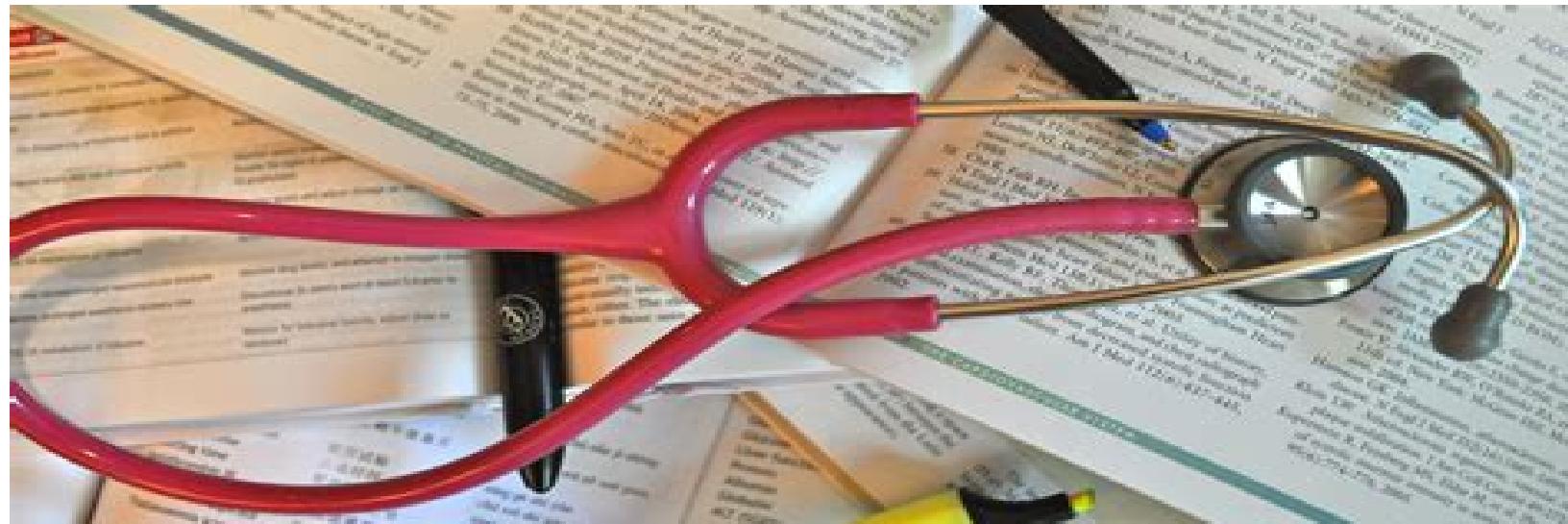




**UNC
GREENSBORO**
School of Nursing



**PhD
STUDENT
HANDBOOK
2025-2026**

PhD Student Handbook

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Introduction and Welcome

About this Handbook

The University of North Carolina Greensboro (UNCG) School of Nursing (SON) provides this handbook to all students enrolled in any of the PhD Programs as a resource to be used during their graduate studies. The handbook begins with general information applicable to **all** nursing graduate students, followed by specific sections for the PhD program.

The handbook is updated annually, and an electronic copy is available on the UNC Greensboro School of Nursing website. Much of the information is linked back to the SON or Graduate School websites.

Welcome from the Administrative Team



Hello friends,
 UNC Greensboro is a unique place, and I am glad that you [found your way here](#). The UNCG School of Nursing embraces a rich history dating back to its early days at the Women's College. I am proud to be part of the Spartan family as the School's fifth dean of nursing and the first dean of color. Here we are committed to an **inclusive community**, where diverse perspectives, experiences, talents, learning styles, and backgrounds fuel our extraordinary passion in pursuit of the ultimate

goal of providing the best healthcare for patients and their families. We are a team of **passionate people** that includes our faculty and staff, and we are educators, scientists, practitioners, advocates, innovators, active-duty service members, veterans, and so much more. We are leaders! Our school is a place to find your way to a meaningful and rewarding career, whether through education or as a member of our team. **Innovative practices** are our norm, whether in our research, teaching/learning operations, active learning classrooms, online learning environments, skills and simulation labs, or through partnerships with our more than 700 clinical agencies in the community. All this culminates into our **extraordinary outcomes**. We have world-renowned faculty who are leaders in the field, staff who are among the best in their areas of expertise, and students who consistently demonstrate great success, such as high graduation rates, high licensure and certification pass rates, and great employment success. UNCG nursing graduates are highly sought after and are leaders in the field of nursing and healthcare.

We are committed to a “Culture of Care” to facilitate student, staff, and faculty wellbeing. We have adopted the theme of “I CARE”:

C – compassion

A – compassion needs action

R – reflection (what we learn to improve upon in interactions)

E – energy (it takes work to care, but it yields cultural energy and positivity)

Welcome to the UNCG School of Nursing! I CARE!

Debra J. Barksdale, PhD, FNP-BC, CNE, FAANP, ANEF, FAAN
 Dean



Dear Future Nurse Scientist,

Welcome to the University of North Carolina Greensboro School of Nursing's PhD Program! We are glad you have chosen to further your education here with us. UNCG School of Nursing has a long tradition of excellence and we look forward to engaging with you in your journey to become a PhD prepared research-oriented nurse scientist. This handbook is meant to be a resource for all nursing PhD students related to School of Nursing and PhD program policies and procedures. I also encourage you to become familiar with The Graduate School's website at <http://grs.uncg.edu/> and with the Graduate Bulletin linked from this page <http://grs.uncg.edu/bulletin/>. Each of these contain a wealth of useful information that can guide you through the program and answer many of your questions. If you can't find the answer you seek, feel free to contact myself, your advisor, or The Graduate School for help.

With warm wishes for your academic success,

Susan Letvak PhD, RN, FAAN
 Daphine Doster Mastroianni Distinguished Professor
 Director PhD in Nursing Program
 #270 NIB
[Saletvak@uncg.edu](mailto:saletvak@uncg.edu)
 336-256-1024

PhD Program Faculty and Support Roles

PHD FACULTY	PHONE	EMAIL
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Avorgbedor, Forgive	336-334-5111	f_avorgbedo@uncg.edu
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Davis-Collins, Kristie	336-334-4115	kedaviscoll@uncg.edu
DeBrew, Jacqueline	336-334-5991	jkdebrew@uncg.edu
Eaves, Yvonne (Senior Associate Dean)	336-334-3735	ydeaves@uncg.edu
Gibson, Tiffany	336-334-4251	tsbulloc@uncg.edu
House, Sherita	336-334-4214	sijohnso@uncg.edu
Johnson Rowsey, Pamela	336-334-4943	pjrowsey@uncg.edu
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Letvak, Susan (PhD Program Director)	336-256-1024	saletvak@uncg.edu
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Rhew, Denise	336-256-0456	dcrhew@uncg.edu
Roberts, Karyn		Kjroberts2@uncg.edu
Sullivan, Connor	336-334-3733	cpsullivan@uncg.edu
Williams, Wanda (Dept. Chair and Director of DNP Programs)	336-334-3431	wmwilliams@uncg.edu

PhD Program Overview

PhD Program Goals

- Practice as nurse scientists to advance the discipline and nursing profession through scholarly inquiry
- Assume leadership roles in promoting optimal health for ethnic minorities, women, children, and older adults
- Meet the academic and healthcare industry needs for nursing scholars in North Carolina and the nation

PhD Program Learning Outcomes

- Evaluate knowledge of ethnic minorities, women, children, and older adults (person)
- Evaluate the impact of health systems and the environment on specific populations (environment)
- Generate nursing knowledge related to health promotion and elimination of health disparities in ethnic minorities, women, children and older adults (nursing)
- Promote health and eliminate health disparities in specific populations through research (health)
- Advance nursing knowledge through the inquiry process (inquiry).
- Demonstrate the art of caring in the nurse scientist's role in academia and industry (caring)
- Practice as a nurse scientist in promoting health and eliminating health disparities in health systems and specific populations (practice)

PhD Program Curricula

Curricula for the BSN to PhD, DNP to PhD and Master's to PhD are here: [Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing \(PhD\)](#) | [School of Nursing](#)

PhD Program Seminars

Enrichment seminars are held on several Fridays a month during the academic year, between the morning and the afternoon classes. Attendance at seminars is expected.

Academic Calendars

UNCG academic calendars can be found here: [Calendars | University Registrar's Office](#)

Academic Requirements

Grading Policies

The PhD program adheres to the grading scale approved for all graduate programs at UNCG SON.

Letter Grade	Grade Range	Grade Point Awarded
A	100 - 93	4.0
B	92 – 85	3.0 (*)
C	84 - 77	2.0
F	76 or less	0.0
(*) MUST maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 to remain in academic good standing in the graduate program.		

*a grade of B is required for a course to be applied to the PhD in Nursing degree. Additional hours must be taken for any hours earned with a grade less than a B.

S-U Courses

Grades for the following courses are reported as Satisfactory (S) or Unsatisfactory (U):

- Directed Research (790)
- Dissertation credits (799)
- Dissertation credits (803)

*If no progress has been made in these courses during the semester hours are taken, a U will be given.

Transfer of Courses

In some instances, especially the DNP to PhD bridge program, work done at other institutions may be counted toward the degree. The Doctoral Program Director may waive up to fifteen credits of course work for students who have recently completed doctoral level courses. If the student proposes the transfer of credit from another recognized graduate school, the work for which the credit was received must be covered by the preliminary examination, and the transfer must be recommended by the student's advisory/dissertation committee before The Graduate School will credit the work to the student's doctoral program.

The following conditions apply to transfer credit for doctoral programs:

1. All credit offered in transfer must have been taken at a recognized, accredited graduate school.
2. The student must have earned a grade of B (3.0) or better on all transfer credit. In a four-letter grading system, only credit earned with either of the top two grades is transferrable.
3. The credit must be recorded on an official transcript placed on file with The Graduate School.
4. The student may be required to submit a copy of the course syllabus to the PhD Director.
5. The credit must be approved by both the student's doctoral advisory/dissertation committee and by the Dean of the Graduate School. The course must appear on the student's approved Doctoral Plan of Study.
6. The credit must be necessary to meet specific degree requirements.
7. Hours only, not grades, may be transferred from other institutions. Quarter-hours do not transfer as semester hours. A fraction of an hour of credit will not be transferred.

PhD Student Academic Progression

The PhD degree is designed to be completed in three years if attending full time and four years if in the BSN to PhD pathway or attending half time.

Continuous Enrollment

The UNCG Graduate School requires that students pursuing a graduate degree or certificate program are required to be enrolled from the time of matriculation through degree/certificate completion. **Continuous enrollment is defined as completing a minimum of one (1) hour of graduate credit (including 799) every fall and spring semester, or one semester during the academic year in combination with a summer session.** This course work must be approved for the student's program of study and selected in consultation with the departmental Graduate Program Director and/or advisor or committee chair. State funds may not be applied to support tuition for any course that is not documented on the student's Plan of Study. **All graduate students must be enrolled for at least 1 credit during the semester in which they are scheduled to receive their degrees/certificates.** This may include the extension course, 803.

Medical or Personal Leaves of Absence

UNC Greensboro supports a leave of absence policy to assist graduate students who are temporarily unable to continue their programs. The leave of absence may extend for up to one academic year. Current students who must break continuous enrollment may apply for a leave of absence. Students choosing this option must file a Graduate School Request for a Leave of Absence that states the reason for the requested absence and that they will neither use University resources, nor require faculty communication or interaction during the leave period. If the leave of absence extends beyond one academic year, the student's matriculation is closed, and the student must re-apply for admission to the Graduate School.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the proposed leave is compatible with the regulations of any granting agency from which funding would normally be received during the leave period and that such agencies are informed of the proposed leave. Students on student loan programs should inquire with the Financial Aid Office and/or lender regarding any consequences that such a leave may have on their ability to receive future aid or on their repayment status.

Graduate students on assistantship, who are granted a leave of absence, will have their salary and stipend suspended during the period of their leave. If feasible, the remainder of their appointment will be held for them upon their return to the next term. If a graduate assistant and Graduate Program Director disagree on the leave or its arrangements, students may appeal to the Graduate School. (See Appeals for Academic Decisions under Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Registration in Section I.)

Required Withdrawal for PhD Students

Students will become academically ineligible to continue if any of the following occur:

- Grades of U, F, or WF for any credit hours.
- Grades of C, C+, or B-in 6 credit hours.
- Degree requirements not completed within the time limit (7 academic years).

Planning in Advance for Major Milestones of the PhD Program

Please be advised that dissertation decorum requires allowing about two weeks for committee chair(s) and members to read and respond to submitted materials (excluding weekends and holidays). Most faculty members in the School are employed from August until May. Students preparing for their directed research, preliminary exam, proposal defense, or dissertation defense should plan accordingly.

The Graduate School allows for seven years to complete the degree. The below timeline will give you guidance as you progress through the program.

Dissertation hours vary in the program but are never fewer than 12 semester hours, typically taken in units of three semester hours. Students must register for NUR 799 for dissertation hours listed in their plan of study with a minimum of 12 hours and a maximum of 18.

Doctoral Timeline to Completing a PhD Degree:

Inch by Inch a PhD is a cinch, yard by yard it is very hard.

Year One

- **Doctoral Advisory Committee (DAC).** Students should choose their formal advisor and file (should be submitted before the student has completed 18 credit hours of coursework). Once the DAC is in place, discussion should begin regarding the student's research interests if it has not begun already. Any subsequent changes in the advisory/dissertation committee must be submitted to The Graduate School for approval. Your **DAC may or may not be your Dissertation Committee. All changes in committee membership must be filed with the Graduate School.**
- **Plan of Study (POS).** The first draft of the Plan of Study should be submitted with the Doctoral Advisory Committee Appointment Form before the student has completed 18 credit hours of coursework.
- **Complete CITI (human subjects training)** prior to the directed research course.

Year Two and Three

- Complete all course requirements in the student's approved program of study.
- **Doctoral Preliminary Exam.** May be held upon completion of **75% of required coursework.** The written and the oral preliminary examinations together constitute a comprehensive examination of the student's command of the field. The examination is preliminary in that you must pass both the written and oral portions before being officially admitted to candidacy for the degree by the Graduate School. Specific information is below.
- An approved **Dissertation Topic Form**, to be filed in The Graduate School.
- **Satisfactory Defense of the Dissertation Proposal.** As stated by the Graduate School, the purpose of this defense is for students to demonstrate depth of understanding of the research topic, ability to perform independent work, have the requisite technical writing skills, and can synthesize material from courses and self-study into a plausible, testable hypothesis. More specific information is below.
- File the Dissertations with Multiple Authors form, if necessary. This information should be included as part of the written dissertation proposal.
- File Final Plan of Study (POS). Be sure the final POS exactly matches your transcript.

- **Admission to candidacy** is done upon the satisfaction of the above requirements and all course work. File an Application for Admission to Candidacy [with the Graduate School](#). Doctoral education should focus more on the creation of new knowledge and less of acquisition of content. Therefore, students should be encouraged to advance to candidacy as soon as appropriate for the discipline.

Year Three, Four and Five (as needed)

- Application for Graduation. **This application is always due by the end of the first week of classes of the semester in which the student plans to graduate.** Students should visit the Graduate School website to view all pertinent information regarding graduation.
- Schedule the **Final Dissertation Defense**. The doctoral candidate who has successfully completed all other requirements for the degree must defend the dissertation orally. At least two weeks prior, the Graduate School will publish the dissertation title and date, time and location of the final oral exam. The exam is open to the public. The Chair is responsible for submitting the **Results of the Oral Examination in Defense of Dissertation** form [to the Graduate School](#) following the exam. More information is below.
- File one *signed* approval copy of dissertation. **The process for submitting the approval copy of the dissertation to the Graduate School has two components: submitting the signed approval and title pages, and electronically submitting the document.
- File a final [Dissertations with Multiple Authors](#) form if there were changes from the proposal. Discuss filing an embargo form with your Committee Chair and applying for copyright of your dissertation.
- File **FINAL copy** of dissertation with the Graduate School. **After completing the formatting revisions requested by the Graduate School, submit the FINAL electronic copy of the dissertation.
- Attend your **University Doctoral Hooding Ceremony** held every May and December.

Summary of Required Milestones

The milestones for Doctoral Programs are outlined in the [UNCG 2025-2026 University Catalog](#). A summary of these milestones is below.

- Residency (Immersion)
- Plan of Study
- Preliminary Exams
- Research Competency
- Comprehensive Exam (Written & Oral)
- Dissertation Proposal
- Admission to Candidacy
- Dissertation Defense
- Filing the Final Approved Dissertation

The Advisory/Dissertation Committee

Students are encouraged to select a Dissertation Chair after the first year of study, or within 18 credit hours. The Chair will assist the student with forming the dissertation committee, consisting of at least two other members of the UNCG School of Nursing graduate faculty and one qualified “external to the School of Nursing” member. This committee must be formally appointed by the Dean of the UNCG Graduate School, the Director of the PhD Program, and must be mutually acceptable to the student and committee members. The process to create the committee is described in a later section. Once a dissertation committee is formed, it is recommended that students meet as a group as early as possible, to discuss the student’s plan of study, timeline, and dissertation topic. Involving all committee members in planning for cognates, electives, timelines and the dissertation promotes collaboration, clarity of roles in supporting the student, and avoidance of misunderstandings.

The Preliminary Exams

Preliminary examinations are conducted in accordance with [Graduate School policies](#).

Purpose

In accord with the Graduate School, the overarching purposes of the preliminary exams are to:

- evaluate the student’s overall proficiency in a body of knowledge and skills after most of the program of study is completed;
- test the candidate’s knowledge of all transferred courses;
- discover any weaknesses in the candidate’s knowledge that need to be remedied by additional courses or other instruction; and
- determine the candidate’s fitness to continue work toward the doctorate.

General Criteria

- ~synthesis and mastery of a broad range of nursing knowledge
- ~application of nursing knowledge to student’s general area of research
- ~clarity, logic, and parsimony in communicating and defending ideas
- ~substantive knowledge of content related to theory, method, and current literature
- ~originality of thought and conceptual and theoretical sophistication

Procedure

- ~ Student must meet with faculty advisor/chair to ascertain readiness to take the preliminary examination with approval of committee.
- ~ The Chair of the Advisory/Dissertation Committee must notify the Director of the PhD Program when the examination will be administered including the date for the oral component
- ~The Advisory/Dissertation Committee members prepare materials for the written examination in the format of a paper or set of questions. The materials should include instructions regarding onsite or offsite requirements.
- ~Each question response must be a minimum of 12 pages and a maximum of 25 pages**, excluding the reference page. Additional formatting questions will be determined by the Committee.
- ~The written examination must be completed in a time frame designated by the committee.

- ~The complete Advisory/Dissertation Committee of at least four members must participate in the written and oral examination.
- ~The entire examination, including the written and oral components, must be evaluated by all members of the Advisory/Dissertation Committee.

Results

The written exam may result in one of three determinations:

- Pass
- Conditional
- Fail

Any requirement for re-writes of any portion (or all) of the exam constitutes a Conditional result. Conditional grades must be reported to the Graduate School indicating the conditions and due date. If the committee so determines, any identified weaknesses may be addressed during the oral portion of the exam, which constitutes a Pass. In the case of a Non-Pass, the student must petition the committee for permission to retake the exam. If granted, the student must wait until the following semester to ensure enough preparation time.

- ~The student must pass the written exam before an oral exam can be scheduled. The oral examination must be scheduled within one month following passing of the written exam.
- ~Unanimous approval is required for passing the preliminary examination, including both written and oral components.
- ~The UNCG Results of the Doctoral Preliminary Examination Form can be obtained from the PhD Program Assistant and should be completed by the Committee Chair. This form must be submitted to the Office of the PhD Program and will be forwarded to the Graduate School by the Doctoral Program Director.
- ~In a case in which a student fails the preliminary examination on the first attempt, the student must petition their committee for the opportunity for a second examination as per the policies and procedures in [the Graduate School Academic Requirements and Regulations](#). No more than one additional examination is allowed, and the student is not permitted to take the second examination during the same semester in which the first examination was failed. The second examination must be comprised of both written and oral components and must be as comprehensive as the first examination, addressing all elements outlined in the purpose of the examination specified at the beginning of this document.

The PhD Dissertation

Before launching dissertation research, it is important that students follow the University policies, procedures, practices, and protocol administered by the [Office of Institutional Research](#). Students will learn more about this process and will work with their Chair and dissertation committee.

Dissertation Proposal Approval

The committee approves the dissertation proposal only if there is full agreement that the student has a written proposal that is fully complete and clear consistent with standards of scholarship for the form of research being proposed and that the student completely demonstrates readiness to move forward to conduct the research under the guidance of the Chair.

Dissertation Proposal Defense (Written & Oral)

All PhD students must write and defend a proposal which states the goals and aims of the dissertation research, justifies the research, and provides a detailed plan to carry out the objectives of the research.

The purpose of the proposal defense is to ensure that the PhD student has a clear and complete articulation of the research to be conducted for the dissertation. The student must prepare the first three chapters of the dissertation and have it reviewed for readiness by the dissertation chair and committee members in order to proceed to the proposal defense. The traditional components of a dissertation by chapter are noted below. The dissertation committee will assess the chapters and make recommendations for changes and revisions. The proposal defense meeting is an opportunity for committee members to assess the student's capability of conducting the research through questions related to the proposal. These oral questions posed by the committee members are designed to ensure that the student may move forward to submit an IRB proposal for review and approval through the University system. **For the Proposal Defense**, the format must include: Chapter 1 = Introduction; Chapter 2 = Literature Review (or manuscript option of a literature review); Chapter 3 = Methods

Apply for Candidacy

When a student has completed all major and minor required courses, has passed the preliminary written and oral examinations, satisfied any language or skill requirements, successfully defended the dissertation proposal, that student may then make formal application to The Graduate School for admission to candidacy for the doctoral degree using the Application for Admission to Candidacy form. Please note, that Candidacy allows students to be considered full time with 3 hours of NUR 799 hours. However, **Candidacy must be applied for before the FIRST DAY OF CLASSES of the semester for which they are in need of the full-time status.**

Dissertation Options

Traditional Option

Students choosing this option typically include at least five chapters in their final dissertation. This includes the three chapters from the dissertation proposal, as well as a fourth results chapter, and a fifth chapter that includes an overall discussion of the dissertation, recommendations, limitations, and other elements as appropriate for the dissertation.

Manuscript Option

If the student wishes to pursue the dissertation manuscript option, s/he should discuss this with the dissertation chair and committee prior to the proposal defense date to obtain appropriate guidance. At the proposal defense meeting, the student should bring a description of plans for the individual manuscripts, a list of proposed journals, and a timeline for completion and submission of manuscripts. The committee will determine if this option is feasible and approve the dissertation manuscript plans at the proposal defense meeting.

The manuscript dissertation must be comprised of at least two manuscripts for publication. The manuscript dissertation should form a cohesive body of work that presents new/original knowledge of the main findings. All manuscripts must represent the dissertation work carried out while a PhD student at UNCG and be approved by the committee at the time of the student's final dissertation defense.

Manuscripts should be suitable for publication defined as being written in the style, substance, and format of specific peer-reviewed professional journals relevant to the content of the manuscript. It is not required that the manuscript be submitted for publication or published. The dissertation chair makes the determination when a manuscript is considered suitable for publication; with input from the PhD committee members and other authors (if applicable).

No other students can be co-authors on any of the manuscripts. Committee members who are co-authors must be identified at the student's dissertation proposal defense. The manuscripts and the roles of the co-authors must be approved by the committee, as well as any changes. For more information about principal authorship, refer to Section 8.12 of the [APA Code of Conduct \(2010\)](#).

All manuscripts should be ready for submission to a peer-reviewed journal at the time of dissertation defense. Journals to which manuscripts are submitted must be approved by the committee so that the journals offer a reasonable chance of publication success. Manuscripts may be published before the final defense if approved by committee chair, members and other authors; if so, the student must obtain copyright permission from the publishing journal to include the article in her/his dissertation. The student should notify the journal that the dissertation will be available online. If a manuscript is rejected by a journal during the dissertation process, the student must submit to another journal approved by the committee. In the case of needed revisions, any changes to the manuscripts must be approved by the committee and other co-authors.

Dissertation Format for Manuscript Option.

- Chapter 1. The introduction
- Chapter 2. The literature review (this may be a manuscript)
- Chapter 3. Methods
- Chapters 4 (& possible 5). The manuscripts (at least one of the manuscripts must be data
- Chapter 6. The conclusion will briefly summarize the dissertation's major findings, limitations, discussion, and recommendations for practice and future research. The student should also discuss the linkages, similarities, and differences among the separate manuscripts that are included in the dissertation, with the goal of presenting the dissertation as a coherent body of work that is a contribution to the knowledge base regarding the research problem.
- Appendices. As appropriate

Authorship & Publication for Manuscripts. The student must be first author on all manuscripts. As first author, the student is responsible for all aspects of the research development, design, implementation, and analysis, as well as writing major portions of the manuscript. If the student has faculty coauthors and the student does not submit the manuscripts within 18 months after degree completion, the faculty coauthors may submit the manuscripts with same author agreements.

Dissertation Defense

The doctoral candidate who has successfully completed all other requirements for the degree will be scheduled by the chair of the advisory/dissertation committee, in consultation with the other committee members, to take a **final oral examination- the Dissertation Defense**. The Final Oral Examination Schedule form must be completed by the chair of the Dissertation Committee and submitted to the PhD Program Assistant at least **two weeks prior to the final oral examination** (dissertation defense). The Graduate School will publish the dissertation title, date, time, and location of the oral examination at least two weeks prior to the examination.

In order to provide adequate time for committee input and revisions, students must submit a complete draft of the dissertation document to the PhD Committee Chair no later than the end of the first week of classes in the semester you plan to graduate. Students should expect multiple revisions before the document is sent out for PhD Committee review. ***The Final Dissertation must be sent to the PhD Dissertation Committee no fewer than two weeks prior to the scheduled defense (and some committee members may require a longer period of time).*** Students who fail to meet either of these deadlines will not be allowed to defend the doctoral document in that semester.

** You will need to be very DILIGENT, as deadlines pertaining to the dissertation document change each semester. You may access these deadlines and others by viewing the Academic Calendar (<https://reg.uncg.edu/calendars/>) on the Graduate School or Registrar's websites.

The dissertation is the product of a thorough investigation of a basic and significant problem or question within the major area of study. An appropriate plan of research must be developed and executed by the student under the general guidance of the chair and the advisory/dissertation committee. The dissertation requirement is designed to develop the capacities of originality and generalization in the candidate. It should foster and attest to the development in the candidate of ability in scientific inquiry, understanding, and mastery of the techniques of scholarship, and the art of exposition within the field of specialization. The advisory/dissertation committee, with such other professors as may be appointed by the Dean of The Graduate School, shall examine the dissertation; and no dissertation shall be accepted unless it secures unanimous approval of the advisory/dissertation committee.

*Please note that the process for submitting the dissertation to The Graduate School has two components: submitting the signed approval copy and submitting the final copy. Be sure to note the specific instructions and deadline dates affiliated with each step.

Students file the dissertation electronically via the online submission system available on The Graduate School's website. In final form, the dissertation must comply with the rules prescribed by the Graduate Studies Committee in the *Guide for the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations*. The approved electronic submission must be uploaded by the deadline date as specified in the Calendar of Events. Publication of the dissertation by UMI Dissertation Publishing/ProQuest Information and Learning is required by The Graduate School. The candidate must pay the associated publishing fee.

The examination is open to all members of the University community who may wish to attend. The final oral examination is administered by the advisory/dissertation committee as per program guidelines. The examination is largely related to the dissertation field of study including courses taken here and elsewhere. Approval of the examination must be attested to by all members of the advisory/dissertation committee.

University and School of Nursing Policies and Requirements

Artificial Intelligence Policy

University Artificial Intelligence information is here: [UNCG Artificial Intelligence](#) Students are encouraged to reach out to individual course faculty concerning the use of AI in course work.

Criminal Background and Drug Screening

As part of the clinical clearance process (which may include collection of dissertation data), students are required to submit immunization documentation as well as complete a drug screening and criminal background check. There is a cost associated with this clinical clearance process. Additional information and instructions will be sent to students after being admitted to the program.

Dean of Students Office

The Dean of Students Office is a resource for any student experiencing difficulty. The link to this office is: <https://sa.uncg.edu/dean/>

Distance Education Policy

The School of Nursing adheres to the University Distance Education Policy found here: [Distance-Education-Policy-2023.pdf](#)

Distance Education Policy

The School of Nursing adheres to the University Distance Education Policy found here: [Distance-Education-Policy-2023.pdf](#)

Health and Certification Requirements

IMPORTANT: The School of Nursing requires that all nursing students have health insurance coverage. Criteria for all undergraduate and graduate students to be eligible for the Student Health Insurance Plan include:

- Enrolled in a BSN, MSN, DNP, or PhD degree program at UNCG.
- Enrolled in at least 3 hours of nursing courses.

A student who meets the above criteria must:

1. Enroll in the Student Health Insurance Plan each semester prior to the beginning of the semester.

OR

2. Prove you have outside health insurance each semester by submitting an on-line waiver to Student Blue that shows evidence of existing creditable health coverage, or later you will be enrolled into the Student Health Insurance Plan by default and the premium will remain on your student account.

Student Procedure for Needlestick or Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure

When there is a parenteral (i.e., needle stick, puncture, or cut) or mucous membrane (e.g., splash to the eye or mouth) exposure to blood or other body fluids, the student is to follow the procedure below.

1. Wash the skin exposure site well with soap and water. Flush eye or mouth with water. Avoid using damaging substances such as bleach. Do not bleed tissue. Rinse well.
2. Inform the Faculty member, who will advise you.
3. Inform the Nurse in charge of the clinical unit.
4. Follow the employee needlestick or bloodborne pathogen exposure protocol/policy of the workplace/institution where the event occurs. Most institutions will arrange to draw and test source blood and provide de-identified test results to the student at the time of the incident. The student should take these results to a health care provider to be evaluated for potential treatment.
5. Inquire about the need to complete necessary incident or agency reports. Schedule a completion time for these reports with the agency. This may be as soon as possible following the exposure or at a later date, based on exposure risks.
6. The student should obtain medical consultation and evaluation as soon as possible. This could be at the Emergency Department of the health care agency where the incident occurred, at the student's own health care provider, or UNCG Gove Student Health Center (336-334-5340). It is preferable to obtain the medical care/consultation where the event occurs, since time is an important consideration if treatment is necessary, and institutions have access to post-exposure medications and source information that the student's primary care provider or the Gove Student Health Center may not.

Be sure to have as much of the following information as possible available for your health care provider:

- Date and time of exposure.
- Details of the incident: where and how the exposure occurred, exposure site (s) on the student's body; if related to the sharp device, the type and brand of device.
- Details of the exposure: type and amount of fluid or material, severity of exposure.
- Details of the exposure source (obtained from the health care agency where the exposure took place)
 - HIV+, HBV+, or HCV+
 - If HIV infected, stage of the disease; CD4 cell count, HIV viral load, history of antiretroviral therapy & antiretroviral resistance information.
- Details about the exposed student
 - Hepatitis B vaccination and vaccine-response status (titer)
 - Other current medical conditions
 - Current medications and drug allergies
 - Pregnancy or breast-feeding

If the health care agency is unable to provide the student with source blood information, the Public Health Law (NCAC 41A.0203) can compel the screening of the source patient. Advanced Home Care should be contacted to perform the necessary blood draw from the source patient. The health care provider caring for the student should provide an order for the lab tests, and a release form for the source individual to complete so the results can be sent to the provider. The student is responsible for any cost related to obtaining the blood specimen and may need to provide insurance information to Advanced Home Care.

7. Inquire about the need to complete necessary incident or agency reports. Schedule a completion time for these reports with the agency. This may be as soon as possible following the exposure or at a later date, based on exposure risks.
8. The clinical faculty will notify the nursing program director of the exposure, who will inform the Senior Associate Dean for Academics.
9. The student, with assistance from their clinical faculty, will complete the required form and submit it to the OSHA Trainer for tracking. Neither the clinical agency nor the University is responsible for the cost of the care that is involved in the treatment, management, or surveillance of exposure to blood or body fluids.

Sexual Misconduct:

If you wish to report sexual misconduct here is the link to the relevant information:

https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UNCGreensboro&layout_id=8

Process for Student Concerns and Complaints

The faculty and staff of the UNCG School of Nursing care about our students. We strive to provide the best educational experience possible, but understand that concerns can sometimes arise. Below is the process to follow should you have a concern or complaint. The link to the UNCG Academic Regulations and Policies, found in the University Catalog, is here: <https://catalog.uncg.edu/academic-regulations-policies/>

The School of Nursing defines a formal complaint as a written Grade Appeal which is not resolved at the level of the instructor, a written notice of violation of University policy, or an Academic Integrity Board submission verified by filing the academic Integrity Violation Report Form. It is always best to first try to resolve the concern with the person immediately involved. If you have a concern with your faculty member, staff member, or another student, please speak to them first. Usually, concerns can be resolved with a conversation. If your concern arises with a preceptor or other employee of a clinical agency in which you are a student, please inform your faculty member immediately. If the concern involves a nursing classroom, lab, or clinical course, and the concern cannot be resolved by speaking with your faculty member, the next step would be to speak to the course chair. It is best if the concern can be put in writing (an email is fine for this purpose). If not able to be resolved at this level, the next step would be the Director of your program. If unable to be resolved at this level, the next step would be to contact the Dean of the School of Nursing.

The School of Nursing Appeals Committee does not hear grade appeals. If you wish to appeal a grade, first discuss your concerns with your instructor, and follow the reporting process described above. If still unresolved, the link to the University Grade Appeal process is here:

<https://aas.uncg.edu/documents/students/GradeAppealPolicy.pdf>

Substance Abuse and Notification Policy:

Both the University and the School of Nursing have Substance Abuse Policies. The University Policy can be found at this link: https://policy.uncg.edu/university_policies/illegal-use-or-abuse-of-alcohol/

The School of Nursing Policy can be found on the School of Nursing Website [here](#):

<https://nursing.uncg.edu/student-resources/other-resources/> .

University Academic Integrity Policy

The School of Nursing adheres to the University Academic Integrity Policy found here: [Academic Integrity Policy & Pledge | Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#)

PhD Student Handbook 2025-2026 UNCG School of Nursing

Unsafe Practice Policy

The nursing faculty of the School of Nursing have an academic, legal, and ethical responsibility to prepare graduates who are competent as well as to protect the public and health care community from unsafe nursing practice. It is within this context that students can be disciplined or dismissed from the School of Nursing for practices or behaviors that threaten or has the potential to threaten the safety of a client, a family member or substitute familial person, another student, a faculty member, or other health care provider.

Student Awareness

All students are expected to be familiar with the principles of safe practice and are expected to perform in accordance with these requirements. Within courses, counseling and advising processes, and other instructional forums, students will be provided with the opportunity to discuss the policy and its implications.

Definition

An unsafe practice is defined as:

- An act or behavior of the type which violates the North Carolina Nursing Practice Act, Article 9 of Chapter 90 of the North Carolina General Statutes (NCGS 90-171.37; 90-171.44).
- An act or behavior of the type which violates the Code of Ethics for Nurses of the American Nurses Association.
- An act or behavior (commission or omission) which constitutes nursing practice for which a student is not authorized or educated at the time of the incident.

Investigation & Evaluation of an Unsafe Practice

When an incident occurs which a faculty member believes may constitute an unsafe practice, he/she shall immediately notify the student and instruct the student to leave the clinical setting. The faculty member will notify the Course Lead Faculty, Concentration Coordinator, and/or Program Director in the School of Nursing.

The course faculty, Concentration Coordinator and/or Program Director will investigate the incident within three working days to determine whether there are grounds for believing that an unsafe practice has occurred. If the incident is minor, the faculty member, in consultation with the person named above, may require remedial work or instruction for the student. If the incident is major, or serial in nature, the Program Director will notify the Dean.

The Dean, in consultation with the involved faculty members, will review the student's clinical performance evaluation(s), academic record and potential for successful completion of the major in nursing. Based upon this careful and deliberate review, a decision to reprimand the student, require withdrawal from the clinical course, or to recommend dismissal of the student from the School of Nursing will be made. The Dean of Nursing will send written notification of the decision to reprimand or to require withdrawal from the clinical course to the student. If the Dean of Nursing recommends dismissal from the School of Nursing, the recommendation will be forwarded to the Vice Provost for Graduate Education for approval and notification of the student.

Should the student wish to appeal the decision, the student will submit a written request to the School of Nursing Appeals Committee. The Dean of Nursing will provide to the Committee the accumulated documentation related to the issue. A request for an appeal should occur within seven working days of written notification of the decision from the Dean of Nursing or the Vice Provost for Graduate Education.

The Appeal Process

The Chair of the School of Nursing Appeals Committee will thereafter notify the student, the faculty member, Course Lead Faculty and Program Director as to the time and place for a hearing to determine whether an unsafe act or behavior occurred and, if so, what resolution to recommend.

The Committee will hold a closed hearing within ten days at which time the faculty member, Course Lead Faculty, and Program Director will be present and will provide documentation and other oral or written evidence regarding the incident. The student will be allowed an advocate/support person at the hearing; however, the support person cannot speak at the hearing and cannot be an attorney.

Following the factual presentation, the Committee will convene in executive session to determine whether an unsafe practice occurred and to recommend a resolution to the incident. The Committee will base its recommendation on the evidence presented at the hearing.

The Committee shall make its recommendation in writing to the Dean and forward pertinent documentation. The Committee may recommend the following remedies: no finding of an act of unsafe practice; a reprimand to the student; or dismissal from the School of Nursing major.

Post Hearing Process

The Dean of Nursing may accept, reject, or modify the Committee's recommendation. The Dean's decision will be made after review of the minutes of the hearing and report to the Committee. If the Dean of Nursing accepts the Committee's recommendation to dismiss the student from the School of Nursing, the recommendation will be forwarded to the Dean of the Graduate School who will notify the student. The Dean of Nursing will notify the faculty member(s) as to the determination. A student who has been dismissed may reapply for admission to the School of Nursing.

Additional Student Resources (links)

[**Information Technology Services \(6-TECH\)**](#)

[**APA Style Tutorial**](#)

[**Nursing Organizations & Memberships**](#)

[**UNCG Phone Directory**](#)

[**Emergency, SON & UNCG Phone Numbers**](#)

[**SON Website**](#)