



**BOSTON COLLEGE**  
Connell School of Nursing

**Ph.D.**  
**STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**2021-2022**

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# GENERAL INFORMATION FOR ALL GRADUATE STUDENTS

## Introduction

The first section of the graduate handbook contains information applicable to all graduate programs. This is followed by the section that specifically addresses curricula and policies that are relevant to students in the Ph.D. program. Additional program information is also available on the Boston College web site at [www.bc.edu/nursing](http://www.bc.edu/nursing). The Associate Dean of Graduate Programs and the Graduate Programs Office staff are also available to answer graduate students' questions. The student handbook reflects current policies and procedures; however, procedures may be revised and updated during the year as necessary. Please check with the Graduate Programs Office for the most up-to-date policies and procedures.

## HISTORY OF THE CONNELL SCHOOL OF NURSING

Boston College inaugurated the School of Nursing in response to the need for a Catholic collegiate school of nursing in the Greater Boston area. With the cooperation of His Excellency, Most Reverend Richard J. Cushing, Archbishop of Boston, a program was offered in February 1947 leading to the degree of Bachelor of Science in Nursing for registered nurses. In September 1947, a basic collegiate program of five years leading to the degree of Bachelor of Science was introduced for high school graduates. Beginning in September 1950, a four calendar-year basic collegiate program was initiated, and in 1957 this was shortened to four academic years. In the spring of 1960 the School of Nursing moved from downtown Boston to the Chestnut Hill campus and occupied its own building, the gift of His Eminence Richard Cardinal Cushing. In 2001-2002, the school received a generous gift from the late William F. Connell and the school is now known as the Connell School of Nursing (CSON).

## HISTORY OF GRADUATE PROGRAMS IN NURSING

Boston College began offering graduate courses in 1952. In the spring of 1956, nursing sought to bring its program into conformity with the standards of the profession, and proposed a Master of Science degree in Nursing, with a minor in education. Boston College began awarding the Master of Science degree in Nursing in 1958. The Ph.D. program, approved by the board of trustees in September 1986, began in fall 1988. Ten students were admitted in the program's initial year; the program expanded to 30 students at the end of three years. The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program was initiated in 2019. This terminal, practice-focused doctoral program prepares Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) as Nurse Practitioners and Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs). In the 1993-94 academic year, there was a general reorganization of graduate arts and sciences and the schools of nursing and education assumed administration of the graduate programs in their respective areas. This organizational change strengthened the already vigorous and vital graduate programs in the Connell School of Nursing.

## CONNELL SCHOOL OF NURSING MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Boston College Connell School of Nursing is to prepare compassionate, professionally competent nurses whose practice and scholarship are scientifically based and grounded in humanizing the experience of health and illness. In keeping with the University's Jesuit, Catholic ideals, we focus on formation of the whole person and promotion of social justice. The Connell School of Nursing educates students as reflective lifelong learners who use knowledge in service to others. The faculty develops and disseminates knowledge for the advancement of

professional nursing practice and the improvement of health and health care for a diverse global society.

The graduate of the baccalaureate program is prepared as a generalist who promotes, maintains, and restores the health of individuals, families, and communities/populations across the lifespan through evidence-based practice. The graduate of the master's program is prepared as an advanced generalist nurse with disciplinary knowledge and skill to improve the delivery of care through leadership, mentorship, and evidence-based practice. The graduate of the doctorate in nursing practice program is prepared for the advanced practice role and is eligible for national certification in a specialty area. The graduate of the Ph.D. program is prepared to engage in and contribute to theoretically driven research and scholarship that address significant problems in nursing and health care and to influence policy.

### CONNELL SCHOOL OF NURSING PHILOSOPHY

Nursing is the art and science of human caring. The recipients of nursing care are individuals, families, aggregates of people, and communities/populations who are sick and well; culturally and linguistically diverse; within all socioeconomic strata; and at all stages in the life cycle. The study of nursing is based on a common intellectual heritage transmitted by a liberal education and the art and science of nursing. Nursing focuses on the life processes and patterns of the individual in the context of the family and the community and also the health needs of the population. Nursing recognizes the contribution of cultural diversity and social environments to the health/illness beliefs, practices, and behavioral responses of individuals and groups.

Nursing education prepares students for the appropriate level of knowledge and skills by building on the liberal arts and sciences. Nursing curricula are logically ordered to provide core knowledge and the application of that knowledge. The preparation for holistic nursing care requires a holistic approach in education, and education is most effective when it involves active participation by the learner. Students are supported in developing clinical skills as well as the ability to think and act ethically. Students are active participants in shaping the learning environment within the Connell School of Nursing.

The Boston College Connell School of Nursing instills the values of service to others, truth through scholarly inquiry, and justice through promoting equal access to care for all people. Service, scholarship, and justice in caring include all people in the global community, particularly the underserved. The faculty believe that promoting the physical, psychological, and spiritual aspects of health are essential to understanding the human dimension of holistic nursing care. Nurses engage in partnerships with individuals and groups to promote and optimize wellness. The nurse respects the uniqueness of the person and the individual's right to choose and actively participate in decisions about health care. Nursing promotes self-determination by empowering clients and advocating for those who cannot do so independently. (rev 4/14)

### ACCREDITATION & CERTIFICATION

The Connell School of Nursing accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE).

## Organizational Structure of the Connell School of Nursing

The **Dean** of the Connell School of Nursing is responsible for the overall administration of the school.

Katherine Gregory, Ph.D., RN, FAAN  
Dean

Office: Maloney 294  
Telephone: 617-552-4251

The **Associate Deans** are responsible for the academic, research and financial administration.

Susan Kelly-Weeder, Ph.D., RN, FNP-BC, FAAN, FAANP  
Associate Dean for Graduate Programs

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Christopher Grillo, M.Ed., MBA  
Associate Dean for Finance & Administration

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### Graduate Clinical Specialty Program Directors

Susan Emery, Ph.D., CRNA  
CRNA Nurse Anesthetist Program

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Kellie LaPierre, DNP, GNP-C  
Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Program

Office: Maloney 370  
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Patricia Underwood, Ph.D., FNP, RN  
Family Primary Care Program

Office: Maloney 373A  
Telephone: 617-552-1846

Laura White, Ph.D., MS, RN, CPNP  
Pediatric Primary Care Program

Office: Maloney 361A  
Telephone: 617-552-1630

Carol Marchetti, Ph.D., RN, PMHNP-BC  
Psychiatric-Mental Health Program

Office: Maloney 346  
Telephone: 617-552-2328

Allyssa Harris, Ph.D., RN, WHNP-BC  
Women's Health Program

Office: Maloney 359  
Telephone: 617-552-0550

## Academic Policies & Procedures

### FACULTY

**Faculty** may be full-time or part-time. Most full-time faculty teach in more than one level of the program. Each faculty member has a designated assistant. Faculty may be contacted via phone and voicemail, email, or through their assistants. **Teachers of Record (TOR)** are faculty who are responsible for coordinating faculty and student activities within a course. Their areas of responsibility include the course syllabus, compiling exams, and computing grades.

### COMMUNICATIONS

The Graduate Programs Office uses BC email for all communications. Upon admission, every student receives a BC email address. Students must activate their BC email address in order to receive important announcements. All students are responsible for checking their BC email routinely. Visit <http://g.bc.edu> to log in to your BC email account. You can arrange to forward your BC email to another email account by visiting [www.bc.edu/offices/help/comm-collab/email.html](http://www.bc.edu/offices/help/comm-collab/email.html).

Each faculty member and staff member has voicemail and email. Each faculty or staff person at BC can be reached via email. Email addresses may be obtained by searching the directory on Agora (<https://services.bc.edu/directorysearch/search!displayInput.action>).

### ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY

Students are expected to maintain high standards of integrity in both the academic and clinical settings. CSON adheres to the Boston College policies surrounding academic integrity. This policy is outlined in the Boston College catalog. The catalog may be accessed online at <http://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/univcat.html>.

Expected ethical behavior in clinical situations is based on the American Nurses' Association Code of Ethics for Nurses (ANA, 2001, 2010, 2015). Students are expected to protect patients' confidentiality at all times, and to be honest in any documentation regarding the patient's condition and their own assessments and interventions. Students are expected to maintain high professional standards, including being physically, intellectually, emotionally, and academically prepared when caring for patients. Unprofessional conduct is considered serious and may result in dismissal from the school.

### RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF SCIENCE

Scientific integrity, the conscious adherence to a set of ethical principles, is the hallmark of all scholarly disciplines, including nursing. Boston College is guided by the ethical principles regarding all research involving human subjects. Graduate students in the Connell School of Nursing who plan to conduct research with humans or material of human origins must submit their research proposals to the Boston College Institutional Review Board (BCIRB) for review and approval prior to carrying out the project. See the website: <https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/research/sites/vice-provost-for-research/research-protections.html>.

### GRADUATE CONSORTIUM IN WOMEN'S STUDIES

The Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies is an inter-institutional enterprise established to advance the field of women's studies and enlarge the scope of graduate education through new models of team teaching and interdisciplinary study. Faculty and students are drawn from nine member schools: Boston College, Boston University, Brandeis University, Harvard University,

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Northeastern University, Simmons University, Tufts University and the University of Massachusetts Boston. Graduate students enrolled in degree programs at Boston College may with the permission of their department apply to participate in this program. For more information go to <http://mit.edu/gcws>.

Graduate students in the Connell School of Nursing may cross register for one (1) course each semester (fall/spring) at Boston University, Brandeis, or Tufts. Cross registration materials are available in Lyons Hall/Student Services. Prior approval by the host institution is necessary. Students should consult with the appropriate BC consortium liaison at the host school about cross registration. Before registering for courses in the consortium, students are required to seek approval from their academic advisor and the associate dean for graduate programs. Cross registration is not available during the summer sessions.

### COURTEOUS CELL PHONE USE

Out of respect for faculty and fellow students, please turn off your cell phones in class. If you need to be available in case of personal or professional emergencies, please adhere to the following guidelines:

- Put your phone on a vibrate setting
- Sit near the door
- If you receive a call, immediately exit the classroom and answer the call well out of earshot of classrooms and offices

Students should not use cell phones in the clinical setting.

### CLASS ATTENDANCE

Graduate students are expected to attend classes regularly, take tests, and submit assignments at the times specified by the professors on the course syllabi. For any absence, students must still meet all course requirements and learning objectives. Attendance in nursing class, clinical, simulation, and lab is expected for all students. Excused absences include student illness, bereavement for an immediate family member, military obligations, or religious observances. Students who anticipate military and religious absences should notify the faculty at the beginning of the semester so accommodations can be made to complete the learning objectives in a timely way. Students are required to communicate an unexpected absence no later than two hours before class or clinical in the method requested by the faculty. See [http://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/univcat/undergrad\\_catalog/policies\\_procedures.htm#religious](http://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/univcat/undergrad_catalog/policies_procedures.htm#religious).

### EXAMS AND QUIZZES

Students are responsible for taking all tests, quizzes, and examinations when they are given and have no inherent right as students to be given a make-up examination. Therefore, students should pay special attention to the announced dates and double check the time, date, and place of all examinations.

If a student anticipates missing an exam, they should contact the professor in advance and ask if she or he will discuss options. Any arrangements must be worked out between the faculty member and the student.



### LOST WORK

It is the student's responsibility to see that the faculty member receives the work submitted. Students should always make a copy of a paper or project before submitting it, especially if mailing it or leaving it at a department office. If a student does not receive the graded work back on time or if there is any doubt as to whether it has been received, it is prudent to check with the faculty member immediately.

### GRADING

In each course in which she or he registers for graduate credit, the student will receive one of the following grades at the end of the semester: A, A-, B+, B, B-, C, or F. The minimum acceptable passing grade for a graduate course is a B- (80). Graduate students will undergo academic review if they have earned a grade less than B- (80) in a course. Academic credit is granted for courses in which a student receives a grade of A, A-, B+, B, B-, or C. No credit is granted for a course in which a student receives a grade of F.

Please also see ACADEMIC STANDING.

The following scale is used in graduate courses in the Connell School of Nursing:

A	94-100 %
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C	74-79
F	Below 74

### INCOMPLETE GRADES

All required work in any course must be completed by the date set by the course faculty member. A student who has not completed the research or written work for a course, may, with adequate reason and at the discretion of the faculty member, receive an "I" (incomplete). All of the course requirements for an incomplete course must be completed, and the "I" grade resolved, within the deadlines set forth by the university (March 1 for fall courses; August 1 for spring courses; October 1 for summer courses). After these deadlines, the "I" grade will permanently convert to an "F" grade. Any exceptions must be approved by the associate dean for graduate programs.

All courses must be successfully completed and all incomplete course grades must be resolved in order for students to be eligible to sit for doctoral comprehensive examinations. Students must successfully complete any pre-requisite course (and all of the requirements within that course) before being allowed to enroll in a subsequent course for which the incomplete course was a prerequisite. Students may not enroll in a graduate course while they have an "I" (incomplete) in a prerequisite course.

### LATE PAPERS/RESEARCH PROJECTS AND EXAMINATIONS

Students are responsible for submitting all work for a course to the faculty member by the specified deadline and taking examinations at their scheduled time and location (except as arranged in advance for specific learning needs). Professors are not obliged to accept any work beyond the deadline or to grant extensions. Any requests for extensions must be made prior to the original due date. All

arrangements for submission of the work must be negotiated directly between the faculty member and the student. Students who anticipate a conflict with a scheduled examination should notify the Teacher of Record as soon as possible prior to the scheduled exam. Faculty members are not obliged to provide early or late exams. Make-up examinations will be given at the discretion of the faculty and only under extreme circumstances. Students who do not show up for a scheduled examination without prior notification to the teacher of record will receive a grade of “o” for the exam.

#### ACADEMIC EVALUATION DISPUTES

Students have the right to know the components of a course on which the final grade will be based, to be graded fairly, and to understand why a particular grade was given. The faculty member has the right to determine which course components will be graded and the weight that will be given to each, the right to determine the grading scale to be employed, and has a responsibility to grade students consistently on that scale. Faculty are also expected to provide a syllabus for each course, specifying dates for assignments and examinations, and the weight given to each course component in determining the final grade, as well as objectives for the course. If a student feels, in light of the above, that a grade is unfair, the student should first make an appointment to see the professor, bring a copy of the paper or exam in question, and request that she or he explain why and how the grade was determined. If, after discussing the grade with the faculty member, the student still feels the grade is unfair, the student may appeal to the chairperson of the department in which the course is offered. If this discussion does not produce a satisfactory resolution, the student may file a formal appeal. The Associate Dean of Graduate Programs can provide the student with further information about this appeal process.

#### GRADUATE ACADEMIC STANDINGS AND PROGRESSION POLICIES

The Graduate Academic Standards Committee, composed of professors responsible for the NURS courses in the MS (nursing) program, meets at the end of each semester to review the records of master’s students with course failures, course deficiencies, low GPAs, or other academic concerns. This Committee makes recommendations about progression in the program in accordance with the policies described below and other relevant university policies. Final progressions decisions are made and implemented by the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs. (MHB, p. 14)

Graduate students are expected to maintain good academic standing at all times and progress through their program of study. Those who are not in good academic standing or are not progressing are subject to review by the Graduate Academic Standards and Progression Committee.

All graduate students in the Connell School of Nursing are expected to maintain a GPA of 3.0 in order to remain in good academic standing. The minimum acceptable passing grade for graduate courses is a B- (80). Students will undergo academic review if they have a GPA of less than 3.0 or earn a grade less than a B- (80) in a course.

If a student does not meet the minimum of a B- in any graduate NURS course, (s)he will be required to retake the course before advancing in the curriculum. Additionally, the student will be placed on academic probation and will be unable to progress until the deficit is remediated. Graduate students may repeat a nursing course only once after withdrawing from it or not achieving a B-. Graduate students who are on probation are not eligible for teaching assistantships, research assistantships, fellowships and/or any type of merit-based tuition remission award. Students will be dismissed from the Connell School of Nursing after 2 nursing (NURS) course failures and/or withdrawals to prevent failure in NURS courses.

Graduate students, who demonstrate unsafe clinical practice or unprofessional conduct in clinical, classroom settings, and/or interactions with BC faculty or staff, will undergo academic review and may be dismissed from the program. Unsafe clinical practice and/or unprofessional conduct are grounds for failure in any clinical course and may result in immediate removal from the clinical site.

The Associate Dean of Graduate Programs will notify the student of the outcome of academic review as soon as possible. If the student is dissatisfied with the decision, he / she may submit a formal appeal. See Graduate Students Rights & Grievances – Formal Appeals.

### GRADUATE STUDENT RIGHTS and GRIEVANCES

This grievance procedure provides a process for constructively resolving serious academic, supervisory or administrative grievances that graduate students may have with faculty, preceptors, staff or administrators. Its purpose is to resolve in a fair manner any grievances arising from grading, other evaluation or supervisory practices, and appeals that students may want to initiate if they are dissatisfied with decisions made by the committees that direct their degree program or the Graduate Academic Standards Committee of the Connell School.

To that end, all concerned should display a cooperative manner. Resolutions should be attempted between the parties involved and mediated rather than directed. Outcomes should be sought at the lowest possible administrative level. Confidentiality of the student(s) and faculty members(s) involved should be maintained at all times. In the event that the student's Chairperson, advisor, preceptor, Dean or Associate Dean of Graduate Programs is a party to the grievance that person should recuse him/herself from considering the matter, and the appropriate administrator at the next highest administrative level will replace that person.

If a student believes that he or she has been evaluated unfairly or has another serious grievance, the student should discuss the matter with the faculty member or preceptor and course Teacher of Record (TOR) involved as soon as possible after the evaluation has been received or the grievance arises. This discussion should provide an opportunity for further dialogue and clarification between faculty and student about how the matter was determined, what criteria were used, and any related issues. If such a discussion results in a mutually acceptable resolution, the matter will be considered closed. If either party wishes to have a written statement of the outcome, the parties will put the resolution in writing, sign it, and each retain a copy. This written statement must be completed no later than two weeks after the mutually acceptable resolution has been reached.

If, however, a mutually acceptable disposition cannot be achieved, the student may present the matter in writing to the CSON Chairperson. The student's written statement to the Chair must be submitted no later than two weeks from the date of the final meeting with the faculty member or preceptor and clearly specify the nature of the complaint and the remedy requested. The Chairperson will review the matter by meeting individually with each individual involved and reviewing any written materials related to the grievance. The Chairperson will meet again with the individuals involved, either separately or jointly or both, in an attempt to resolve the matter.

The Chairperson will provide a written response within two (2) weeks of this meeting. If a settlement is reached, it is to be put in writing and signed by the Chairperson and each of the parties, with each to retain a copy. If no resolution is reached, the Chairperson will prepare a written summary of events relevant to the grievance and provide a copy of it to the student and the faculty member or

other individuals involved. In the event that the grievance concerns treatment or evaluation in a practicum, the student should follow this same procedure, discussing the matter first with his or her preceptor and/or clinical instructor. If this discussion does not lead to resolution, the matter should be brought to the CSON Chairperson who will follow the guidelines described above

#### FORMAL APPEAL PROCEDURES

If a graduate student is dissatisfied by the outcome of the discussions and process at the Chairperson level, the student may initiate a formal appeal. The student must initiate the appeal as early as possible, but not later than thirty (30) days after receiving the Chairperson's resolution.

A formal appeal consists of a written explanation of the grievance sent to the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs, which should include the reasons the student believes the faculty member's or preceptor's evaluation was arbitrary, unethical, or based on extrinsic error, and the reasons why previous discussions were not satisfactory. The Associate Dean of Graduate Programs may request that the faculty member, the Chairperson and any other individual involved provide the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs with a written evaluation of the merit of the appeal and a summary of the attempts to resolve the grievance. Associate Dean of Graduate Programs will then convene an ad hoc committee composed of three members of the elected Grievance Committee. The ad hoc committee will conduct an independent review of the grievance, which will include discussing the grievance with the student, the Chairperson and other individuals involved. Within thirty (30) days of receiving the formal appeal, the ad hoc committee will provide a statement of the committee's resolution of the matter to the student, the Chairperson involved in the earlier level of the process, the person(s) against whom the grievance was brought, and the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs.

If the student is dissatisfied with the conclusions of the ad hoc committee, the student may submit a written appeal to the Dean. The appeal must be submitted as soon as possible but no later than thirty (30) days after the student has received the conclusions of the ad hoc committee.

A formal appeal to the Dean consists of a written explanation of the appeal, which should include the reasons the student believes the faculty member's or preceptor's evaluation was arbitrary, unethical, or based on extrinsic error, and the reasons why previous discussions were not satisfactory. Copies of decisions made by the Chairperson and the ad hoc committee will be forwarded to the Dean for their consideration in this review of the student's appeal. Within thirty (30) days of receipt of the student's appeal, the Dean will render a decision. The decision of the Dean is final, and will be communicated to the student in writing, with copies to the person(s) against whom the grievance was brought, and the CSON Chairperson and Associate Dean of Graduate Programs.

If a student's grievance relates to the student's legal rights under any law or regulation, the grievance will be addressed in accordance with the applicable legal requirements. In such cases, the faculty member or administrator responding to the grievance should consult with the Associate Dean of Finance and Administration who will facilitate communication with the Office of the General Counsel.

#### TRANSFER POLICY

Matriculated graduate students may request permission to transfer in up to six credits of graduate course work completed at another regionally accredited graduate university. Only courses completed within the past five years that were not applied to a prior degree, which the student earned a grade 80

(B-) or better, can be considered for transfer. Matriculated students are not permitted to take courses outside of Boston College, other than through the Consortium. Core courses that were taken prior to matriculation may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Students will not be allowed to transfer in more than six (6) credits towards their degree.

To request to have an outside course considered for transfer, the student must provide a copy of the course description for electives and course syllabus for core courses to the graduate office. Core nursing courses that were taken prior to matriculation at Boston College must be reviewed for equivalency by the Teacher of Record for the core course at Boston College, and approved by the TOR and the graduate associate dean (forms in the appendix and on the CSON web site.) If approved, the student must submit a final official transcript documenting a grade of B or better to the graduate office for processing. The transfer course and credit, but not a grade, will be recorded on the student's transcript after the student has successfully completed one full semester at Boston College.

Electives / cognates may be approved by the faculty advisor.

#### POLICY ON NOT REGISTERED (NR) STUDENTS

Matriculated students who are not registered must complete a leave of absence or withdrawal form and return it to the Graduate Programs Office. Failure to do so may result in the university deactivating the student's enrollment and their dismissal from the program

#### TIME LIMITS

Students in the MS program have 5 years from initial enrollment to complete their program of study. Students in the DNP and Ph.D. program have 8 years from initial enrollment to complete all degree requirements, including defending and submitting the final version of the dissertation.

Graduate students who exceed the program time limits or who fail to make progress towards their degree will be reviewed by the Graduate Academic Standards and Progressions Committee and may be subject to dismissal from the program.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE (LOA)

Graduate students enrolled in a degree program who do not register for course work, doctoral advisement, or doctoral continuation in any given semester must request a leave of absence (LOA) for that semester. LOAs are granted for one semester at a time. Students may obtain a LOA form from the graduate program office or the CSON website and submit this form to the Graduate Programs Office for the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs' approval. Leave time will be considered a portion of the total time limit for the degree unless due to active military service.

Students must meet any conditions specified for return from a leave of absence. Students on LOA must still follow procedures and deadlines for initiating the placement process for clinical practice; clinical placements will be on a space available basis. Students must notify the Graduate Programs Office by March 1 prior to the academic year they wish to return.

When a student takes a LOA from Boston College for mental health reasons, the student is expected to get the appropriate treatment to deal with the condition that led to the leave. Before the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs can make a decision regarding readmission, it is required that the student's mental health treatment professional provide sufficient information to Boston College for the purpose of assessing the student's readiness to return and take on the rigors of his/her academic

program. For more information, please contact Dr. Craig Burns, Director of University Counseling Services at 617-552-3310.

### ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT

It is the student's responsibility to take advantage of the advisement process. Each student is assigned to a faculty advisor. Students are expected to meet with their advisors on a regular basis, keep their advisors informed about their academic progress and seek assistance with problems in a timely manner. Advisor information is available on the Agora Portal.

### PLAN OF STUDY

Each student must have a plan of study on file. These are completed with the Graduate Programs Office and/or with the specialty program director/advisor. Students are responsible for reviewing and updating their plans of study. In addition to providing guidance to students in progressing through the curriculum, the plans of study are used for course enrollment management and to schedule clinical placements (see clinical practica section).

### SUMMER SESSIONS

The Connell School of Nursing usually offers graduate courses\* during Summer Session I and Summer Session II.

\*Courses with fewer than 10 students enrolled may be cancelled.

### WITHDRAWAL FROM A COURSE

Students who withdraw from a course after the registration period but before the last three (3) weeks of class will have a grade of "W" recorded in their permanent record. The last date for withdrawal from a course is specified on the academic calendar each semester. Students are not permitted to drop courses during the last three (3) weeks of classes or during the exam period; students who are still registered at this point will receive a final grade. Students may withdraw from a course or change from credit to audit up to three (3) weeks prior to examinations and may receive a partial tuition refund on withdrawals submitted during the three weeks following registration. Students who change from credit to audit receive no refund.

Graduate students may only repeat a course once.

### WITHDRAWAL FROM BOSTON COLLEGE

Students in good standing who wish to withdraw from Boston College are required to file a withdrawal form in the Graduate Programs Office. In the case of students who are dismissed for academic or disciplinary reasons, the appropriate administrator will complete this form.

### GRADUATION

The University awards degrees in May, August and December; commencement ceremonies are held only in May.

#### May Graduation

Graduate degrees are awarded at the annual May commencement. Students who plan to graduate in May should file a graduation form (online) by the deadline stated in the academic calendar (usually early in February). Students who sign up for graduation but do not graduate on the anticipated date are automatically moved to the next scheduled graduation period by the registrar's office.

Diplomas are distributed to individual students at the Connell School of Nursing ceremony immediately following the completion of the university commencement exercises. Diplomas will be mailed to students unable to attend commencement. Diplomas or transcripts will not be awarded or issued until all degree credits have been recorded on the student's permanent record and all accounts and fees have been paid.

#### August and December Graduations

Graduate students who have completed all degree requirements by August 30 or December 31 are eligible to receive their degree as of those dates. The procedure is the same as for May graduation. Since there are no commencement exercises in December or August, the names of those receiving degrees will be included in the Boston College program for the following May commencement. Those students who would like to participate in the May ceremonies must notify the Graduate Programs Office.

#### SURVEY OF EARNED DOCTORATES

Doctoral students are asked by Boston College to participate in a brief survey following their program completion. This is a university policy in collaboration with the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED) to track all graduating doctoral students across the country. The online survey will be administered by the Graduate Programs Assistant via email to the recent graduates. The survey will encompass all graduates in a given academic year (July 1 through June 30).

#### CHILDBIRTH AND ADOPTION ACCOMMODATION POLICY

Boston College recognizes the importance of family issues. Any full-time Connell School of Nursing Ph.D. fellow in good academic standing who is the primary caregiver of a newborn child or an adoptive child under the age of 13 newly placed in the home is eligible for an accommodation. This Ph.D. fellow accommodation is not an employee medical leave or a leave of absence from the academic program.

In connection with the birth of a child, a Ph.D. fellow who is the primary caregiver of the child is eligible for an accommodation extending for a period of up to eight (8) consecutive weeks. A Ph.D. fellow who is the primary caregiver of an adoptive child under the age of 13 newly placed in the home is eligible for an accommodation extending for a period of up to eight consecutive weeks immediately following the placement of the child in the home.

During the accommodation period, the Ph.D. fellow will be relieved of the service requirements that accompany their funding. During the remainder of the semester (before and/or after the accommodation period), the student's program will assign service duties consistent with the academic nature of a graduate or doctoral assistantship.

During the accommodation period, the Ph.D. fellow may attend classes and work on course assignments to the extent possible. The Ph.D. fellow and the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs should work with the professors in these courses to adjust, to the extent reasonably possible, attendance requirements, assignment deadlines, and exam dates during the accommodation period.

The Associate Dean for Graduate Programs and professors should work with Ph.D. fellows to establish appropriate timetables for completing coursework and exams during the semester in which the accommodation is taken.

Funding provided by the University, including funding for health insurance, will continue during the accommodation period. The accommodation policy will not extend the total number of years of funding available to a Ph.D. fellow. For Ph.D. fellows with nine (9) month stipends, funding is for the academic year only.

Students funded by government grants or other external sources must follow the policies of their funding agency. If external funding is suspended or reduced during the accommodation period the university will assume funding responsibility for the accommodation period.

Details of the arrangement should be worked out in writing between the Ph.D. fellow and the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs, and reported to the Vice Provost for Faculties before the accommodation period begins.

A Ph.D. fellow anticipating a childbirth or adoption accommodation must notify their academic advisor and submit a written request to the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs. The Associate Dean will inform the Vice Provost for Faculties of all such requests.

Requests for accommodation should be made no less than three months before the expected start of the accommodation period in order to allow appropriate arrangements to be made to cover any research or teaching fellowship responsibilities. Departments are encouraged to work out specific arrangements with students, on a case-by-case basis, within the broad framework of this policy.

## **Resources**

Information about activities and resources for graduate students across the university is located at the Graduate Student Life website: <http://www.bc.edu/offices/gsc/>

## **FINANCIAL AID**

### **FINANCIAL AWARDS**

A limited number of Connell School of Nursing partial scholarships are available in the form of tuition remission and endowment scholarships. Financial awards are contingent upon compliance with all academic standards and regulations. Graduate students may not receive university financial aid (stipend and/or tuition scholarships) from two schools or departments simultaneously without the Dean's approval.

See the CSON website (<https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/schools/cson/admission-aid/tuition-aid.html>) for additional information about external sources of scholarships and financial aid.

### **PH.D. FELLOWSHIPS**

With generous funding from the university, CSON is able to offer university fellowships to its most well qualified full-time Ph.D. students upon admission. University fellowships usually include tuition (approximately 46 credits), subsidized health insurance, and a stipend. University fellowship stipends are comparable to NIH pre-doctoral stipend levels (approximately \$25,000 per year in 2021-2022). University fellowships may be renewed twice (for a total of up to three (3) years of funding), provided fellows remain in good academic standing, demonstrate significant progress toward the degree, demonstrate scholarly productivity and meet the expectations of the fellowship experience



and mentor. Fellows are expected to be full-time students, commit to work approximately 16 hrs. per week on a faculty member's research project and limit outside employment to a maximum of one day per week during the semester. Fellows are also expected to attend scholarly workshops and conferences at CSON and elsewhere (approximately 2 – 4 hrs. per week). Fellows may be assigned to teaching fellowships in lieu of research fellowships during the third year. Please see page 24 for more information.

Students who are on academic probation and/or do not pass the comprehensive examination are not eligible to receive fellowship or other funding. Fellowship funds may not be used towards tuition for courses or comprehensive examination credits that are being repeated. Ph.D. fellows who obtain outside funding through NRSA awards, RWJF or similar mechanisms, may be eligible to retain a portion of their university fellowship. Please contact the Graduate Programs Office to discuss fellowship and funding policies. Ph.D. students are encouraged to discuss fellowship and funding policies with the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs or the Associate Dean for Research, who is an additional resource for exploring NIH external funding opportunities, such as NIH NRSA awards. Additional information on NRSA awards and other external funding is provided on page 25.

#### TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS (TA)

Teaching assistants are graduate students enrolled in the Connell School of Nursing. The graduate school has a limited number of teaching assistantships available each semester. The teaching assistant (TA), in addition to her or his program of studies, is usually responsible for either 7.5 or 15 hours per week of teaching/instructional activities in the undergraduate or graduate program performed under the supervision of the course faculty and/or teacher of record. TAs are compensated with a stipend. The Graduate Programs Office will send out applications for TA positions each summer.

#### RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIPS (RA)

Research assistantships may be available through faculty grants. The nature and number of hours involved are determined by the faculty member holding the grant. Assistantships provide limited tuition remission or a stipend that varies among projects. Students who wish to be considered for these opportunities should contact the Office for Nursing Research.

#### PROCEDURES FOR FINANCIAL AID RECIPIENTS

An aid recipient who relinquishes an assistantship or a tuition scholarship must report this matter in writing to the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs. These awards may be discontinued at any time during an academic year if either the academic performance or in-service assistance is unsatisfactory. They may also be discontinued for unprofessional conduct or conduct injurious to the reputation of the University.

#### OTHER SOURCES OF FINANCIAL AID

Students interested in other sources of financial aid, such as work-study funds and various loan programs, should inquire at the University Financial Aid Office where all such aid is administered. Students receiving loans are expected to meet their ethical, legal and professional responsibilities in repayment of these loans. Another useful website for scholarship information is [www.discovernursing.com](http://www.discovernursing.com). Information about university-wide teaching or graduate assistantships is available through the Murray Graduate Center via [www.bc.edu/gsc](http://www.bc.edu/gsc).

## UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

### THE LIBRARIES

The Boston College Libraries offer a wealth of resources and services to support the teaching and research activities of the University. The book collections exceed 2 million volumes, and approximately 21,000 serial titles are currently received. Special collections for nursing are housed in the Mary Pekarski Nursing Archives in Burns Library and include: nursing ethics, nursing history, and the recently acquired collections of the North American Nursing Diagnosis Association (NANDA) and the American Association of Nursing Attorneys.

Membership in two academic consortia, the Boston Library Consortium and the Boston Theological Institute, adds a greater dimension to the resources of the Boston College Libraries, providing Boston College faculty and graduate students who have special research needs access to the millions of volumes and other services of the member institutions. Through membership in New England Library Information Network (NELINET), students have online access to publishing, cataloging, and interlibrary loan location from the OCLC, Inc. database, which contains over 36 million records from the Library of Congress and from more than 25,000 contributing institutions worldwide.

Boston College Libraries is a member of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL). Boston College was among the first schools in the country to offer an online public computer catalog of its collections. The libraries' computerized system provides instant access to information on library holdings, as well as supporting book circulation and acquisitions' procedures. Students may browse the catalog using video display terminals in all the libraries, and may access the catalog via computer from their homes or offices at [www.bc.edu/libraries](http://www.bc.edu/libraries). In addition, the libraries offer computer searching of hundreds of commercial databases in the humanities, sciences, business, and social sciences through an in-house CD-ROM network, through access to outside databases, and through the library computerized system. Access to an increasing number of full-text journals is also available online.

Information on use of the libraries is contained in the Guide to the Boston College Libraries, on the Boston College website, and other brochures available in the libraries. There is a reference librarian assigned to each discipline. Wanda Anderson ([wanda.anderson@bc.edu](mailto:wanda.anderson@bc.edu)) is the reference librarian for nursing. Students should arrange for orientation to the library resources through the many library offerings provided.

### MURRAY GRADUATE STUDENT CENTER

The John Courtney Murray, S.J. Graduate Student Center is a facility established to meet the needs of graduate students. It is located across Beacon Street at 292 Hammond Street. The Murray Graduate Student Center provides opportunities to gather for discussion, reflection, presentations, meals, and social functions. It offers a computer lab with PCs and Macs, study rooms with network stations, network activated jacks and wireless network connections for laptop computers, dining facilities, and an administrative staff to act as advocates for all graduate students. The Murray Graduate Student Center also serves as a coordinating center for graduate student groups such as the Graduate Student Association, Graduate International Student Association, and the Graduate AHANA Student Association. To reserve space for graduate events or for more information, please see the Murray Graduate Student Center website ([www.bc.edu/gsc](http://www.bc.edu/gsc)) or call 617-552-1851.

### STUDENT LOUNGES

Students may use student lounges in all Boston College buildings. Students are able book study rooms in O'Neill Library or in the Murray Graduate Student Center for small group study.

The Kennedy Resource Center (KRC) in the Connell School of Nursing, Maloney Hall 243 & 244, houses audiovisual programs and computer-assisted instruction.

The simulation laboratory in Maloney Hall is a state-of-the art facility in which students may learn and practice a variety of nursing skills. This may be used by students as part of their coursework. The nursing student lounge is located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of Maloney Hall and is available for use by all undergraduate and graduate students. The lounge houses a printer, 2 small refrigerators and a microwave, as well as student lockers. If students are interested, they can reserve a locker through the Graduate Programs Office; lockers are first-come, first-serve and may be reserved for a full academic year.

### WIRELESS NETWORK

The wireless network at Boston College provides laptop users with the flexibility to access the network from many points on campus including libraries, classrooms, dining halls, and even outdoor common areas. The Connell School of Nursing is equipped with a wireless network.

### CONNORS FAMILY LEARNING CENTER

The Connors Learning Center provides free tutoring to the student body at large, support services to students with learning disabilities or attention deficit disorder, and instructional support for graduate students and faculty. They also assist students who need help improving their writing skills. The Connors Family Learning Center is located on the second floor of the O'Neill Library.

### AHANA STUDENT PROGRAMS

The goal of this office is to promote the optimal academic achievement of African-American, Hispanic, Asian and Native-American (AHANA) students at Boston College, especially those identified as being at potential academic disadvantage. Services available include tutorial assistance, academic advisement, individual and group counseling tracking of academic performance, and career counseling. In addition to these services, the office assists AHANA student organizations in developing and implementing cultural programs. Students can contact the Graduate AHANA Association through the Murray Graduate Student Center.

### CAREER CENTER

The Career Center provides comprehensive resources and information concerning all aspects of career planning and job hunting, which includes providing group and individual assistance in resume writing, interview preparation, and job-hunting strategies. They also offer an on-campus-recruiting program, current job listings and a credentials service. These services are available to graduate and undergraduate students in all schools and concentrations, as well as to alumni.

Graduate students are encouraged to visit the Career Center in Southwell Hall at 38 Commonwealth Avenue, where they can pick up the Center's monthly publications. Students are encouraged to make an appointment through the Career Center's website.

### OFFICE OF CAMPUS MINISTRY

The Office of Campus Ministry strives to deepen the faith of Boston College students by offering opportunities to discover, grow, express and celebrate the religious dimensions of their lives in personally relevant ways. In addition, it works to foster justice by developing social awareness and to build a sense of community as a Christian value in the whole University. Chaplains from a variety of faiths are available. Offices are located in McElroy Commons, Room 233.

### UNIVERSITY COUNSELING SERVICES (UCS)

University Counseling Services (UCS) provides counseling and psychological services to the students of Boston College. The goal of UCS is to enable students to develop fully and to make the most of their educational experience. Services available include individual counseling and psychotherapy, group counseling, consultation, evaluation and referral. Students wishing to make an appointment may contact UCS at 617-552-3100 or visit the office in Gasson Hall 001 during regular office hours of Monday through Friday 8:45AM-4:45PM.

### OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT OF STUDENT AFFAIRS (VPSA)

The Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs (VPSA) coordinates the planning, implementation and evaluation of programs and services for graduate student development. This includes overseeing students' clubs and organizations, programming, the Graduate Student Association, alcohol and drug education, off-campus and commuting student affairs, and international student services. The VPSA is also responsible for coordinating policies and procedures concerning student conduct and discipline, and the judicial process. Graduate students can visit the Director of Graduate Life, Dr. Carole Hughes, at the John Courtney Murray, S.J. Graduate Center on 292 Hammond Street or contact via 617-552-1855 or [gsc@bc.edu](mailto:gsc@bc.edu).

### SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Any student who wishes to request reasonable accommodations due to a documented disability should notify the faculty within the first two (2) weeks of a course. For more information regarding services for students with disabilities contact Caroline Davis, Director, Office of Student Outreach and Support Services ([caroline.davis.2@bc.edu](mailto:caroline.davis.2@bc.edu)). For more information regarding services for students with learning disabilities, contact Dr. Kathleen Duggan, Director, Connors Family Learning Center, O'Neill Library ([dugganka@bc.edu](mailto:dugganka@bc.edu)).

### GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION (GSA)

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) of Boston College is an autonomous organization that serves students in the Graduate Schools of Arts and Sciences, Nursing, Social Work, the Lynch Graduate School of Education and the Carroll Graduate School of Management.

The GSA exists to provide academic support to students in the form of conference grants and special group funding, to host social, cultural and academic programs for graduates, and to inform the graduate community of matters of interest to them. The GSA also advocates for graduate student interests within the University community. The GSA nominates graduate students to serve on a variety of committees, including the University Academic Council, the University Committee on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, the Graduate Educational Policy Committee, and the new student center committee.

The GSA is funded by the activity fee charged to every graduate student at registration and is governed by the GSA Student Council, composed of student representation from each academic

department. The council and staff work together to strengthen the collective voice of graduate students. The GSA publishes an annual Graduate Students Achievement Profile online, that lists all graduate students who have published or presented papers, won awards, or otherwise been acknowledged for their work.

The GSA is located in the Murray Graduate Student Center at 292 Hammond Street across Beacon Street from McElroy Commons. Contact [gsa@bc.edu](mailto:gsa@bc.edu) for more information.

#### GRADUATE NURSES ASSOCIATION (GNA)

The Graduate Nurses Association (GNA) meets regularly in the Connell School of Nursing to provide a forum for concerns and interests of graduate students. They sponsor coffee hours, luncheons and other social events so that graduate students can interact with each other and with faculty on an informal basis. The GNA also hosts a graduate student banquet prior to May commencement for graduating students and their families. They are also involved in a variety of projects to help fund various groups in the community. The GNA office can be reached at [bcgradnurses@gmail.com](mailto:bcgradnurses@gmail.com). The GNA has membership in the GSA and two members of the GNA are appointed to represent graduate nursing students at GSA meetings and activities.

#### UNIVERSITY HEALTH SERVICES (UHS)

The primary goal of University Health Services (UHS) is to provide confidential medical/nursing care and educational programs to safeguard the physical well-being and mental health of the student body. It is located on the ground floor of 2150 Commonwealth Avenue on the Chestnut Hill Campus; the phone number is 617-552-3225. The entrance is on St. Thomas More Road. The services include a walk-in clinic as well as medical, surgical, gynecological, orthopedic, nutrition, physical therapy, allergy, and immunization clinics. The in-patient infirmary is open 24 hours a day when school is in session.

The health/infirmary fee for medical care on campus is not a substitute for a health insurance policy. Massachusetts law requires that all university students registered for 75 percent of a full-time course load be covered by an accident and sickness insurance policy so that protection may be assured in case of hospitalization or other costly outside medical services. Insurance information is available online at [www.bc.edu/offices/uhs](http://www.bc.edu/offices/uhs).

# **OVERVIEW OF THE Ph.D. PROGRAM**

According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree represents the highest level of formal education for nurses in preparation for a career in research and the scholarship of discovery. Ph.D. graduates are prepared to build and communicate the knowledge base in the profession, develop the science, steward the profession, educate the next generation of nurses, define the uniqueness of nursing and maintain its professional integrity. In the academic setting, the Ph.D. is the highest academic degree and is required for success as a scientist in the multiple disciplines represented within educational institutions. In the scientific arena, the Ph.D. is the beginning preparation for the development of an independent research trajectory. Attainment of the Ph.D. requires a strong scientific emphasis within the discipline, an understanding of the science of related disciplines and translation science, dissemination of innovations, and interdisciplinary collaboration. In addition, for the profession to achieve this vision and make the maximum impact on the healthcare system, Ph.D. nursing scientists should reflect society at large (from: AACN, 2010, *The Research-Focused Doctoral Program In Nursing: Pathways To Excellence*).

The Ph.D. program at the Boston College Connell School of Nursing is a post-master's research-focused degree. The program aims to prepare nursing scholars and researchers who are prepared to lead the field. Ph.D. students are offered a variety of learning opportunities through close faculty-student mentorship, course work, interdisciplinary colloquia, independent study, and research practica. Ph.D. students have the opportunity to take courses and study with experts within the Connell School of Nursing, across the Boston College campus and with colleagues at affiliated health centers and universities in the greater Boston area. Policies and procedures for the program are consistent with those of the University. Individual plans of study are determined according to the student's background, research interests, and stage of scholarly development prior to enrollment.

Low student-faculty ratios, research mentorship and hands-on training experiences facilitate the development of students' scholarly and research trajectories and permit program completion within a normative amount of time. Ph.D. students have opportunities to work and study with accomplished faculty, many of whom have externally funded research grants (NIH and other), are fellows in the American Academy of Nursing, and contribute as journal editors and manuscript reviewers. This provides students with opportunities to work on the cutting edge of nursing science.

Although there is currently no formal accreditation body for Ph.D. programs in nursing, the Connell School of Nursing subscribes to the standards and recommendations outlined in the AACN (2010) report, *The Research-Focused Doctoral Program In Nursing: Pathways To Excellence*.

## **Program Objectives**

The graduate of the Ph.D. program will be prepared to:

1. Constructively critique and synthesize nursing and interdisciplinary knowledge within a substantive area of inquiry relevant to nursing practice.
2. Design, conduct, and disseminate innovative, rigorous, and ethically sound research that draws upon multiple methods to advance nursing science.
3. Assume leadership and collaborate with other disciplines to address contemporary healthcare concerns affecting health and well-being.
4. Use scholarly inquiry to generate and disseminate knowledge that facilitates humanization, advances the discipline, informs practice, and reshapes policy.
5. Articulate the perspective of nursing in interdisciplinary dialogue for the common good of a diverse and global society.

## **Ph.D. Student Fellowships and Other Funding Opportunities**

### **UNIVERSITY FELLOWSHIPS**

With generous funding from the university, CSON is able to award university fellowships to well qualified full-time Ph.D. students at the time of admission. The purpose of the Ph.D. fellowship is to encourage highly qualified students to enroll in doctoral studies and to increase engagement as a student and developing researcher. University fellowships usually include full-time tuition (approximately 46 credits), health insurance, and a stipend. University fellowship stipends (approximately \$25,000 per year in 2020-2021) are comparable to NIH pre-doctoral stipend levels. Fellows may be assigned as teaching fellows in the third year, provided they have already met the expectations of the research fellowship.

University fellowships may be renewed up to twice (for a total of up to 3 years of funding), provided fellows remain in good academic standing, demonstrate significant progress toward the degree, demonstrate scholarly productivity and meet the expectations of the fellowship experience and mentor. Fellows are expected to be full-time students, commit to work approximately 16 hrs. per week on a faculty member's research project and limit outside employment to a maximum of one day per week during the semester. Fellows are also expected to attend scholarly workshops and conferences (approximately 2 – 4 hrs. per week). Fellows sign an annual fellowship contract outlining these expectations.

Students who are on academic probation and/or do not pass the comprehensive examination are not eligible to receive fellowship or other funding. Fellowship funds may not be used towards tuition for coursework unrelated to the Ph.D. or for coursework or comprehensive examination credits that are being repeated. Ph.D. fellows who obtain outside funding through NRSA awards, RWJF or similar mechanisms, may be eligible to retain a portion of their university fellowship. Please contact the office of the Associate Dean to discuss fellowship and funding policies.

### **NATURE OF FELLOWSHIP WORK**

All full-time students who receive fellowships will be assigned a fellowship supervisor. The research fellowship supervisor may be the student's academic advisor, but may be another CSON faculty member who has agreed to provide and supervise a research fellowship experience. Whenever possible, the research fellowship experience will be in the student's area of interest. The main

responsibility of the research fellowship supervisor is to provide opportunities for the fellow to engage in research experiences and activities and develop skills in research and scholarship. Teaching fellowship supervisors will be expert teachers and the TORs for courses that, whenever possible, provide a fit with the student's area of expertise. The teaching fellowship experience should provide students with opportunities to develop teaching skills related to classroom and/or clinical instruction. For more information, please see page 32.

#### PROCESS FOR APPOINTMENT AND EVALUATION OF FELLOWS

The Associate Dean of Graduate Programs consults with the Ph.D. program committee and faculty and makes fellow assignments at the time of admission. At the beginning of each academic year, fellows meet with their assigned research fellowship supervisors to develop outcome criteria for the year. These criteria will be used as an important part of the evaluation process. Fellows will be reviewed annually for their attainment of fellowship outcomes, scholarly productivity, academic standing and progress toward the degree. Fellows who do not meet the above criteria may not have their fellowships renewed. Ph.D. students who are not in good academic standing and/or do not make significant progress toward the degree may also be referred for review by the academic progression/review committee (please see page 15).

There are times when the work of the research fellowship supervisor or the relationship between the mentor and fellow may not be congruent to achieve the goals of the fellowship for the given year. If this occurs, fellows and/or fellowship supervisors should contact the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs to discuss the possibility of reassignment. While it is anticipated that the fellowship experience will be a positive one for both the student and the research fellowship supervisor, it is the prerogative of the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs to terminate the fellowship if the fellow's performance has not been deemed satisfactory by the faculty member. Fellowship assignments may be changed annually or during the academic year depending upon ongoing research activities and student and faculty needs.

#### NIH NRSA PREDOCTORAL (F31) AWARDS

The purpose of the Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award (NRSA) Individual Predoctoral Fellowship (Parent F31) is to enable promising predoctoral students to obtain individualized, mentored research training from outstanding faculty sponsors while conducting dissertation research. Applicants for this F31 program are expected to propose a dissertation research project and training plan in scientific health-related fields relevant to the mission of the participating Institutes and Centers. This training plan should reflect the applicant's dissertation research project, and facilitate and clearly enhance the individual's potential to develop into a productive, independent research scientist. The training plan should document the need for, and the anticipated value of, the proposed mentored research and training in relationship to the individual's research career goals. The training plan should also facilitate the fellow's transition to the next stage of his/her research career. Applicants for the F31 must be Ph.D. students who have identified a dissertation research project and appropriate sponsor(s).

The Kirschstein-NRSA Individual Predoctoral Fellowship (F31) program may provide up to five years (typically 2-3 years) of support for research training which leads to the Ph.D. or equivalent research degree in the biomedical, behavioral, or clinical sciences. NRSA fellowships are available through many NIH institutes, including the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR). The current program announcement outlining the NRSA program may be found at:

<https://www.ninr.nih.gov/training/trainingopportunitiesextramural/training-grants>.



Additional information about NRSA programs may be found at the [Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award \(NRSA\)](#) website. Ph.D. students are encouraged to contact the Associate Dean for Nursing Research, Dr. Christopher Lee, or the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs, Dr. Kelly-Weeder, early in their program to discuss NRSA applications.

#### PART-TIME PH.D. TUITION SCHOLARSHIPS

Partial tuition scholarships may be available for outstanding part-time students. A maximum of one or two such scholarships may be available in a given year. Students should contact the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs for further information.

#### OTHER PH.D. FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The Graduate Programs Office and the Dean's Office pursue external funding opportunities for graduate students on an ongoing basis. CSON has been very successful in recent years in securing funding for MSE students and for Ph.D. students. CSON has consistently received funding from the Jonas Foundation and has had Jonas Scholars in each of the past several cohorts. CSON also reviews Ph.D. student supplemental funding opportunities from the RWJF *Future of Nursing Scholars* Program. Ph.D. students will be notified whenever the school secures external funding and when new funding opportunities are identified.

There may also be opportunities for Ph.D. students to be funded on faculty research projects as either research assistants or through diversity supplements and other administrative supplements to faculty members' NIH grants. Other opportunities, including tuition remission, TA and RA positions are described on pages 7 in this handbook. Ph.D. students are encouraged to discuss fellowship and funding policies with the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs; the Associate Dean for Research is an excellent resource for exploring additional opportunities for external funding. See page 25 for more information about NIH NRSA Predoctoral (F31) awards.

## **Faculty Roles in Ph.D. Student Advisement and Mentorship**

In addition to financial funding, the CSON supports its doctoral students and facilitates successful completion of the Ph.D. through close faculty-student mentorship. Ph.D. students work with, study with and are mentored by expert faculty within the CSON and across the university, as well as by inter-professional colleagues from collaborating organizations and universities in the greater Boston area.

Each Ph.D. student is assigned an **academic advisor** within the CSON at the time of admission. This faculty member helps the student to develop his/her plan of study and advises on academic matters, including preparation for the doctoral comprehensive examination. The advisor acts as a role model and mentor, facilitates professional growth and provides career advice. Every funded Ph.D. fellow is also assigned a **research supervisor**, who is an experienced faculty researcher who provides the fellow with “hands-on” research experiences on the supervisor’s research projects. When possible, the faculty academic advisor will also be the research supervisor.

Non-fellows and part-time students are encouraged to undertake a similar supervised research experience / practicum. The third important faculty role is the **dissertation chairperson**, who is chosen by the student (please see page 37). Although the way these roles are enacted may vary across individuals, a general summary of the roles and responsibilities follows.

**Advisor:** Guides the student through academic coursework and professional development

**Responsibilities:**

1. Collaborates with the student to map out plan to complete doctoral coursework
2. Recommends and facilitates networking to advance academic and professional goals
3. Promotes access to university and external resources

**Research Supervisor:** Supervises the doctoral student in a research fellowship or practicum

**Responsibilities:**

1. Oversees student engagement in research that may include: CITI completion, literature reviews, IRB preparation, study recruitment and enrollment, preparation of the codebook, data collection, data entry and management, analysis of data, data coding, preparation of reports, and assistance with manuscript preparation
2. Provides a summary and evaluation of student research activity
3. Communicates as needed with the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies.

**Dissertation Chair:** Oversees all aspects of the dissertation completion from identification of the committee to dissemination of results

**Responsibilities:**

1. Collaborates with the student to identify committee members
2. Leads the dissertation and proposal defense processes
3. Advocates for consistent adherence to the dissertation proposal goals
4. Guides the candidate to set a realistic timeline for completion of the dissertation
5. Assists the candidate in navigating the IRB approval process
6. Guides the candidate toward achieving a high level of technical and ethical quality in the dissertation research
7. Supports dissemination of dissertation findings

## SUMMARY OF PH.D. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

In order to earn the Ph.D. degree, students must complete all degree requirements within a maximum of 8 consecutive years and a maximum of 10 consecutive years for the MS/PH.D. program. The Ph.D. program requirements are summarized below under five main headings. As the field continues to grow and change, program requirements will continue to shift and evolve in order to continue to prepare nurse scholars and researchers who are well positioned to lead the field into the future. The five major areas of program requirements are listed below and addressed in more depth in the following sections.

- I. CURRICULUM
- II. LANGUAGE COMPETENCY
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### I. CURRICULUM

The Ph.D. program curriculum includes core content in three core areas of study: knowledge development in nursing, substantive nursing content, and research methods. The knowledge development component includes courses in philosophy of science, epistemology of nursing, and strategies for developing nursing knowledge. Substantive nursing content is acquired through the study of nursing processes and outcomes, ethics, policy and cognate courses in the student's area of focus. The research component of the curriculum includes qualitative and quantitative research methods, statistics, research practica, and dissertation advisement. Experiential research activities also contribute significantly to students' research development. Relevant cognate courses are required to develop knowledge and expertise in the student's chosen area of focus in addition to the core areas of study. Consistent with AACN recommendations for research-intensive doctoral programs in nursing, most Ph.D. students at CSON pursue full-time study. However, part-time study is possible for well-qualified individuals. Interested students should contact the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs to discuss plans of study and funding opportunities for part-time Ph.D. students.

**Forty-six (46) credits are the minimum for meeting the Ph.D. degree requirements for post-MS students.** The student's background, focus, and research interests may require additional coursework, training and credits beyond the 46 credit minimum. For post-BSN students who enter through the MS/Ph.D. program, the total number of credits required and plan of study are different.

### Ph.D. Curriculum (Total = minimum of 46 credits)

- NURS 9806 Philosophical Inquiry for Knowledge Development in Nursing (3 cr.)
- NURS 9807 Strategies for Knowledge Development in Nursing (3 cr.)
- NURS 9808 Research Design & Methods I (3 cr.)

- NURS 9809 Research Design & Methods II (3 cr.)
- NURS 9810 Responsible Conduct of Research (1 cr.)
- NURS 9712 Integrative Review for Nursing Science (3 cr.)
- NURS 9716 Health Care Policy & Social Justice (3 cr.)
- NURS 9751 Advanced Qualitative Research Methods (3 cr.)
- NURS 9812 Research Seminar: Developing the Purpose, Aims and Questions (2 cr.)
- NURS 9813 Research Seminar: Refining the Research Plan (2 cr.)
- NURS 9901 Doctoral Comprehensives (0 – 1 cr.)
- NURS 9902 Dissertation Advisement [Fall] (3 cr.)
- NURS 9903 Dissertation Advisement [Spring] (3 cr.)
- NURS 9911 Doctoral Continuation (1 cr.)  
 \*\*Students are required to register for Doctoral Continuation each semester following completion of the above coursework until graduation
- XXXX XXXX Cognant/Electives (3 cr.)
- XXXX XXXX Cognant/Electives (3 cr.)
- XXXX XXXX Cognant/Electives (3 cr.)
- XXXX XXXX Cognates/Electives (3 cr.)

## Ph.D. Program - Plan of Study

<b>FIRST YEAR</b>
<b>Fall Semester</b>
NURS 9806 Philosophical Inquiry for Knowledge Development in Nursing (3 cr.)
NURS 9807 Strategies for Knowledge Development in Nursing (3 cr.)
NURS 9808 Research Design and Methods I (3 cr.)
NURS 9810 Responsible Conduct of Research (1 cr.)
<b>Spring Semester</b>
NURS 9712 Integrative Review for Nursing Science (3 cr.)
NURS 9809 Research Design and Methods II (3 cr.)
XXXX XXXX Intermediate Statistics # (3 cr.)
<b>SECOND YEAR</b>
<b>Fall Semester</b>
NURS 9751 Advanced Qualitative Research Methods (3 cr.)
NURS 9812 Research Seminar: Developing the Purpose, Aims & Questions (2 cr.)
XXXX XXXX Cognate / elective or Advanced Statistics # (3 cr.)
XXXX XXXX Cognate / elective or Advanced Research Methods (3 cr.)
<b>Spring Semester</b>
NURS 9716 Healthcare Policy & Social Justice (3 cr.)
NURS 9813 Research Seminar: Refining the Research Plan (2 cr.)
NURS 9901 Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination (1 cr.)
XXXX XXXX Cognate / Elective or Advanced Statistics # (3 cr.)
XXXX XXXX Cognate / Elective or Advanced Research Methods (3 cr.)
<b>THIRD YEAR</b>
<b>Fall Semester</b>
NURS 9902 Dissertation Advisement (3 cr.)
OPTIONAL: Cognate, Elective or Teaching Course
<b>Spring Semester</b>
NURS 9903 Dissertation Advisement (3 cr.)
OPTIONAL: Cognate, Elective or Teaching Course
<b>EACH SEMESTER UNTIL GRADUATION</b>
NURS 9911 Doctoral Continuation (1 cr.)

\*Ph.D. Fellows and students are also expected to attend Ph.D. Forums and Brown Bag Lunches

\*\*Ph.D. students are expected to complete at least two statistics courses at the intermediate - advanced level; introductory graduate statistics courses do not count towards this minimum.

## II. LANGUAGE COMPETENCY

Ph.D. students must demonstrate proficiency in either a language other than English, or demonstrate computer literacy. Completion of the doctoral program requirements such as course work, written and oral components of the comprehensive examination and dissertation research provides students with the skills needed to be computer literate. Therefore, computer literacy may be demonstrated by completion of all Ph.D. program requirements.

If a student wishes to demonstrate competency in a foreign language, an examination or series of courses may be completed. The languages accepted include most classical or modern languages. Students who wish to fulfill the language requirement by taking an exam in Spanish, French, German or Russian should register for these examinations in the Office of Testing. Students who wish to meet this requirement by demonstrating competency in a foreign language should contact the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs.

## III. EXPERIENTIAL TRAINING IN RESEARCH & TEACHING

Research training is a core function of the Ph.D. program. In addition to coursework in research design, methods and statistical analysis, Ph.D. students are also expected to complete a variety of experiential research training activities and seminars. **Training in the responsible conduct of research** is met through participation in the required seminar (NURS 9810) and completion of online CITI training. Students are required to maintain CITI certification throughout their enrollment in the Ph.D. program. **Ph.D. student forums and CSON-wide research seminars and Think Tanks** are offered on a variety of research-related topics (e.g., developing a research trajectory, components of a grant proposal, and preparing research abstracts, posters and presentations). **Collaborative research experiences** with research fellowship supervisors, individual faculty or research teams provide students with hands-on training in the various phases of a research project and often yield opportunities for collaborative publications and presentations. Ph.D. research fellowships are one type of collaborative research experience; part-time Ph.D. students and non-fellows should contact their advisor and/or the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs to arrange comparable hands-on research training experiences. There are also opportunities for Ph.D. students to participate in research projects with other faculty and experts from CSON, BC and collaborating organizations in the area. Finally, Ph.D. students are encouraged and assisted to prepare **NRSA applications and small grants** to fund pilot studies and/or dissertations.

### Research Residency Requirements

Beginning with students admitted in 2016, each Ph.D. student must successfully complete an experiential research training experience or residency as a requirement for graduation. Full-time Ph.D. students who are funded research fellows meet this requirement through their research fellowship activities. All Ph.D. students must complete this requirement prior to submission of the Ph.D. dissertation proposal. The purpose of the research residency is to provide the student with an in-depth hands-on research experience and to enhance their socialization into the role of a Ph.D.-prepared nurse researcher. For students who are not research fellows, the research residency must include a minimum of 150 hours of experiential research learning activities. Examples of appropriate activities include, but are not limited to, development of an IRB application, instrument design, data collection, data analysis, development and/or presentation of research results at a conference or in a publication. These types of experiential learning activities, when undertaken in the role of Research Fellow or Research Assistant, may be counted toward the research residency requirement. Prior

research experiences may be counted toward the research residency requirement through portfolio review. Students, with the help of their advisor and/or research supervisor, will identify specific learning objectives, activities and timetable for completion of their research residencies. The advisor and/or research supervisor and Associate Dean of Graduate Programs must approve the student's plan prior to beginning any residency-related activities. A copy of the approved plan will be placed in the student's file. Students will be assigned to research fellowship supervisors who can provide appropriate research opportunities.

In addition to research and knowledge development, doctorally-prepared nurses will be responsible for training the next generation of nurses. Many Ph.D. students intend to pursue careers in academia after graduation. As such, it is important that Ph.D. students develop beginning skills in nursing education and teaching prior to graduation. Please see below for additional information.

### **Teaching Residency Requirements**

Beginning with students admitted in 2016, each Ph.D. student must successfully complete an experiential training experience or residency in teaching / nursing education as a requirement for graduation. This training / fellowship experience may be scheduled at any time in the student's program but must be completed before the final dissertation defense is scheduled. The purpose of the teaching residency is to increase knowledge of and competencies in the role of the Ph.D. prepared nurse educator. The teaching fellowship / training must include a minimum of 100 total hours of experiential learning activities directly related to the classroom and/or clinical teaching roles, and must include a minimum of 50 hours of direct student contact. Examples of appropriate activities include, but are not limited to, developing course syllabi, developing lecture objectives with corresponding evaluation criteria, developing test items and evaluating their effectiveness, preparing and demonstrating effective in-class presentations and lectures, demonstrating appropriate use of A/V and other materials to enhance classroom presentations and completion of course(s) at the Center for Teaching Excellence including the Apprenticeship in College Teaching (ACT). These types of activities, when undertaken in the role of Teaching Assistant, may be counted toward this requirement. Prior teaching experiences may be counted toward the teaching residency requirement through portfolio review. Students, with the help of their advisor/chairperson, will identify the specific objectives, learning activities and timetable for completion of their teaching residencies. The advisor/chairperson and Associate Dean of Graduate Programs must approve the student's plan for the teaching residency prior to beginning any residency-related activities. A copy of the approved plan will be placed in the student's file. Students will be assigned to course faculty / mentors who can provide appropriate teaching opportunities.

## **IV. PH.D. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION**

### **Purpose of the Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination (Comps)**

The purpose of the Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination is to demonstrate mastery of the five program objectives through written and oral responses to questions developed by the Ph.D. Comps Committee faculty. Topics include but are not limited to knowledge development, research methods, substantive knowledge, ethical judgment, and nursing/healthcare issues and health policy. In responding to exam questions, students should integrate content from these areas.

There are two parts to the Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination: a written component and an oral component. The written examination is completed first. Students answer written questions in essay form. Responses should be complete and concise, and include references to the work of key authors. The answers should be written (typed) using 12-point font, and double spaced with 1-inch margins. The page limit is a maximum of 12 pages per question. Citations and references should be included using APA format (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Students attest their adherence to principles of academic integrity by signing a prescribed statement that accompanies the exam.

The student's written responses help to give focus to the oral portion, but do not limit discussion. Other topics related to the program objectives may be addressed during the oral portion of the examination.

The general criteria for evaluation include demonstration of:

- a. clarity and succinctness in written and oral discussion
- b. ability to conceptualize, analyze, and synthesize
- c. capacity for organized thought
- d. substantive knowledge
- e. research methods expertise

### **Eligibility and Registration**

A student in good academic standing who has no incompletes or failures in required coursework may take the comprehensive exam during or after the last semester of required coursework. Students who intend to take the comprehensive examination must register for NURS 9901 Doctoral Comprehensives in the semester in which they plan to take the exam.

In addition, students intending to sit for the comprehensive examination should notify their advisor and the Graduate Programs Office in the first two weeks of the semester in which they wish to take the examination. If the student has special needs that require accommodation during the written exam, a letter explaining the needs and requesting reasonable accommodation should be submitted to the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs along with the application form. If not registered for other courses during the semester when they take the comprehensive examination, students will need to pay a fee (1 credit).



## Procedures, Rules and Grading

### COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION COMMITTEE

The comprehensive examination committee is comprised of 3-5 faculty, most of whom teach in the Ph.D. program and/or serve on the Ph.D. program committee. Whenever possible, the student's advisor, chair, and/or research supervisor are not included on the student's comprehensive examination committee.

### SCHEDULING

Comprehensive examinations are offered twice per year, in the spring (usually late May) and fall (usually early September). All students take the written component at the same time; the oral examination is scheduled within 1 – 2 weeks after the written portion has been completed. Whenever possible, the individual oral examinations are all scheduled to occur within a two day period. The times and dates of the examinations are scheduled by the graduate office at the beginning of the semester. The Associate Dean of Graduate Programs will hold an information session early in the semester with students who are registered for comprehensive examinations; detailed information will be provided prior to or during this meeting.

### WRITTEN EXAMINATION

The exam consists of 3 or 4 questions. The questions are developed by the comprehensive examination committee members. Areas to be examined reflect the doctoral program objectives. Topics include but are not limited to knowledge development, research methods, substantive knowledge, ethical judgment, and nursing/healthcare issues and health policy. In responding to exam questions, students should integrate content from across these areas.

The written component of the comprehensive examination is usually given in a “take-home” exam format. Students may use their own computers and resources or complete the exam at BC. Each student has the same period of time in which to write their exam. Students with English as a second language are granted an additional two hours in order to complete the examination. The Graduate Programs Office verifies receipt of the student's examination and answers. Comprehensive examinations and answers are reviewed by the Graduate Programs Office and distributed to examination committee members for in-depth review and scoring.

### ORAL EXAMINATION

Upon completion of the written portion of the comprehensive examination, the oral portion is scheduled with the committee members for a period of 1.5 to 2 hours. The student's written responses help to give focus to the oral portion, but do not limit discussion. Other topics related to the program objectives may be addressed during the oral portion of the examination.

### RULES AND GRADING

Written answers must be in essay form, be complete and concise, and include references to the work of key authors in these areas. The exam should be typed in 12-point font, double spaced with 1-inch margins on all sides. The page limit is 12 pages of text per question / answer. References should be included, using APA format. References are not included in the page limits.

**Time limits and page limits are strictly enforced; answers that exceed the page or time limits will be disqualified and the exam will be graded as “Fail.” Students will then have to re-register and retake the comprehensive examination the next time it is offered.**

Students attest their adherence to principles of academic integrity by signing a prescribed statement that will accompany the exam. **Under no circumstances should students ever discuss the content or questions on the comprehensive examination with other students. To do so is a violation of academic integrity.**

### EVALUATION CRITERIA

The criteria for evaluation of the comprehensive examination include demonstration of:

1. Clarity and succinctness in written and oral discussion
2. Ability to conceptualize, analyze, and synthesize
3. Capacity for organized thought
4. Substantive knowledge
5. Research methods expertise

The following grading system is used:

Pass with distinction	PWD
Pass	P
Fail	F

The chairperson of the examination committee submits an official ballot, graded and signed by each member of the committee, to the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs. The student receives a copy of the ballot.

### CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE

A student who fails the comprehensive examination may retake the exam no more than once and no sooner than the following semester. The student should consult with the chairperson of the comps committee, the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs and their advisor regarding the best time to retake the examination. The chairperson of the comps committee and the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs will provide the student with a summary of their performance and areas in which the student needs to improve. A new committee may or may not be convened. The student must re-register for Doctoral Comprehensive (NURS 9901) in the semester in which the student plans to retake the comprehensive examination. Students who have completed all coursework but have not passed the written and oral portions of the comprehensive examination are not eligible to be admitted to candidacy and therefore may not register for dissertation advisement.

### ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY

A student attains the status of a doctoral candidate by passing the doctoral comprehensive examination and by satisfying all degree requirements except the dissertation. Doctoral candidates are required to register each semester for either Dissertation Advisement (NURS 9902 / 9903) or Doctoral Continuation (NURS 9911) until completion of the dissertation and graduation. Students should contact the Graduate Programs Office for information on how to register for Dissertation Advisement and Doctoral Continuation.

## **V. DOCTORAL DISSERTATION**

Students enter the dissertation phase of the doctoral program after passing the comprehensive examination. The appropriate procedures are described below in order to facilitate a successful transition from student to doctoral candidate and from doctoral candidate to graduate of the Ph.D. program. In general, there are 10 steps to complete the dissertation phase successfully.

Student dissertation proposals and dissertation defenses must be held during the academic year (i.e., September - May). Students may not defend their work during the summer months.

### **Step 1 – Registering for Dissertation Advisement**

After admission to candidacy, the candidate registers with his/her dissertation chairperson for Dissertation Advisement (NURS 9902 in fall semester and NURS 9903 in spring semester). If a candidate has questions or problems registering, they should contact the Graduate Programs Office. Each of these courses is 3 credits but is considered a full-time course load for registration purposes. The Teacher of Record (TOR) for NURS 9902/9903 is the chairperson of the dissertation committee, or, until the chair is named, the TOR is the student's advisor. The Graduate Programs Office will create sections that correspond with each faculty member. After the two semesters of dissertation advisement, doctoral candidates must continue to register for NURS 9911 Doctoral Continuation each semester until the dissertation is successfully defended and all degree requirements are completed. All candidates are required to register and pay for Doctoral Continuation (1 credit) each semester until they graduate. Failure to register for Doctoral Continuation can affect access to BC resources such as e-mail, library, databases, and other support services and resources. The University may de-enroll candidates from the program for failure to register. Payment of equivalent doctoral enrollment fees is required before a candidate can return after a lapse in enrollment.

### **Step 2 – Selecting the Dissertation Committee**

The purpose of the dissertation committee is to guide the candidate through the dissertation phase of the program and enhance the candidate's ability to contribute new knowledge or add to existing knowledge through research.

#### **PROCESS**

Within 6 months of successfully completing the Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam, the candidate chooses the chairperson and committee members for their dissertation committee. The candidate usually selects the chairperson first. The candidate and chairperson together identify potential committee members who can facilitate the candidate's project as described below. The chairperson should be in place at the time the candidate enrolls for the first semester of Dissertation Advisement (NURS 9902). The entire dissertation committee should be in place prior to writing the dissertation proposal. In the event of a change of candidate focus, or other circumstances that hinder the chairperson and candidate working together, a new chairperson should be selected by the candidate in consultation with the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs.

The **Dissertation Committee Formation Form** is completed by the candidate and signed by each dissertation committee member. The candidate then submits the form to the Graduate Programs Office. The Associate Dean of Graduate Programs formally appoints the committee by signing the Dissertation Committee Formation Form. The form is placed in the candidate's file and a copy is provided to the candidate. Once the Dissertation Committee Formation Form has been approved and

filed, any changes to the committee membership must be formally approved. The dissertation committee chairperson should approve all changes to the committee membership. The Associate Dean of Graduate Programs should approve requests to change the dissertation committee chairperson. If any changes in committee membership are made during the dissertation phase, a **Dissertation Committee Change Form** should be completed and filed with the Graduate Programs Office.

#### DISSERTATION COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Candidates should select dissertation committee members who will be available for full participation on the dissertation committee. Collectively the committee should be comprised of members who complement one another and are collectively able to provide expertise in each of the following areas: (a) substantive content area; (b) research methods and / or analytic approach; and/or (c) philosophical or conceptual underpinnings of the proposed study. Additionally, committee members should be able to provide access to institutional, environmental and/or population-related resources needed to complete the study.

The dissertation committee consists of a minimum of three members, each of whom must possess a Ph.D. or similar research-intensive degree. Clinical or content experts without research-intensive doctoral degrees (e.g., MD, DNP, JD, DPT, PharmD) may serve as a fourth member of the committee. At least two committee members must be doctoral-prepared faculty members from Connell School of Nursing (CSON). Two members of the committee must hold graduate degrees in nursing. At least two committee members should be tenured or tenure-track faculty members at CSON, BC, or a comparable institution. The remaining committee members may be (but are not required to be) members of the faculty of another school within the university or appropriately prepared persons outside the university who are qualified to serve as graduate faculty. When selecting a committee member from outside of the CSON, the candidate submits the individual's two page biosketch or CV to the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs. The Associate Dean of Graduate Programs approves the outside appointment by signing the Dissertation Committee Formation Form.

Faculty members who leave the CSON may serve on a dissertation committee and be counted as a CSON member for up to 5 years, provided they have previously worked with the candidate and meet the criteria outlined in the preceding paragraph (were tenured or tenure track with a Ph.D. or equivalent research intensive terminal degree). Faculty members cannot be the dissertation committee chair after they leave CSON but may remain on the candidate's committee as a member.

#### DISSERTATION COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

The dissertation committee chairperson is a CSON faculty member who agrees to take major responsibility for dissertation guidance. The chair is responsible for guiding and encouraging the candidate's design and execution of an original, high quality, Ph.D. level research project. The end result of this effort is expected to be a rigorous dissertation that makes a substantive contribution to the discipline. Tenured and tenured-track faculty members in CSON are eligible to serve as dissertation committee chairpersons, provided they have previous experience serving as a dissertation committee member. In general, it is recommended that untenured assistant professors should not chair dissertation committees.

The responsibilities of the dissertation chair include the following:

- Collaborate with the candidate regarding the selection of other committee members.

- Supervise the formulation/writing of the candidate's proposal. The candidate should consult with the committee members for advice on the dimensions of the study; however, it is the responsibility of the dissertation chair, in conjunction with the candidate, to submit to the committee members an approved proposal.
- Ensure that candidates adhere to CSON and university policies and processes related to timing and all other aspects of the dissertation.
- Direct the candidate in carrying out the approved study and closely supervise the writing of the dissertation.
- Inform the scheduling of the final dissertation defense to provide as public a forum as possible. The final defense should not be scheduled until:
- - a) the dissertation has been completed;
  - b) the dissertation has been approved by the dissertation chair; in collaboration with the committee members i.e., it meets minimum standards (fidelity to the proposal, methodologically and analytically rigorous, conforms to APA (6<sup>th</sup> or latest edition) in terms of format, style, readability, and presentation); and,
  - c) the chair and committee members believe the candidate is prepared to defend the dissertation.

### **Step 3- Preparing the Dissertation Proposal**

Candidates should communicate frequently and work closely with members of the dissertation committee, especially the chairperson, to insure progress in all areas of the proposal. The proposal should be written so that it will, in large part, comprise the initial chapters of the dissertation and provide the basis for application to the appropriate Institutional Review Board(s).

### **Step 4 – Notifying of Intent To Submit Proposal**

Candidates indicate their intent to submit a dissertation proposal by filing the **Intent to Submit Dissertation Proposal form** with the Graduate Programs Office. This form is signed by the student and the dissertation committee chairperson to indicate that the chairperson has approved that the proposal in its current form may be distributed to committee members and the Graduate Programs Office. The dissertation proposal should be a format similar to the sample on page 42 and should also include a title page and an abstract. The abstract should include: title, significance of problem to be studied, research questions, and proposed method.

The dissertation proposal is distributed to committee members and the Graduate Programs Office and, at the same time, the Intent to Submit Dissertation Proposal form is filed with the Graduate Programs Office. The candidate works with the Graduate Programs Office staff to tentatively identify proposal hearing dates and times. The proposal hearing may be scheduled for any day and time at least two weeks (14 days) after the date when the form was filed and the dissertation proposal was distributed.

### **Step 5 – Holding the Proposal Hearing**

Prior to holding the dissertation proposal hearing, the dissertation committee members should be in contact with the chairperson and agree that the plan for research is ready for implementation and the proposal is acceptable. Any committee member who has serious reservations about the status of the proposal will advise the chairperson of the dissertation committee, who will then meet with the candidate and advise them to postpone the proposal hearing. The chairperson will also notify the

Graduate Programs Office that the proposal hearing will be delayed. When the committee members all agree that the candidate is ready to proceed, they sign the **Dissertation Proposal Hearing Scheduling Form** and provide the candidate with their available days and times for the proposal hearing. The candidate files the signed Dissertation Proposal Hearing Scheduling Form with the Graduate Programs Office at least 3 days in advance of the desired hearing date(s). By signing, all committee members indicate their agreement that the candidate may proceed with the proposal hearing. The Graduate Programs Office will check for room availability and scheduling conflicts and notify the candidate and their chairperson of the schedule. Although this defense is informal, candidates may present slides and/or handouts as appropriate. The exact format and expectations should be established by the committee chairperson.

At the proposal defense hearing, the candidate will meet with members of their dissertation committee to discuss the dissertation proposal and to answer questions related to the proposal. The committee will make one of four decisions at the end of the hearing:

- The proposal is accepted.
- The proposal is accepted with stated qualifications and specific changes. Notation is also made as to who will review and approve the changes.
- The proposal is rejected in its present form, but may be revised and resubmitted at a later date;  
Another proposal hearing will be scheduled when the committee agrees the proposal is ready.
- The proposal is rejected.

At the conclusion of the proposal hearing, committee members sign the **Dissertation Proposal Hearing Outcome Form** (provided by the dissertation chair at the time of the hearing). Committee members sign the form and indicate one of the four above outcomes. If minor revisions are required, the committee indicates whether the chairperson, a designated committee member or the entire committee must approve the revisions. The candidate submits the form to the Graduate Programs Office after the proposal defense hearing. Signatures indicate agreement with the outcome checked on the form. After the proposal defense hearing, the candidate makes revisions as recommended by the committee, submits copies of the revised proposal to committee members and to the Graduate Programs Office, and arranges for follow-up meetings with committee members as necessary to meet the candidate's needs.

## **Step 6 – Obtaining IRB Approvals**

Human participants' protection is a critical step that precedes data collection. Therefore, data collection for the dissertation does not begin until after the dissertation committee and the relevant IRBs approve the proposal in writing. The Boston College IRB will not approve a proposal until the committee has approved it at the proposal defense. Pilot studies may be conducted before the dissertation proposal defense with IRB approval. Faculty will guide candidates in obtaining the relevant IRB approvals for this pilot work. Any applications for grants or for IRB approval must have prior written approval by the chairperson of the dissertation committee.

As of July 1, 2015, the Boston College IRB protocol submission process has changed and the IRB has transitioned to an on-line system called CyberIRB. Investigators should submit initial protocols and complete amendments and continuing review applications online through CyberIRB. These policies and procedures are on the Vice Provost for Research website: <https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/research/sites/vice-provost-for-research/research-protections/policies--procedures.html>

Plans for obtaining IRB approval at Boston College, and at other agencies as necessary, must be clearly identified in the dissertation proposal. Appropriate letters of approval must be submitted to the chair of the committee prior to initiating data collection.

Candidates are expected to utilize principles of responsible conduct of research, and to implement any specifications or conditions imposed by IRBs. The dissertation committee and the IRB must approve any deviation from the approved dissertation proposal related to human subjects participation. Candidates must submit yearly or periodic reports and/or applications for continuing approval to the IRB(s) as specified by each IRB.

The final dissertation should include a copy of the IRB approval in the appendix (Institutional identifiers may be redacted as necessary at the discretion of the committee). The text should also state that IRB approval was obtained.

## **Step 7 - Conducting the Research and Writing the Dissertation**

### **CONDUCTING THE DISSERTATION RESEARCH**

The completion of a dissertation is a major requirement for the doctoral degree. It is an independent research study and scholarly work that must be approved by a committee of readers. The dissertation research is conducted in keeping with the dissertation proposal that was approved by the candidate's committee. Any changes in the plan, procedures, sample or any other aspect of the study must be submitted and approved by the committee, in writing, and the records in the Graduate Programs Office must be updated. All IRB approvals must be obtained before any participant recruitment or data collection may occur. The candidate must have completed training in the responsible conduct of research (through NURS 9810 or similar) prior to data collection. The candidate and any research assistants must also hold current CITI certification at the time of data collection.

### **WRITING THE DISSERTATION**

The final dissertation is developed and written under the supervision of the committee chair and the other committee members. The process for development and review shall be at the discretion of the chair in concert with the other committee members and the candidate. The dissertation should be written in accordance with APA format (6<sup>th</sup> edition). Grammar, syntax, writing style, etc. should be scholarly and consistent with doctoral standards. It is to be expected that candidates will submit multiple drafts and complete numerous revisions while writing the dissertation.

### **CHANGES IN DISSERTATION COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

If changes occur in committee membership at any time during the dissertation phase, a **Dissertation Committee Change Form** should be filed in the Graduate Programs Office. The Associate Dean for Graduate Programs must approve all changes. New committee members must agree with the approved proposal or a new proposal hearing may be required.

## MANDATORY ATTENDANCE AT O'NEILL LIBRARY WORKSHOP – eTD@BC

All candidates who are completing doctoral dissertations must attend a library workshop on how to prepare and upload the dissertation. The workshops are called “eTD@BC” and are held throughout the academic year in the fall and spring semesters. Students must provide documentation of attendance at these workshops to the Graduate Programs Office. Information about the workshops is located at <http://www.bc.edu/libraries/help/howdoi/etd.html>.

## **Step 8 - Defending the Dissertation**

Candidates who have successfully completed the proposal hearing and written the dissertation are required to defend their dissertation research in a public hearing. The public oral defense of the dissertation followed by uploading the final dissertation into ProQuest are the last milestones in completion of the Ph.D. degree. Dissertation defenses should be open to the public; as such, dissertation defenses may only be scheduled during the academic year (i.e., between September 1 and June 1 and not during spring or winter breaks when classes are not in session).

When the candidate completes a final version of the dissertation and all of its associated components, they submit the final version to all members of the committee with a copy to the Graduate Programs Office. Committee members should be allowed a minimum of 21 days to review the final dissertation. The candidate becomes eligible to schedule an oral defense when all members of the committee have reviewed the complete dissertation with all components (including face page, dissertation committee signature page, copyright page, abstract, acknowledgements, table of contents, appendices), and agreed that the dissertation is complete and ready for presentation. All members of the committee must sign the **Intent to Defend Doctoral Dissertation Form** indicating that they have read the final draft, that it is complete, and that they agree that the candidate is ready to proceed with the defense. The dissertation defense cannot be scheduled until this signed form is submitted to the Graduate Programs Office. Committee members' signatures indicate that no substantive changes need to be made prior to the defense (other than correcting a minimum number of typographical errors).

At least three weeks prior to the desired date of the defense, the candidate submits the signed **Intent to Defend the Doctoral Dissertation Form** to the Graduate Programs Office and identifies potential dates and times for the defense. The candidate verifies that the copy of the dissertation that the Graduate Programs Office has is the final pre-defense version, and includes all of the components identified above. Then, the Graduate Programs Office works with the candidate to schedule a room for the defense and arrange for any needed equipment.

The final pre-defense version of the dissertation that is submitted to the committee and the Graduate Programs Office should be considered a final product pending any minor changes or editorial corrections made by the committee as a result of the defense. Note that if any copyrighted materials (e.g., instruments) have been used, the candidate must have obtained written permission from the copyright holder both for permission to use the material in the research, and for inclusion and publication in the dissertation. If the copyright holder does not give permission to include the printed material in the dissertation, then the candidate cannot include copies of such material in the final version of the dissertation. Documentation of permissions for use, confirmation of purchase, and relevant correspondence are included in the appropriate appendix in the dissertation.



## CONDUCT OF THE DEFENSE

The dissertation defense is an open hearing. As such, dissertation defenses may only be held during the academic year and should not be held at times when most faculty are unavailable (e.g., summers, semester breaks, during faculty assembly). Posting of public notices of the defense is the responsibility of the Graduate Programs Office. The candidate is required to bring copies of the dissertation abstract to the defense for audience distribution.

The dissertation defense is a formal occasion for the candidate to defend their scholarly work publicly. At the defense, the candidate presents a summary of the completed research and responds to questions from the committee and other attendees. The dissertation committee chairperson runs the meeting and specifies the format and timeline with the candidate in advance. The dissertation defense is to be based on the final dissertation that was submitted to and reviewed by the committee. No new findings or interpretations are to be presented by the student. Except in unusual circumstances, dissertation defenses will not exceed two hours. When the committee has been satisfied and has indicated its desire to vote, the members will meet privately and will reach a decision on the outcome of the dissertation and defense.

The committee will deliberate and vote for Pass or Fail. The committee will provide a list of recommendations for changes and revisions to the dissertation. In general, major changes, or any changes substantive enough to require more than two weeks to complete should be the basis for a failure. All members of the committee must sign the ballot before the dissertation can be considered accepted. The outcome of the pass / fail vote and any necessary revisions or changes will be recorded on the **Dissertation Defense Outcome form** and submitted to the Graduate Programs Office after the defense is completed. The candidate's committee determines the outcome after the defense. Because the outcome is not decided until after the committee meets in private, celebrations prior to the announcement of the outcome are not appropriate.

The candidate will be informed of the committee's decision as soon as the committee has finished its deliberation and voting. **If the committee is satisfied with the dissertation, original signatures should be obtained on 3 copies of the Dissertation Signatures Title Page at the conclusion of the defense.** The candidate should prepare 3 copies of the Dissertation Signatures Title Page in advance of the dissertation defense and bring them with him/her to the defense. If substantive changes are required, signatures should be delayed until these changes are completed to the satisfaction of the committee.

**The 3 signed copies of the Dissertation Signatures Title Page are submitted to the Graduate Programs Office when all revisions have been completed and the final version of the dissertation has been approved by the chairperson and dissertation committee.** The Graduate Programs Office sends one signed copy to the eTD coordinator / digital preservation manager at the O'Neill Library and one copy to Student Services; the third copy is retained in the candidate's file. The Graduate Programs Office will also email the eTD coordinator and notify them that the candidate is free to upload the dissertation.

Although not required, doctoral graduates are expected to publish the results of their dissertation research in a peer-reviewed journal or other appropriate publication outlet and/or to present their results at a scholarly conference. Faculty members who have made substantive contributions to the study sometimes collaborate on writing the paper for publication. In all cases, however, the author of the dissertation is the first author listed on any paper based on the dissertation submitted for

publication and ethical guidelines related to authorship should be followed. Candidates whose work is accepted for publication are asked to send a copy of the article to the Graduate Programs Office.

### **Step 9 – Uploading the Final Approved Dissertation into ProQuest**

Completion, defense, and upload of the final version of the dissertation must occur within 8 years of initial enrollment into the Ph.D. program, or 10 years for the MS/Ph.D. program. This period includes any leaves of absence (LOA). LOA forms and procedural information are available from the Graduate Programs Office. It is the candidate's responsibility to be aware of the deadline for submission of the final version of the dissertation.

#### **MANDATORY ATTENDANCE AT O'NEILL LIBRARY WORKSHOP – eTD@BC**

If they have not yet done so, the candidate must attend a library workshop on how to prepare and upload the dissertation. The workshops are called “eTD@BC” and are held throughout the academic year in the fall and spring semesters. Students must provide documentation of attendance at these workshops to the Graduate Programs Office. Information about the workshops is located at <http://www.bc.edu/libraries/help/howdoi/etd.html>.

#### **UPLOADING THE FINAL DISSERTATION IN THE eTD SYSTEM (aka DEPOSITING)**

After final revisions have been reviewed and approved by the dissertation committee members and chairperson, and the 3 signed copies of the Dissertation Signatures Title Page have been submitted to the Graduate Programs Office, students will be able to upload the final approved version of their dissertations into ProQuest through the eTD system of the O’Neill Library. The eTD uploading process is explained during the library’s mandatory “eTD@BC” Workshop. Additional questions should be directed to the Scholarly Communication Librarian at the O’Neill Library.

After the dissertation has been uploaded to the eTD system, the Graduate Programs Office and Associate Dean of Graduate Programs will receive notification of the upload, review and approve it. Dissertations that are not in compliance with the above requirements will not receive approval. All must be done before the graduation deadline.

**Please note: Digital images of signatures should never be included in the electronic version of the dissertation (e.g., IRB forms, copyright permissions, etc.) Please remove all signature pages before uploading the final dissertation.**

#### **COPYRIGHT PAGE**

Regardless of which option (open access or traditional publishing) you select with UMI Dissertation Publishing (ProQuest), this page is required and must conform to sample; otherwise, the Graduate Programs Office reserves the right to require the page to be redone. The copyright year should match the date of defense.

#### **DISSERTATION EMBARGO POLICY**

Upon completion of a doctoral dissertation in the Connell School of Nursing, the graduate may request an embargo for not more than two years without special permission. To request an extension beyond two years, but for no more than five years, the graduate must submit a written request with rationale to the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs. The Associate Dean of Graduate Programs and the dissertation committee chair (and co-chair, if any) must approve any request for an extension beyond two years. Permission will only be granted for specific and extraordinary reasons, such as the graduate’s intention to publish work from the dissertation in a journal or book with a

publisher that restricts consideration of manuscripts derived from dissertations that have been made available online. It is the graduate's responsibility to request an extension of the dissertation embargo. Permission is not guaranteed.

Students who propose to conduct dissertation research that utilizes existing data or specimens that are not solely owned by the student should anticipate and discuss any data use or publication restrictions with the owner(s) of the data prior to the dissertation proposal hearing. Any such restrictions should be addressed at the dissertation proposal hearing and approved by the dissertation committee and chair. If data use restrictions or agreements may result in a subsequent request for an embargo extension beyond two years, it is preferred that the request be submitted to the dissertation chair(s) and the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs at the time of the dissertation proposal hearing.

### **Step 10 – Scheduling Graduation**

Candidates who wish to earn their degree by a specific graduation date need to meet the deadlines published in the academic calendar by the registrar's office for completing all degree requirements including uploading or depositing the final dissertation. The BC academic calendar is located at <http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/offices/stserv/academic/current/calendar.html>. Candidates need to plan well in advance to complete the dissertation and the defense, and any necessary revisions, before the specified deadlines. It is not unusual for committees to require revisions or modifications in the dissertation report following the defense. Candidates should reserve time and resources for making these changes after the defense and before the deadline for uploading / depositing the final version of the dissertation. Candidates should refer to the university calendar or contact the Graduate Programs Office for specific dates. Three original signed and approved dissertation title pages must also be filed in the Graduate Programs Office before the university deadline.

Students must sign up for graduation online via Agora portal by the date specified for each semester. This procedure involves verifying personal information and specifying the name to be written on the diploma. Students also need to notify the Graduate Programs Office in writing of their plans to graduate.

The University awards degrees three times a year: May, August 30, and December 31<sup>st</sup>; a commencement ceremony is held only in May. Graduates who have been awarded degrees the previous August and December are invited to participate in the May graduation. The dissertation must be uploaded into ProQuest through the eTD system at the library by the deadlines posted in the academic calendar (usually early April) in order to officially participate in the May commencement and receive a degree at that time. Ph.D. candidates who complete all degree requirements by the deadlines for August 30 or December 31 graduations are eligible to receive their degree as of those dates. Since there are no commencement exercises in December or August, the names of those receiving degrees will be included in the program of the following May commencement. Graduates who would like to participate in the commencement ceremonies the following May are invited to do so. They must notify the graduate office by January 15<sup>th</sup>. Graduates should contact the Graduate Programs Office with any questions.

Only those Ph.D. candidates who have completed all degree requirements and uploaded their final dissertation onto ProQuest through the library eTD system by the posted deadline for May graduation will be able to walk in the May graduation ceremony. Those who are not able to meet the May graduation deadlines will receive their degree at the next graduation date and will be eligible to participate in the commencement ceremony the following May.

## **DISSERTATION FORMATS**

### **Types of Dissertations**

There are two types of PhD Dissertations possible at the Boston College School of Nursing:

1) Manuscript Option Dissertation and 2) Traditional Dissertation.

The Manuscript Option Dissertation advances the student's publication record to strongly position the student for post-doctoral fellowships and faculty positions. The Manuscript Option Dissertation includes at least three manuscripts (at least one of which is data-based) anchored by introductory and conclusion chapters.

A Traditional Dissertation also has introductory and conclusion chapters, but in lieu of manuscripts includes three chapters covering review of the literature, methods and results.

Students, in consultation with their Dissertation Chair, should make the decision regarding what type of Dissertation to complete as early as possible as the requirement for one manuscript to be published (or accepted for publication) prior to Final Dissertation Defense may delay the student's time to degree completion.

#### **Several factors should be considered in the decision-making process:**

- Some Dissertation Chairs require students to complete a manuscript option– students should have a conversation with their Chairs around Dissertation expectations as early possible.
- Some international students are required by their sponsoring government to complete a Traditional Dissertation– it is the student's responsibility to know the requirements of the sponsoring agency and to communicate that to the Chair early in the program.
- The Manuscript Option Dissertation should not be viewed as an easier option; it is simply a different way of completing the competencies of the program and making an important contribution to the advancement of science in a way that maximizes timely publication of that research. Both types of dissertations are required to meet the standard of publishable and impactful research with comparable scope.
- Given the publication requirement of the Manuscript Option Dissertation, it is strongly advised that students who choose this option submit their first manuscript for publication no later than the second year of their program of study. Students should also only consider this option when their Chair has a strong record of publication.
- Dissertation Chairs may consider additional factors in their decision to advise the student to choose one option over another.

## CSON PhD Manuscript Dissertation Option

### PROCEDURE

The decision regarding which type of dissertation to pursue should be made as early in the program as possible and in collaboration with the Dissertation Chair. This requires the selection of a Dissertation Chair and approval by the Dissertation Chair. Specifically, this decision must be made prior to the proposal defense. In the rare case that a student successfully defends a Dissertation Proposal for one type of Defense (e.g., Manuscript Option Dissertation) and then decides to change to a Traditional Dissertation, a new Proposal Defense must be conducted.

The Proposal Defense and Final Dissertation Defense procedures are similar for both types of Dissertations; but the content and layout of the Proposal and Dissertation differs by type. The Manuscript Option Dissertation is described below. Details regarding the Traditional Dissertation are outlined in the PhD handbook

### POLICY

A **minimum of three 1st-authored manuscripts**, at least one of which must be data-based, is required, and all manuscripts must represent work completed during the student's PhD study at Boston College. As faculty chairs are directly involved with the student in the preparation of the dissertation manuscripts, they are included as authors on the final manuscripts. This process is well supported by the International Journal of Medical Education (IJME).

Prior to the Dissertation Defense, **at least one manuscript** must be accepted for publication or published in an indexed, peer-reviewed professional journal that publishes original research. The Dissertation must be first-authored by the student and represent research primarily conducted by the student.

### MANUSCRIPT DISSERTATION OPTION DEFENSE

The following documents are required for the Proposal Defense of the Manuscript Option Dissertation.

1. **Introduction** (Chapter 1)

Chapter 1 of a Manuscript Dissertation Option is a little longer than a Traditional Dissertation

Chapter 1 (approximately 15-20 pages) includes the:

- a. significance of the research proposed
- b. brief review of the literature
- c. overall purpose of the body of work to be represented by the proposed set of manuscripts
- d. table that outlines each chapter and associated aims
- e. aims associated with each individual manuscript
- f. overarching theoretical framework or conceptual basis for the entire body of proposed research
- g. implications of the research for nursing science

In particular, careful attention should be given to the overall goal and purpose of the Manuscript Option Dissertation and how the set of manuscripts work together to achieve this purpose, separate from how each manuscript addresses a specific aim of the Dissertation. This is often the most

challenging part of Chapter 1 to write, but is a necessary expectation of the Manuscript Option Dissertation and the successful defense of a particular set of manuscripts.

2. **Manuscript Chapters** (minimum of 3) or one chapter for each manuscript.

Each manuscript chapter (and its preceding page) should stand alone as a significant contribution that is comparable in scope to a chapter in a traditional dissertation.

- a. Each proposed manuscript chapter (and any manuscript that has already been published or accepted) should be included in the Dissertation Proposal Defense document. No more than two manuscripts to be submitted for the dissertation may be published or accepted for publication prior to the proposal defense. (Students are not limited in the number of other manuscripts they publish as 1st or co-author during their program).
- b. Manuscripts that are already published (or accepted for publication) should be included in their entirety using the required formatting guidelines for dissertations. The manuscript should include an introductory page with title of the manuscript, authorship, name of journal, brief description of the journal and the journal's impact factor.
- c. Manuscripts that are being proposed should include an introductory page with proposed title of the manuscript, proposed authorship, name of proposed target journal (including brief description of the journal audience, purpose and impact factor), and expected stage of submission at the time the dissertation will be defended (e.g., submitted, in review, published).

The manuscript, itself, should contain an appropriate (for the target journal) introduction, literature review (including theoretical/conceptual framework and purpose/aims), proposed method section (including description of relevant human subjects protections) and analytic plan.

The introductory page for all manuscript chapters should also include the following statement **“This manuscript represents a significant contribution to the dissertation work.”**

**Examples of manuscripts**

Examples of data-based papers include, but are not limited to results paper, psychometric testing of a measurement instrument, literature review or meta-analysis that includes analysis (not just description) of a body of literature.

Examples of other appropriate papers include, but are not limited to systematic review of literature, concept analysis, methods paper, or theory application.

3. **Final Chapter** (two sections)

- a. Discussion: This section presents interpretation of the results of the Dissertation as a whole and should include a discussion of the theoretical and practical implications of the findings across all manuscripts included in the Dissertation. In addition to the methodological, theoretical, and clinical importance of the research, the relationship between the student's findings and previous research, and prior literature should be discussed.
- b. Summary and implications: In this section, students should succinctly integrate the set of manuscripts, and summarize the relationships among the problem(s) addressed by the dissertation, the review of the literature, the methods, the findings

and the salient themes presented in the discussion section. In particular, students should refer back to the overall goal and purpose of the work represented by the set of manuscripts that was put forth in Chapter 1. This section should conclude with implications for nursing and other disciplines, strengths and weaknesses of the research, and suggestions for future research. This important section should be concise and complete.

#### **4. References and Appendices**

- a. References to the literature should be confined to sources actually cited in the prior chapters (all references in the manuscripts do not need to be cited).
- b. The appendices should include a copy of the consent form for human subjects research, pertinent communications, copies of the interview guides used for data collection, secondary tables, protocols, etc.

### **Copyright and Permission to Reprint**

When previously published copyrighted materials are presented in a Dissertation, the student must obtain a signed waiver from the copyright owner (usually the publisher or journal) and include it as an appendix in the final Dissertation. Generally, journals that own the copyright of the manuscript usually grant permission for the manuscript to be reprinted as part of the final, submitted Dissertation. Some publishers do not allow the inclusion of previously published manuscripts to be incorporated into the Dissertation, but do allow pre-proof galley to be included; some journals impose time restraints (e.g., when the Dissertation can be available on ProQuest). Students must contact the publisher/journal about the intent to include the paper in a Dissertation prior to submitting the final version to the library to ensure there is no violation of the copyright agreement with the journal. Boston College library guidelines related to Dissertations, including copyright, can be found at <https://libguides.bc.edu/graduate-etd/home>

Students should be aware that “permission to reprint” previously published work is separate from the decision to copyright the Dissertation. Manuscript Option Dissertations are much more challenging to copyright and students should consult their Dissertation Chair regarding the advantages and disadvantages of copyrighting a Manuscript Option Dissertation.

### **Electronic Publication of Dissertation (All Dissertations)**

All doctoral candidates who are completing Dissertations must attend a library workshop on how to prepare and upload the dissertation prior to uploading / depositing the Final Dissertation. The workshops, “eTD@BC”, are held twice per year in October and February. Information about the workshops is located at <http://www.bc.edu/libraries/help/howdoi/etd.html>.

The Scholarly Communication Librarian at O’Neill Library is also available to answer questions ([etd-support@bc.edu](mailto:etd-support@bc.edu)).

The library has options related to embargoing open access publications, and students should consider those options as related to future publications from the Dissertation. The Library requires students to submit an electronic copy of their Doctoral Dissertation, which will be accessible in the Student Scholar Archive. Students should submit their electronic copy in PDF format. The document is published as "Open Access" and is made available for worldwide access immediately. This is the recommended option, particularly for Manuscript Option Dissertations where chapters may already

be published. The document may be published on "delayed" or "secured" release. The maximum period for this delay is three years. At the end of this time, the Dissertation will be released for worldwide access. Students should consult with their Dissertation Chair regarding the decision to delay/embargo the Dissertation.

## **Sample Dissertation Proposal Format**

Ph.D. dissertations and dissertation proposals should follow APA format (6<sup>th</sup> edition). A suggested content outline for the dissertation proposal is provided below. The actual content outline and any additional information that should be included in the proposal will be determined by the dissertation committee chairperson and members. The content outline will be modified for qualitative and/or mixed methods proposals. The methods section of a dissertation proposal is usually written in the present or future tense as the study has not yet been conducted (e.g., the study sample will include. . .; participants will be...). Literature reviews are usually written in the past tense (please see APA 6<sup>th</sup> edition [2010]). In general, 1 inch margins on all sides are appropriate; however, if the student intends to have the dissertation bound, the left margin may be increased to 1 1/4 - 1 1/2 inches. Tables should be included in the text.

### **ABSTRACT**

#### **CHAPTER ONE: STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

- Statement of Problem
- Significance of Problem
- Purpose of the Study
- Definitions and Assumptions Based on Existing Knowledge
- Aims, Research Questions and/or Hypotheses
- Overview of theoretical framework (sometimes included here)

#### **CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

- Theoretical framework (unless qualitative methods requiring inductive theory development after data analysis are proposed)
- Background / Synthesized Review of Literature
- Relevant Findings from Preliminary Studies
- Other information deemed relevant by the committee

#### **CHAPTER THREE: DESIGN & METHODS**

- Study design / Methodology
- Site and Sampling
- Procedures
- Measures / Instruments
- Data Analysis Plan
- Timeline for Completion
- Plans for IRB Approval at Boston College and other agencies.

#### **APPENDICES**

- Instruments / Consent forms / Letters of support or approvals from agencies and/or IRBs.



## **Sample Final Dissertation Format**

The style and formatting for all aspects of the dissertation should adhere to APA manual 6<sup>th</sup> edition (2010) (e.g., tables, figures, page numbering, spacing, use of headings and subheadings, citations, references, etc.). The methods and results of the final dissertation are usually written in the past tense in the final dissertation because the study has been completed. (e.g., the final study sample included; the participants were. . .). The content outline will be modified for dissertations that employ qualitative approaches or mixed methods and may include other sections as deemed appropriate by the committee chairperson. In general, 1 inch margins on all sides are appropriate; however, if the student intends to have the dissertation bound, the left margin may be increased to 1 ¼ - 1 ½ inches. Tables should be included in the text.

### **TITLE PAGE**

### **ABSTRACT**

### **CHAPTER ONE: STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

- Statement of Problem
- Significance of Problem
- Purpose of the Study
- Definitions and Assumptions Based on Existing Knowledge, Aims, Research Questions and/or Hypotheses

### **CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

- Theoretical basis (unless qualitative methods requiring inductive theory development after data analysis are proposed)
- Background / Synthesized Review of Literature
- Relevant Findings from Preliminary Studies
- Other information deemed relevant by the committee

### **CHAPTER THREE: DESIGN & METHODS**

- Study design / Methodology
- Site and Sampling
- Procedures
- Measures / Instruments
- Data Analysis Plan

### **CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS**

### **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION**

### **APPENDICES**

- Instruments / Consent forms / Letters of support or approvals from agencies and/or IRBs.

## **Dissertation and Graduation Completion Checklist**

### After successful completion of the Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam

- Enroll in Dissertation Advisement course with your advisor during the two semesters after comps:
  - NURS9902 (Fall)
  - NURS9903 (spring)
- Each semester after, enroll in Doctoral Continuation (NURS9911) with your advisor until you have successfully defended your dissertation.
- Select dissertation committee members; if a committee member is from outside of Boston College, submit a copy of their CV to the Graduate Programs Office.

#### Form to be completed:

- **Dissertation Committee Formation Form**

If you add or remove a dissertation committee member during your dissertation research, submit the **Dissertation Committee Change Form** to the Graduate Programs Office.

If your advisor/chair changes during your dissertation research, submit the **Doctoral Change of Advisor Form** to the Graduate Programs Office.

- Prepare dissertation proposal. When complete, schedule your dissertation proposal defense.

#### Form to be completed:

- **Intent to Submit Dissertation Proposal Form**
- **Dissertation Proposal Hearing Scheduling Form**

- Once you have successfully defended your dissertation proposal, submit a copy of the approved proposal to the Graduate Programs Office to be filed.
- Obtain IRB approval(s) from Boston College and other agencies before beginning research.
- When you know which semester you plan to defend, notify the Graduate Programs Office to ensure your graduation term in the university system is correct.
- Prior to when you plan to defend your dissertation, you must attend an eTD@BC workshop held by the library to learn the process for submitting your dissertation at Boston College. These workshops are generally held each October and February. Please contact the ETD Administrator ([etd-support@bc.edu](mailto:etd-support@bc.edu)) with any additional questions.

At least 5 weeks before your planned dissertation defense date:

- Submit final draft of your dissertation, including abstract, title pages, and appendices, to your dissertation committee for review.
- Once your dissertation committee has approved your dissertation, you can begin scheduling your defense. The Graduate Programs Office must be informed of the defense date. They will assist you in scheduling a room for your defense.

Form to be completed:

- **Intent to Defend Doctoral Dissertation Form**

- Upon successful defense of your dissertation, obtain signatures from your committee confirming that your dissertation is ready for publication.

Form to be completed:

- **Dissertation Defense Outcome Form**
- **Dissertation eSignatures Title Page Form**

- Submit the final dissertation to eTD for publication and the completed Dissertation eSignatures Title Page Form to the Graduate Programs Office.

Both your final dissertation and the completed Dissertation eSignatures Title Page Form must be submitted by the university deadline for theses and dissertations in order to graduate that semester. This date can be found on the Boston College Academic Calendar. Please check with the Graduate Programs Office if you are unsure of this date.

## **OPPORTUNITIES TO DEVELOP IN THE ROLE OF NURSE EDUCATOR**

The Ph.D. is widely recognized as a research focused doctoral degree (AACN, 2001, 2010); as such the primary focus in the Ph.D. program is on research, scholarship and the generation and dissemination of knowledge. However, because many Ph.D.-prepared nurse scientists plan to pursue careers in academic settings, CSON provides a number of opportunities for Ph.D. students to gain training and experience in the role of the nurse educator.

Current opportunities within the CSON and across the Boston College campus, include:

- Funded teaching fellowships in lieu of research fellowships, usually in the third fellowship year for full-time funded Ph.D. fellows with mentorship by expert teachers
- Teaching residency experiences for all Ph.D. students with mentorship by expert teachers
- Center for Teaching Excellence Apprenticeship in College Teaching (ACT) program  
<http://www.bc.edu/offices/cte/programs-and-events/apprenticeship-in-college-teaching.html>
- Free online Coursera course “*How to Teach Online*” ([www.coursera.org](http://www.coursera.org))
- Teaching assistant (TA) positions in CSON in both undergraduate and graduate nursing courses
- Lab and clinical assistant positions (per diem TA positions)
- Biology Dept. TA positions in Microbiology and A&P courses
- Guest lecturing in both undergraduate and graduate nursing courses
- Enrollment in NURS 8580 *Foundations in Teaching and Learning in Nursing*

Students should also feel free to contact the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs with suggestions or questions regarding these options.

# PROGRAM FORMS

## PH.D. PROGRAM FORMS

Available in the Graduate Programs Office and on the web at: <https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/cson/sites/students.html#doctoral>

- Ph.D. Plan of Study
- Course Transfer Request Form
- Comprehensive Examination Application Form
- Doctoral Change of Advisor Form
- Dissertation Committee Formation Form
- Dissertation Committee Change Form
- Intent to Submit Dissertation Proposal Form
- Dissertation Proposal Hearing Scheduling Form
- Dissertation Proposal Hearing Outcome Form
- Intent to Defend Doctoral Dissertation Form
- Dissertation Defense Outcome Form
- Dissertation Signatures Title Pages
- Dissertation Guidelines
- Dissertation Title Page
- Dissertation Copyright Page
- Dissertation Submission Checklist
- Graduate Student Grievance Procedure

## UNIVERSITY FORMS

Available in the Office of Student Services or on the web at: [https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/offices/student-services/registrar/academic-forms.html#graduate\\_forms](https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/offices/student-services/registrar/academic-forms.html#graduate_forms)

- Leave of Absence/Program Withdrawal Form

