the GSBS, Program faculty shall advise and monitor the progress of doctoral students throughout the students' tenure in the Program and graduate school. Roles, responsibilities, and procedures are described in the following sections:

I. Faculty Roles and Responsibilities

A. The Initial Advisor

The Initial Advisor represents a vital linkage between the entering student and the Program. This advisor plays an important role in orienting the student to Program requirements, assisting with clarification of goals, helping the student to structure a meaningful and integrated learning experience, and monitoring the student's progress in and adjustment to doctoral study. Students are required to complete the Milestone Agreement Form in concert with their Advisor, to reflect their progress throughout the program. The specific responsibilities of the Initial Advisor are to:

1. Interpret with the student the Program requirements, policies, and procedures
2. Assist the student in planning an initial and ongoing program of study in accordance with Program requirements and individual objectives for doctoral study.
3. Work in concert with the student to complete the Individualized Development Plan (IDP) and submit to Graduate School at the end of the first semester.
4. Assist the student with identifying a research advisor based on his or her individual research interests.
5. Provide feedback to the Program Director regarding the student's progress, goals and plans.

Each newly admitted student is assigned an Initial Advisor. Post-master's students are assigned individually to faculty members with similar interests, as indicated and available. Post-baccalaureate students admitted in any given year are all assigned to the same advisor to provide consistent transitional support. Exceptions will be made with the approval of the Program Director.

Regardless, new doctoral students are encouraged to talk with as many faculty members as possible during the initial semesters of study in order to identify a potential Research Advisor.

B. The Research Advisor

Selection of the Research Advisor is done by the first semester of the student's second year of full-time study or the equivalent in earned credits. In consultation with the

Initial Advisor, the student selects a Research Advisor who is a member of the doctoral faculty of the School of Nursing and who has agreed to serve. The student shall notify the Program Director of that selection in writing, using the form, "Request for Research Advisor". The Research Advisor advises the student on the program of study in support of the dissertation. The Research Advisor may also serve as Supervisory Professor and chairperson of the student's Dissertation Supervisory Committee. At this time students and their Research Advisor sign a Compact Agreement. This agreement is intended to support the development of a positive mentoring relationship between the pre-doctoral student and their Research Advisor.

The specific responsibilities of the Research Advisor are to:

1. Assist the student in finalizing the formal program of study in accordance with GSBS policies, Program requirements, and individual research interests and goals.
2. Provide feedback to the Program Director regarding the student's progress, goals and plans.
3. Determine, with the student, his/her readiness to take the Comprehensive Qualifying Examination.
4. The Program Director will sign the student's form, "Request to Schedule the Comprehensive Qualifying Examination."
5. Assist the student with identifying a Supervisory Professor (if different from Research Advisor) and potential members of the Dissertation Supervisory Committee.
6. Assist the student through the dissertation proposal writing process, using the GSBS instructions found at <http://gsbs.utmb.edu/candidacy/#IV> . Activities may include but are not limited to:
 - a) selecting and refining a research topic and question,
 - b) justifying the background and significance of the proposed research,
 - c) identifying the appropriate theoretical/conceptual perspective (as appropriate),
 - d) developing the methodology and research design,
 - e) describing the plans for data collection and analysis, and
 - f) specifying how the protection of human subjects will be achieved.
7. Determine the student's readiness to present the dissertation proposal and assist the student with:
 - a) setting a date to present the proposal at a meeting of the Potential Dissertation Supervisory Committee that is no later than three (3)

- weeks prior to the last day of the semester,
 - b) following-up with potential committee members outside of UTMB, making sure their credentials are on file in the Program Office,
 - c) distributing the proposal to all committee members in advance of the meeting and at least two (2) weeks prior to the date of the scheduled meeting,
 - d) preparing the paperwork to present to committee members regarding endorsement of the proposal,
 - e) making any special communications arrangements for committee members not able to attend the meeting in person, and
 - f) facilitating the timely return of signed documents endorsing the proposal to the Program Office.
8. Conduct the student's dissertation proposal meeting and lead deliberations of the committee members following the student's presentation.
9. Ascertain the committee's decision to endorse or not endorse the student's proposed work as presented and discussed.
10. Upon endorsement, inform the student of the decision and provide written notification to the Program Director.
11. In the case that the proposal is not endorsed unanimously by the Potential Supervisory Committee, delivers in writing to the student and Program Director specific plans for remediation. Responsibilities in this situation include:
- a) warranting the execution and monitoring of remedial actions undertaken by the student,
 - b) determining with the student that he/she is ready to present the revised proposal,
 - c) assisting the student with scheduling the second proposal meeting when the remediation is complete (abiding by the timelines in 8 a and c above),
 - d) conducting the proposal meeting, leading discussion, and eliciting the committee's decision re: endorsement, and
 - e) reporting to the student and Program Director, in writing, the decision of the committee.
12. Assist the student with completing and submitting to GSBS the "Application for Candidacy-Doctor of Philosophy (GSBS)".

C. The Supervisory Professor

The Supervisory Professor is a member of the doctoral program faculty, nominated by the student in consultation with the Research Advisor, approved by the Program Director, and appointed by the Dean of GSBS. The Supervisory Professor guides and advises the student through the preparation, completion, and defense of the

dissertation (Final Oral Examination).

The specific responsibilities of the Supervisory Professor are to:

1. Serve as Chairperson of the candidate's Dissertation Supervisory Committee and Final Oral Examination Committee.
2. Advise and supervise the candidate in carrying out the dissertation research, following the "GSBS requirements for formatting, electronic submission, and deadline dates, etc. (<http://gsbs.utmb.edu/candidacy/#VI> and click on [Instructions for Preparation of the Doctoral Dissertation and Master's Thesis](#))
3. Meet with the candidate as needed to review the dissertation work.
4. Work in concert with the student to complete the Evaluation of Student's Work form each semester until the student defends the dissertation.
5. Assist the candidate with addressing problems that arise during the conduct and writing of the research.
6. Support the candidate's communications with other members of the Dissertation Supervisory Committee.
7. Determine with the candidate and document, six (6) weeks prior to the anticipated date of the candidate's Final Oral Examination with Committee, that:
 - a. all requirements are met.
 - b. the program of study used by the supervisory professor the student, and the Nursing PhD Program Office to advise the student during the program is up to date and all requirements have been met (a degree audit will be required).
 - c. the dissertation (electronic or hardcopy) will be ready for distribution to the Dissertation Supervisory Committee at least three (3) weeks prior to the anticipated Final Oral Exam with Committee.
8. Communicate with all committee members and inform them of the candidate's readiness to distribute the dissertation. Prepare the committee members to hear directly from the candidate about scheduling the Final Oral Examination with the Committee.
9. Support the candidate making contact with each member of the committee to negotiate the anticipated time for the Final Oral Examination with the Committee.
10. Support the candidate's distribution of the dissertation to committee members at least three (3) weeks prior to the scheduled Final oral Exam with Committee.

Once the date, time and location of the Final Oral Examination with Committee are set, you and the student shall schedule the Public Defense within two (2) weeks following the Final Oral Exam with Committee.

11. Assist the candidate with preparing the “Request for Final Oral Examination. While requirements for the two-phase dissertation defense in the Nursing PhD Program are in place, the date that must be placed atop this form is the date of the Public Defense that will be announced by GSBS. The room number and time must also be included. It is this form that activates the GSBS announcement, which requires a two (2) week advanced notice (see item 9 above). The candidate will submit this form to GSBS (with Vita and Summary), signed by all committee members prior to his/her public defense. As stated above, this form will activate the two (2) week advance notice GSBS requires for the announcement of the Public Defense. A copy must be filed with the Nursing PhD Program Office.
12. Assist the candidate with reserving the room through the Nursing PhD Program Office and ordering any telecommunications and audiovisual support services needed during the Final Oral Examination with Committee and the Public Defense. Advise candidates that some costs may be associated with defense that will be their responsibilities.
13. One week prior to the Final Oral Examination with Committee, determine with the student and each Dissertation Supervisory Committee member that the Final Oral Examination with the Committee can proceed as scheduled. Advise the candidate to prepare the “Report of Final Oral Examination” form and bring it to the Final Oral Examination with Committee to obtain signatures of committee member (use black ink).
14. Conduct and lead the Final Oral Examination with the Committee including discussion and deliberations following the candidate’s presentation.
15. Ascertain the committee’s appraisal of the candidate’s presentation and written dissertation (refer to Dissertation section).
16. Poll the committee members for their votes as to whether the candidate has passed or failed the oral examination and written dissertation. The decision of the committee must be unanimous.

17. Have all committee members sign the “Report of Final Oral Examination” at the conclusion of this exam and have the student retain the form until the Public Defense, announced by GSBS, is successfully completed. At that time, the candidate shall deliver the signed form to GSBS along with other requirements due at that time according to GSBS Policies. Copy this to the Program Director.
18. Have all committee members complete the dissertation oral and dissertation written assessment forms (Office of Institutional Effectiveness). The Supervisory Professor must return these completed forms to the Nursing PhD Office.
19. Submit to the Program Director written notice that the student has successfully completed and passed all degree requirements (Comprehensive Examinations, all course requirements, the Final Oral Examination with Committee and Public Defense.
20. In the case the candidate does not pass the Final Oral Examination with the Committee, Public Defense or written dissertation, it is the responsibility of the Dissertation Supervisory Professor to:
 - a) deliver the decision to the student immediately following deliberations and in writing to both the student and Program Director,
 - b) deliver, in writing to the candidate and Program Director, specific plans for remediation.
 - c) assist the candidate with carrying out the remedial actions required by the committee,
 - d) determine with the candidate that he/she is ready to schedule the second oral examination (candidates may repeat the Final Oral Examination only one time),
 - e) assist the candidate with scheduling the second examination,
 - f) conduct the second oral examination, lead the discussion and deliberations, and
 - g) ascertain the votes of the committee members as to the students pass or fail status.

D. The Dissertation Supervisory Committee

As part of the student's Candidacy process, the Dissertation Supervisory Committee is selected on the basis of expertise relevant to the dissertation research and appointed by the Dean of the GSBS to serve in an advisory capacity to the student.

1. The following steps are required to establish a Dissertation Supervisory Committee:
 - a) In consultation with the nominated Supervisory Professor, the student nominates Potential Dissertation Supervisory Committee members and forwards their names to the Program Director using the form, "Potential Supervisory Committee Members". The Program Director forwards the list of nominees to the Dean of the GSBS for later formal appointment to the committee.
 - b) Following the student's successful presentation of the dissertation research proposal to the potential committee members, each member is asked to endorse the proposal and indicate in writing a willingness to serve on the Dissertation Supervisory Committee (using the form, "Potential Supervisory Committee Member's Endorsement", if appointed. Potential committee members internal to UTMB but without GSBS faculty status will require a special appointment from the Dean of the GSBS.
 - c) Individual committee member's endorsements are filed in the Program Office. Documentation that the endorsements have been received and are on file in the Program Office is enclosed with the student's "Application for Candidacy-Doctor of Philosophy (GSBS)" when submitted to GSBS.
 - d) The Dean of the GSBS contacts each potential committee member via e-mail or in writing to ascertain his/her willingness to serve on the student's Dissertation Supervisory Committee. Formal appointment to the Dissertation Supervisory Committee is made by the Dean of GSBS and announced to the university community when the student is admitted to Candidacy.
2. The roles and responsibilities of the Dissertation Supervisory Committee members are to:
 - a) Advise the student in the development of the dissertation research proposal, according to expertise and in consultation with the Potential Supervisory Professor.

- b) Indicate approval of the proposed dissertation research plan as written and presented orally by the student by signing the “Potential Supervisory Committee Member’s Endorsement of Proposal” form.
- c) Be available to the student for consultation regarding the research and the developing dissertation. The GSBS “Guidelines for Formatting the Dissertation” (available online) must be used by students and their supervisory committee members in the preparation of the dissertation.
- d) Read the dissertation and, when appropriate, sign the “Approval to Schedule the Final Oral Examination” form designating that the dissertation and the student are ready for the Final Oral Examination (defense of the dissertation).
- e) Declare by signing the “Report of the Final Oral Examination” form, that the student has successfully completed the Final Oral Examination (defense of the dissertation).
- f) Designate by signing the Signature Page of the dissertation (student prepares the signature page according to GSBS formatting requirements) that the dissertation is complete and acceptable.
- g) In the case that the candidate has not passed the oral exam or written dissertation, or both, it is the responsibility of the Dissertation Supervisory Committee to:
 1. determine remediation requirements and communicate those to the Supervisory Professor,
 2. assist the candidate with carrying out the remedial actions as appropriate by expertise,
 3. be available to negotiate the scheduling of the second oral examination (candidates may repeat the Final Oral Examination only one time),
 4. participate in the second Final Oral Examination,
 5. determine whether the candidate has passed or failed,
 6. communicate your vote in committee, and
 7. sign the Report of the Final Examination and other documents as appropriate.

II. Student Roles and Responsibilities in Advising Processes and Procedures

The specific responsibilities of the student are to:

- A. Communicate regularly with the Initial Advisor regarding progress, goals, and plans. It is recommended that the student and the Initial Advisor meet at least once a semester.
- B. Initiate contact with the faculty member whom the student is considering as a Research Advisor.
- C. Select a Research Advisor in consultation with the Initial Advisor.
- D. Notify the Program Director, in writing, of the choice of Research Advisor (“Request for Research Advisor” Form).
- E. Regularly seek consultation with the Research Advisor.
- F. When appropriate, prepare, with the Research Advisor, the “Request to Schedule the Comprehensive Qualifying Examination” and submit it to the Program Director.
- G. Nominate a Supervisory Professor, in consultation with the Research Advisor. Complete the form, “Request for Supervisory Professor” and submit it to the Program Director.
- H. Discuss with the potential Supervisory Professor, potential members of the Dissertation Supervisory Committee.
- I. Initiate contact with faculty members nominated for membership on the Dissertation Supervisory Committee after consultation with the Supervisory Professor.
- J. Nominate, with the approval of the Supervisory Professor, the potential members of the Dissertation Supervisory Committee who agree to participate using the form, “Potential Supervisory Committee Members”.
- K. Procure from the off-campus nominee and any non-GSBS faculty a Curriculum Vita and submit them with a copy of the “Potential Supervisory Committee Members” form to the Program Office. The original copy of the “Potential Supervisory Committee Members” form shall be submitted officially to the Program Director as part of the student’s “Application for Candidacy-Doctor of Philosophy (GSBS)”.
- L. Following the proposal defense meeting, the student obtains each potential Dissertation Supervisory Committee member’s signature on a form, “Potential Supervisory Committee Member’s Endorsement of Proposal” (one for each). The student ensures that each form is signed and returned to the Program Office electronically, via postal service or fax.

- M. Process the “Application for Candidacy-Doctor of Philosophy (GSBS)”.
 - N. Initiate regular contact with the Supervisory Professor and other members of the Dissertation Supervisory Committee, as necessary, throughout the dissertation research process.
 - O. Initiate discussions with either, the Initial Advisor, Research Advisor, or Supervisory Professor and the Program Director should there be a desire to change an advisor or member(s) of the Dissertation Supervisory Committee. Process the form, “Request for Change of Initial and Research Advisor.” Process the GSBS form, “Request for Supervisory Committee Member Change” when requesting changes in the Supervisory Professor or members of the Dissertation Supervisory Committee.
- III. Change of Advisors and Dissertation Supervisory Committee Members

In consultation with the appropriate advisor, a student may request a change in the Initial Advisor, the Research Advisor, the Supervisory Professor, or Dissertation Supervisory Committee member(s) (i.e., if the substantive area of the student’s research changes markedly). Either the Advisor, the Supervisory Professor, or the student may initiate any change. Requests for changes should be forwarded, in writing, to the Program Director using the form “Request for Change of Initial and Research Advisor.” Process the GSBS form, “Request for Supervisory Committee Member Change” when requesting changes in the Supervisory Professor or members of the Dissertation Supervisory Committee.

The Program Director will coordinate this change.

COMPREHENSIVE QUALIFYING EXAMINATION POLICY

I. Purpose of the Comprehensive Qualifying Examination

The Comprehensive Qualifying Examination (CQE) is designed to validate the student's readiness to conduct independent research within the broader context of the discipline of nursing. The CQE is designed to appraise the student's ability to synthesize and apply knowledge essential for conducting scholarly inquiry to design and evaluate nursing research.

Policies Regarding the Comprehensive Qualifying Examination

- A. The CQE exam is a five-hour written exam addressing core knowledge deemed essential for all doctoral students. Content covered in the CQE includes all coursework in the Nursing PhD Program curriculum.
- B. The results of the CQE are reported by the Chairperson of the Examination directly to the Nursing PhD Program Director who informs the student of the results.
- C. Members of the Nursing PhD Program Faculty are responsible for the development and administration of the CQE and the evaluation of student performance. The Committee for the CQE is responsible for developing, administering, and grading the written exam. The committee is comprised of at least three (3) members of the Nursing PhD Program Faculty appointed annually by the Nursing PhD Program Director. The Nursing PhD Program Director serves in an Ex-Officio capacity on this committee.
- D. The student's performance and grades (pass/fail) on the CQE shall be determined by majority rule of the CQE Committee.
- E. Failures of the CQE examination are addressed in section VI of this document.
- F. The student's performance and grade on the re-examination shall be determined by majority rule of the CQE re-Examination committee and reported to the Nursing PhD Program Director, who will inform each student of his/her results. The final results of the CQE examinations shall be reported to the GSBS.

III. Scheduling the Comprehensive Qualifying Examination

- A. A student who anticipates completing coursework within a given term should consult her/his Research Advisor, who should audit the student's

transcript in relation to the appropriate Program of Study (POS) and determine the student's readiness to take the CQE.

- B. A student on academic probation will not be allowed to take the CQE until the probationary status is resolved.
- C. Following approval from his/her Advisor, the student should complete the "Request to Schedule the Comprehensive Qualifying Examination" form. The completed request form should be forwarded to the Nursing PhD Program office.
- D. The CQE is offered three times a year during the months of January, May, and either August or September. Students shall be informed of the specific dates of the CQE six (6) to eight (8) weeks in advance by the Program Director or her designee. Each student shall take the CQE during the semester immediately following the completion of all required course work, with the exception of GNRS 6340: Doctoral Research Seminar, which may be taken either before or after taking the CQE.
- E. A student who has special needs must provide document consistent with UTMB policies for students with disabilities.

IV. Administration of the Comprehensive Qualifying Examination.

- A. Students have the option of taking the CQE exam on the UTMB Campus or at a university or commercial testing center that offers test proctoring.
- B. Students who expect to take the CQE should indicate their choice of testing location when completing the "Request to Schedule the Comprehensive Qualifying Examination" form.
- C. Students who opt to take the exam at a location other than UTMB must:
 - 1. Identify the proctored testing site (the testing site must be a university or a commercial testing center).
 - 2. Identify a contact person at the selected location with whom the CQE Committee or Program Administrative Associate can communicate. Forward that information to the Program Administrative Associate and/or the CQE Committee Chair.
 - 3. Arrange for the time and date of the exam to coincide with the administration of the exam at UTMB.
 - 4. Pay all costs involved in the off-campus testing.
- D. Students who opt to take the exam at the UTMB location:

1. Will be notified by the Program Administrative Associate about the exact location of their testing site at least one (1) week in advance of the date and time of the exam.
2. No costs are associated with on-campus testing.

E. Procedure for administering the CQE examination:

1. Off Campus site
 - a. The Program Administrative Associate and/or Chair of the CQE committee will orient the testing center's contact person to the process and requirements of the examination. The Nursing PhD Program will deliver all testing materials to the testing site(s) prior to the designated day and time of the exam.
 - b. The student will report to the testing center on the designated day and time of the exam and complete the exam.
 - c. The testing site contact person will deliver the completed exam materials to UTMB.
 - d. The Program Administrative Associate or her designate will send an electronic confirmation of receipt of the completed exam to each student who completed the exam in an off-campus site.
2. On Campus site
 - a. Students should report to the Program Administrative Associate or her designate to begin the examination at the scheduled date and time.
 - b. The Program Administrative Associate or her designate will deliver the exam to the student at the UTMB testing site.
 - c. The Program Administrative Associate or her designate will serve as examination proctor and will assure that each student completes the examination at the designated time.

F. Procedure for delivering the completed CQE examinations for grading:

1. The Program Administrative Associate will receive all completed CQE examinations, code the examinations for blind review (grading) by the CQE Committee, and deliver the coded examinations to the CQE Committee for grading.
2. The CQE Committee Chair will collect all the graded examinations, collate the grades by the codes assigned to the

examinations, and report the results to the Nursing PhD Program Director who will notify the students of their results.

3. Students may expect to receive feedback within 4 weeks from the time of sitting for the exam.
4. Hard copies of the graded examinations will be retained in each student's permanent file. The examinations may be reviewed by the student, but they must not be removed from the Nursing PhD Program offices.

G. Unforeseen circumstances:

1. Should circumstances, such as illness or emergency, arise on the date of the either the CQE so that a student unexpectedly is unable to take the examination, s/he should notify the Nursing PhD Program Director as soon as possible. The student's examination will be re-scheduled; depending on the circumstances, an alternate examination may be administered.
2. Should a student become ill or an emergency arise requiring the student to leave the examination site prior to completion of the examination, s/he must notify the Nursing PhD Program Director or her designate, return all examination materials to the test proctor, and provide a written explanation. The student's examination will be re-scheduled; an alternate examination may be administered.

V. Grading the Comprehensive Qualifying Examination

A. The CQE is graded to evaluate whether and how effectively the student:

1. Demonstrates depth of knowledge in his/her focus area.
2. Demonstrates the ability to integrate his/her focus area within the broader context of nursing knowledge.
3. Demonstrates the ability to appropriately select, apply, and evaluate the tools of scientific inquiry in nursing (i.e., theory development, conceptualization, measurement, research design, data collection, and data management).
4. Cites relevant sources to support responses.
5. Provides answers that are complete, concise, logical, and responsive to the specific questions asked.

B. Standards for passing the examinations:

1. Students must achieve a minimum of 70 % on each section of CQE to pass the entire examination.

2. The student's performance and grade on CQE will be determined by majority rule of the respective committees.

VI. Unsuccessful Performance on the Comprehensive Qualifying Examination

- A. A student who does not pass the CQE is permitted one re-take of the exam.
- B. Scheduling the re-take: Students should plan to retake the CQE at the next regularly-scheduled offering of the examination.
- C. The student must complete a new "Request to Schedule the Comprehensive Qualifying Examination" form, obtain appropriate signatures, and file the new form with the Nursing PhD Program Office prior to retaking the examination.
- D. Students who re-take the CQE will follow the same procedures and respond to the same exam as students who are taking the exam for the first time.
- E. If the student's performance on his/her re-take of CQE is unclear as to whether s/he performed successfully on the re-take, the examination committee may opt to schedule an oral session in which the student will be given the opportunity to respond to questions that will clarify his/her responses. The members of the committee who graded the re-take of the student's CQE will be responsible for developing, conducting, and evaluating the oral clarification session. The oral clarification session should be scheduled within two weeks of the student being informed that s/he will be required to respond to clarifying questions. The student should be informed of the content area(s) that will be addressed in the oral session at the time the session is scheduled.
- F. The student's performance and grade on the re-examination or oral clarification session will be determined by majority rule of the CQE committee and reported to the Nursing PhD Program Director who will inform the student of her/his results. The final results of the CQE examinations shall be reported to the GSBS.

VII. Outcomes of the examinations are managed in the following ways:

Results of CQE	Procedure
Pass	Progress to proposal development and/or refinement
Fail – first attempt	Review failed exam with Research Advisor. Re-Take the exam the next time it is given. File new request form.
Pass – Second attempt	Progress to proposal development and/or refinement

Fail -Second attempt	Subject to dismissal from Nursing PhD Program OR committee may determine the appropriateness of an oral session to allow the student to clarify content. Oral clarification scheduled within two (2)weeks, student notified of content area(s) to be addressed
Pass CQE -Oral Clarification	Progress to proposal development and/or refinement
Fail CQE -Oral Clarification	Subject to dismissal from the Nursing PhD Program

CANDIDACY

The following requirements must be met in order for the student to be admitted to candidacy:

- I. All major/required course work is completed and any academic deficiencies have been removed from the student's transcript.
- II. The Comprehensive Qualifying Examination (CQE) must be successfully completed, concurrently with or prior to completion of GNRS 6340.
- III. After successful completion of the CQE, but before candidacy is approved, the student may register for Research (GNRS 6097) for three (3) to nine (9) hours variable credit each semester, not to exceed a maximum of three (3) consecutive semesters. Failure to achieve candidacy by the end of the third consecutive semester after successfully completing the CQE is grounds for dismissal from the Program and GSBS. Leaves of absence or other approved interruptions in active registration do not change this requirement.
- IV. The student in concert with his/her Advisor, completes the Evaluation of Student's Work Form at the end of each semester the student is enrolled in GNRS 6097 and until the student successfully defends his/her dissertation proposal.
- V. The student, in consultation with the Research Advisor, identifies Potential Supervisory Committee Members, including a Supervisory Professor if the Research Advisor is not going to fill that role (see forms, "Potential Supervisory Committee Members).
- VI. The student, in consultation with the Potential Supervisory Professor, prepares a research proposal that will be the basis of the student's dissertation.
- VII. Following the completion of the written proposal, and with the approval of the Potential Supervisory Professor, the student will:
 - A. Set a date to present the proposal at a meeting of the potential Dissertation Supervisory Committee members that is no later than three (3) weeks prior to the last day of the semester. All committee members must agree on the date and receive a copy of the proposal at least two weeks prior to the date of the scheduled meeting.
 - B. Orally present the research proposal to the Committee on the agreed upon date.
- VIII. A student may choose to present the proposal to his/her committee via video conferencing or may choose to come to UTMB.

- IX. Students will obtain, in writing, each potential supervisory committee member's endorsement of the proposal (form, "Potential Supervisory Committee Member's Endorsement of Proposal"). This endorsement should be obtained following the Approval of the proposal and be filed with the Program Office prior to submitting the formal application for candidacy to GSBS.
- IX. Students are eligible to submit their proposals to the Institutional Review Board after obtaining their Potential Dissertation Supervisory Committee's endorsement and approval of the proposal.
- X. To be admitted to candidacy, the student submits the following to the Program Director:
- A. "Application for Candidacy-Doctor of Philosophy (GSBS)" form with the student's section completed.
 - B. The research proposal, developed using GSBS formatting guidelines.
 - C. The completed "Potential Supervisory Committee Members" form (will be filed in Program Office).
 - D. The collection of "Potential Supervisory Committee Member's Endorsement of Proposal" forms completed by each member with all required signatures (will be filed in program office).
 - E. Signed Compact between Biomedical Graduate Students and their Research Advisors
- XI. The Program Director signs the student's "Application for Candidacy-Doctor of Philosophy (GSBS)" form and recommends approval of the student's candidacy to the Dean of GSBS.
- XII. The student is responsible for delivering the completed and approved "Application for Candidacy-Doctor of Philosophy (GSBS)" form and the research proposal to the Dean of GSBS. The completed "*Potential Supervisory Committee Members*" form and the signed "*Potential Supervisory Committee Member's Endorsement of Proposal*" form are filed in the Nursing Doctoral Program Office.
- XIII. The Dean of GSBS:
- A. reviews the completed "Application for Candidacy-Doctor of Philosophy (GSBS)" and the student's research proposal, and
 - B. formally appoints the faculty agreeing to serve as Dissertation Supervisory Professor and committee members, and

C. elicits from appointed faculty their recommendations and approval of the proposed work.

- XIV. When the Dean of GSBS determines that all the actions and conditions to the “Application to Candidacy-Doctor of Philosophy (GSBS)” are satisfied, the student will be notified about his or her acceptance into candidacy.
- XV. After acceptance into candidacy, the student must register for nine (9) hours of Dissertation (GNRS 6099) each semester to maintain full time status until the successful completion of all degree requirements (maximum of five years).

DISSERTATION

The dissertation is the report of an original investigation carried on by the candidate under the direction of the Dissertation Supervisory Professor. The dissertation must be the candidate's own work. Although it may be the result of research enterprises in which the candidate has collaborated with others, it must be presented in the candidate's own style and a substantial portion must represent that person's own creative style. The dissertation must be completed within five years after admission to candidacy (GSBS).

The Dissertation Supervisory Committee is the primary source of consultation for the student during all phases of the research process (conceptualization, collection and analysis of data, interpretation of findings) and completion of the written dissertation. The following is a framework within which it is expected that the student and committee will operate.

I. Dissertation Supervisory Committee

- A. The student's Supervisory Professor serves as Chairperson of the student's Dissertation Supervisory Committee.
- B. In addition to the Supervisory Professor, the Dissertation Supervisory Committee is comprised of at least four other members; two of whom are nurses with doctoral preparation, who hold a GSBS faculty appointment; one of whom is in a program other than the Nursing PhD Program, and one who is outside of the UTMB institution and recognized as an expert in the student's area of concentration or method. The nomination and selection of committee members is fully described in the candidacy section of the Nursing PhD Program Policies.
- C. During the dissertation research process, members of the committee shall be available to the student for consultation. The GSBS "Guidelines for Formatting the Dissertation" (available online) will be used by all students and their supervisory committee members in the preparation of the dissertation.
- D. It is the responsibility of the Dissertation Supervisory Committee to:
 1. Recommend that the Program Faculty approve the dissertation proposal.
 2. Be available to consult and advise the student regarding the dissertation research and writing of the dissertation.
 3. Read and give counsel on the various drafts of the dissertation and, when appropriate, designate the dissertation as complete and ready to be orally defended.

4. Participate in the Final Oral Examination of the candidate.
5. Determine the outcome of the Final Oral Examination and indicate such by signing the appropriate documentation.
6. Recommend approval of the completed dissertation.

E. It is the responsibility of the Supervisory Professor to:

1. Work in concert with student to complete the “Evaluation of Student Work” form each semester until the students defends his/her dissertation.
2. Review the proposed research for scientific quality and provide advisory input to the student.
3. Assure appropriate approval for the conduct of the study has been obtained from the UTMB IRB and other affiliated institutions.
4. Record and communicate committee action to the student and to the Program Director.
5. Recommend changes in the membership of the committee as necessary (in consultation with the student).
6. Notify the Program Director of the composition of the committee and any changes that occur. The Program Director is responsible for submitting the changes to the Dean of GSBS.
7. Submit the form certifying the completion of the dissertation to the Program Director.

II. Final Oral Examination – Guidelines

- A. Each student must successfully complete a final oral examination.
- B. All students are required to come to UTMB campus for the final examination.
- C. The Dissertation Supervisory Committee conducts the final oral examination and decides on the following matters:
 1. That the document is acceptable as a doctoral dissertation and that it is defensible. If a majority of the committee agrees that the dissertation is not defensible, the examination is canceled. If the dissertation is deemed defensible, the Supervisory Professor will

submit a request to the Program Director to schedule the Final Oral Examination. The Supervisory Professor will work with the student and the Program Director to assure this request is completed in accordance with the GSBS guidelines.

2. The committee will discuss and agree on examination procedures.
3. Final Oral Examination has two parts, both of which must be successfully completed. The procedures are as follows:
 - a. The candidate orally presents the dissertation to the Dissertation Supervisory Committee in closed session on the agreed upon date.
 - b. The candidate's oral presentation of the dissertation to the university community and the public shall be scheduled for a date and time following the Supervisory Professor's formal notification to the Program Director and Program Faculty that the candidate has successfully passed the examination.

D. Conclusion of the Examination: At the end of the examination, the candidate will leave the room and the committee will deliberate in private on the performance of the candidate. Students are assigned a grade of pass or fail on the Final Oral Examination. During deliberations, the Dissertation Supervisory Committee Chairperson shall ask each committee member to comment on each part of the examination and on the total examination. Following deliberations, the members will be polled for their votes as to whether the candidate has passed or failed. The decision of the committee must be unanimous. Committee members shall sign the "Report of the Final Oral Examination" form to register their vote and the Dissertation written and oral exam forms.

1. Upon the student passing the Final Oral Examination, the committee chairperson informs the student verbally in person, the Program Director in writing and the Dean of GSBS by filing the "Report of the Final Oral Examination".
2. In the event that the candidate fails the Final Oral Examination, the Dissertation Supervisory Committee chairperson shall notify the student following the committee's deliberations. The chairperson also informs the Program Director, in writing, of the reason(s) for the failure, the decisions concerning remedial action, and the process for completing those actions. A copy of the letter shall be provided to the candidate and to each committee member.

The conditions of failure and actions for remedy are as follows:

- a. When the initial decision of the committee, prior to proceeding to the Final Oral Examination, is that the written dissertation is defensible but the oral presentation proves faulty, the committee members shall recommend suggestions to remedy the deficiencies.
- b. Recommendations for remedy along with specific timelines and expected procedures and outcomes must be specified in writing, via letter, to the student, the Program Director, all committee members, and the Dean of GSBS. The candidate may re-take the Final Oral Examination one time.
- c. The date for the repeat oral examination must be scheduled within one year from the date of the original defense (Final Oral Examination). When the date is set for the re-examination, the Supervisory Dissertation Committee chairperson shall submit a request to the Program Director to reschedule the Final Oral Examination.
- d. The Program Director will assure that the request is completed in accordance with the GSBS guidelines and policies.

Legend: History of Document Development, Revision, Approval:

Approved by Doctoral Program Advisory Task Force, May 2, 1996

Revised by the Doctoral Coordination Council, June 14, 1999

Revised by the Doctoral Coordination Council, October 18, 1999

Revised for the Nursing Ph.D. Program Faculty by their Bylaws and Policies Committee, October 2003.

Revisions approved by the Nursing Ph.D. Program Faculty, October 22, 2003.

Additional revisions made by the Nursing Ph.D. Program Faculty, November 17, 2003.

Revisions approved by the Nursing Ph.D. Program Faculty, January 26, 2004 with addition of changes in titles of Part I and Part II CQEs debated and concluded by e-mail on January 27, 2004.

Distributed in Final Copy as of January 27, 2004

Approved as revised by vote of the Nursing Ph.D. Program Faculty, March 25, 2004

Revised by Nursing PhD Faculty April 2013

Revised by Nursing PhD Faculty August 2014

Revised by Nursing PhD Faculty January 2015

APPENDIX A

GUIDELINES FOR INDEPENDENT STUDY

Independent Study in Nursing for Doctoral Students is an opportunity to pursue a topic or project with the guidance of a School of Nursing doctoral faculty member. The student enrolled in an Independent Study is expected to assume primary responsibility for learning. The faculty member's role is to challenge and guide the student in intellectual efforts.

Procedure

A mutual agreement is necessary between the student and the faculty member in terms of the topic, objectives, and evaluation for the Independent Study. **A Course Plan (see form in Appendix A) must be completed, signed by both the faculty and student and submitted to and approved by the Nursing PhD Program Director. This Course Plan must be completed and approved prior to the twelfth class day of the fall and spring terms and the tenth class day of the summer term. If the course plan is not approved by that deadline, the student will be dropped from the independent study.** The course plan must be appropriate for the content and credit (1-3 credits).

Any clinical component must be cleared through the agency with the faculty member responsible for informing the Nursing PhD Program Director to assure contractual and insurance coverage.

Credit earned in Independent Study applies to elective credit.

Student Responsibilities

1. The student is responsible for completing and submitting the Course Plan to the Nursing PhD Program Office.
2. The student is responsible for scheduling regular conferences with faculty.
3. All work is expected to be completed within the semester. Independent Study that requires more than one semester to complete must be divided into two or more semesters. In such cases, a separate grade will be awarded for each semester's work.
4. Creative dissemination of completed work is encouraged such as presentation, publication, and colloquium.
5. The student completes a faculty evaluation form according to GSBS policy and procedure.

Faculty Responsibilities

1. The faculty approves the student's objectives, topic area, and evaluation plan.
2. The faculty assures quality learning experiences through the provision of
 - a) Individual conference time
 - b) Challenging questions, comments and feedback
 - c) Promoting critical thinking
3. The faculty prepares an evaluation for the student's experiences and submits the grade in accordance with GSBS policy and procedure.

GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH PRACTICUM

The Research Practicum for the Nursing PhD Students is an opportunity to work with a School of Nursing faculty member or other researchers actively involved in conducting nursing research. The student enrolled in a Research Practicum is expected to assume primary responsibility for learning by assisting the faculty member in her/his research. The faculty member's role is to challenge and guide the student in intellectual efforts and when practical, involve the student in the research process.

Procedure

A mutual agreement is necessary between the student and the faculty member in terms of the topic, objectives, and evaluation for the Research Practicum. A Course Plan (see form in Appendix A) must be completed, signed by both the faculty and student, submitted to, and approved by the Nursing PhD Program Director. This Course Plan must be completed and approved prior to the twelfth class day of the fall and spring terms and the tenth class day of the summer term. The course plan must be appropriate for the content and credit (3 credits).

Any clinical component must be cleared through the agency with the faculty member responsible for informing the Nursing PhD Program Director to assure contractual and insurance coverage.

Nine credit hours of Research Practicum are required.

Student Responsibilities

1. The student is responsible for completing and submitting the Course Plan to the Nursing PhD Program Office.
2. The student is responsible for scheduling regular conferences with faculty.
3. All work is expected to be completed within the semester
4. The student completes a faculty evaluation form according to GSBS policy and procedure.

Faculty Responsibilities

1. The faculty approves the objectives, topic area, and evaluation plan.
2. The faculty assures quality learning experiences through the provision of Individual conference time
 - a. Challenging questions, comments and feedback
 - b. Promoting critical thinking
3. The faculty prepares an evaluation for the student's experiences and submits the grade in accordance with GSBS policies and procedures.