

**TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY**  
**COLLEGE OF NURSING**  
**DOCTORAL STUDENT HANDBOOK**

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**Mission**

The PhD program at Texas Woman's University College of Nursing develops nurse scholars who contribute to the profession of nursing. Scholars are those nursing leaders who discover, integrate, apply, and disseminate knowledge to promote the health of society. The emphasis of the PhD program is on research, primarily in the areas that influence women's health.

**Goals**

The goals of the doctoral nursing program are to prepare students who should be able to:

- Engage in scholarship that will add to the body of nursing knowledge/science.
- Influence professional values and practice.

- Investigate substantive questions of human health.
- Integrate knowledge from nursing and other disciplines to address problems of human health.
- Teach and mentor other nurses and nurse scholars.

### **General Information about the Doctoral Program in Nursing**

The information provided in this handbook is to assist students in (1) academic program planning and (2) meeting the requirements of the College of Nursing and the Graduate School for completing the PhD degree in nursing. This information is intended to clarify and to supplement, not to replace, the information in the Graduate Catalog. Each student should read thoroughly and comply fully with all requirements of the College of Nursing and the Graduate School.

The curriculum is organized to support scholarly development. To provide students with a foundation in research, both didactic and experiential opportunities in quantitative and qualitative research methodologies are incorporated. Throughout the core curriculum, theory and research components are linked because faculty believe that they are inseparable in practice.

Clinical aspects of nursing are important. Students are expected to enter the program with a clinical area of expertise obtained in a master's degree program and by means of clinical practice. This clinical area may serve as the impetus for research during the doctoral program. Efforts are made to match faculty and student research interests.

The program offers students opportunities for significant study in areas of individual interests through a broad selection of substantive and methodological elective courses. The advisory committee can assist students in securing elective experiences that will facilitate their knowledge and research expertise. Electives may be found within the College of Nursing and in other disciplines at TWU and other area universities with whom TWU has affiliation agreements.

### **Admission Requirements**

All applicants must meet the general requirements for admission to the Graduate School. In addition to these general requirements, the College of Nursing requires the following for admission to the doctoral program:

1. A course in statistics.
2. A course in research at the graduate level.
3. A course in nursing theory at the graduate level.
4. A master's degree with a major in nursing from a program accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting body (preferred).
5. Two letters of recommendation.
6. A statement of research interest area and professional goals.
7. A current license to practice professional nursing in the U.S.A.\*
8. A curriculum vitae or resume.
9. GRE or MAT scores

\*Nursing credentials of international students will be assessed individually.

Admission to the nursing doctoral degree program may be awarded on an unconditional or provisional basis. The criteria for unconditional admission are:

- A minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.5 on prior graduate level course work; or
- A preferred score of 460 on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) Verbal and 500 on the GRE Quantitative; or
- A preferred score of 50 on the Miller Analogies Test (MAT).

Applicants who do not meet the unconditional criteria, but who have a minimum GPA of 3.0 on prior graduate level course work may be considered for provisional admission on an individual basis. Factors that will be considered in the admission decision are:

- GPA on graduate level work,
- GRE verbal and quantitative scores or MAT score,
- Scholarly activities,
- Professional leadership, and
- Work history.

*If a student has been provisionally admitted, the conditions necessary for full admission will be specified in the admission letter from the Graduate School. Once the conditions for full admission have been met, the student should petition the Graduate School through the College of Nursing for advancement from Provisional Admission to Unconditional Admission. This request is made through the Doctoral Program Coordinator. Failure to meet conditions of provisional admission results in the student's removal from the program.*

### **Transfer of Credits**

The doctoral program consists of a minimum of 60 credit hours of post-master's credit (a minimum of 90 post-baccalaureate credit hours). At least 50 percent of the course credit toward the doctoral degree must be completed at Texas Woman's University. The master's degree in nursing is considered to be part of the doctoral program. Up to 36 credit hours of master's level work can be accepted and applied toward post-baccalaureate credit hours.

There is no automatic transfer of graduate credit, but students may seek approval for additional transfer credit from the Academic Advisory Committee and the Associate Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School. Only courses from an accredited institution in which a grade of B or better was earned may be considered. No credit toward a graduate degree may be earned through correspondence or through extension work for another institution. A student may apply for consideration for transfer credit only after satisfactorily completing a minimum of nine hours of graduate credit at TWU.

### **Part-time Enrollment**

Students planning part-time enrollment need to consult closely with their advisor and/or the Doctoral Program Coordinator so that required nursing courses can be taken in the recommended sequence. While a full-time student can complete the required course work in three and one-half years, the part-time student will require a longer period of time depending upon their availability to take required course work.

### **Readmission**

Doctoral students who interrupt their progression in the doctoral program for more than two years must make a formal request to the College of Nursing for readmission to the program. The Graduate Academic Affairs Committee will evaluate the request. If the request is granted, the Academic Advisory Committee will, in consultation with the Doctoral Coordinator, stipulate any course work to be repeated. However, the ten-year time limitation for completion of the program shall remain in effect from the time the first doctoral credit is awarded. If during the student's absence, the curriculum or admission standards have changed, the student will be expected to meet any new admission standards and fulfill the requirements of the current curriculum.

Students not in good standing at the time they cease course work shall not be readmitted to the program. Students who have been dismissed from the program shall not be eligible for readmission. Students who have failed the qualifying examination for the second time shall not be eligible for readmission.

### **Academic Advisement**

Prior to admission to the doctoral program, the Doctoral Program Coordinator acts as an advisor for the student. At the time of admission to the doctoral program, each student is assigned a major advisor from the nursing faculty. Prior to enrolling in any course work, students must contact the Doctoral Program Coordinator or their major advisor.

At the completion of 12 specified hours in the program (N6023, N6053, N6004), an advisory committee will be formed for the student. The three member Academic Advisory Committee has the primary authority and responsibility for the academic program of the student. This responsibility includes the preparation, with the student, of a total program of doctoral study which is formalized in the Doctoral Degree Plan.

The Academic Advisory Committee serves to mentor students as they progress through the program. Each student is asked to compile a portfolio of his/her work to share with the committee in regular meetings held at least once a semester. These meetings provide the opportunity for the committee and student to dialogue about student progress, research interests and possibilities, academic issues or concerns, etc. The student is responsible for scheduling this meeting each semester.

The Academic Advisory Committee chair is the faculty member whom the student should contact for information related to procedures and requirements for degree planning, changes in the program of study and/or changes in committee membership, advisement about courses to be taken, and transfer of credit from other institutions. The student and major advisor prepare the Doctoral Degree Program (Appendix B) which is approved by the Academic Advisory Committee and then approved and filed in the Graduate School.

### **The Doctoral Degree Plan**

All doctoral students must file a degree plan with the Graduate School. It is the student's responsibility to work with her/his advisor to develop the degree plan before completion of 18 semester hours. All degree plans should be submitted to the Graduate School one year prior to the graduation date.

The student and the Academic Advisory Committee work together on the program of study to insure that the requirements of the Graduate School are fulfilled. The Academic Advisory Committee provides guidance to the student with regard to elective courses that will assist the student to focus on an area of interest or a minor.

The Degree Plan (Appendix B) must list exact course numbers and titles. Any transfer credit approved by the committee must have an official transcript filed with the Graduate Office. When the Degree Plan form has been completed it must be signed by all members of the Academic Advisory Committee.

When all members of the committee approve of the plan, it is then forwarded to the Coordinator of the Doctoral Program for approval and signature, and then to the Dean of the College of Nursing. If approved by the Dean of the College of Nursing, the Degree Plan is then forwarded to the Graduate Office. If the Associate Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School approves the Degree Plan, copies of the signed form are sent

to the student and the department. Once the degree plan has been filed and approved, any changes in courses must be approved by the Academic Advisory Committee and a Change in Degree Program (Appendix C) must be filed with the Graduate Office.

If the Associate Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School finds the Degree Plan unacceptable, the College of Nursing will be notified. The Academic Advisory Committee will assist the student in making the appropriate revisions or advise the student of the required additional documentation.

## **The Program of Study**

### **Length of Program**

A full-time student considering the doctoral program should plan on 3 1/2 years of full-time study to complete required course work (excluding dissertation). Full-time study is considered 9 hours of course work per semester. The part-time student will need a minimum of four to five years to complete course work provided 6 hours are taken each semester.

ALL REQUIREMENTS TOWARD A DOCTORAL DEGREE, BEYOND THE MASTER'S DEGREE OR ITS EQUIVALENT, MUST BE COMPLETED WITHIN A PERIOD OF TEN CONSECUTIVE CALENDAR YEARS FROM THE DATE DOCTORAL CREDIT IS FIRST EARNED.

By state mandate, doctoral students must pay out-of-state tuition for any doctoral course work taken in excess of 99 credit hours. This policy includes all credits for which students enroll while they are classified as a doctoral student, including courses with grades of PR or WP.

### **Degree Requirements**

The PhD program in nursing requires satisfactory performance in each of the following:

- Completion of a minimum of 60 credit hours beyond the Master's Degree as follows: Nursing major 36 credit hours (includes 6 credit hours of dissertation); Electives 18 credit hours; Women's Health elective 3 credit hours; and Education elective 3 credit hours.
- Satisfactory completion of the research tools required by the Graduate School. (The statistics research tool and a second tool selected from computer science, writing, information retrieval, or qualitative research.)
- Completion of additional courses deemed necessary for fulfilling academic and career goals.
- Successful completion of the preliminary examination.
- Successful defense of the dissertation.

### **Progression Requirements**

To continue in the nursing program, students must receive a minimum grade of B in each nursing course and must maintain a 3.0 grade point average. The student may repeat only one nursing course in which a grade of less than B is earned. A student who has earned a grade of less than B (C, D, F, or WF) in two nursing courses at the graduate level or who has earned a grade of less than B (C, D, F, or WF) twice in the same graduate level nursing course will be removed from the nursing program. If a course must be repeated, the student cannot progress in the program until that course has been successfully completed.

If the GPA falls below 3.0 in one semester, the student is placed on scholastic probation. Failure to attain a 3.0 GPA in the next regular semester will result in dismissal from the

program. A student who has provisional admission will be dismissed from the program the first time the GPA falls below a 3.0.

A grade of WP is assigned when a student withdraws from a course prior to the penalty date. After the penalty date, a WP will be assigned if the student's average grade in the course at the time of withdrawal is 80% or higher. A grade of WF will be assigned if the student's average grade is below 80%.

The College of Nursing has an appeal procedure should a student wish to appeal a grade. That procedure is available from the Doctoral Program Coordinator or the Associate Dean. The Graduate School appeal procedure can be found in the TWU Student Handbook or online at: <http://www.twu.edu/o-sl/>

### **Required Courses in the Nursing Major**

Students admitted to doctoral study who have not had a master's level theory course or content equivalent to NURS 5013 Theoretical Foundations of Nursing Practice, are required to complete this course before beginning the required doctoral courses. In addition, students who are deficient in research course work will be required to enroll in NURS 5023 Research in Nursing. When NURS 5013 and NURS 5023 are taken to meet the admission requirements, they are prerequisites for the doctoral program and the hours are not considered as part of the 60 post-masters credits required for the PhD degree.

Students are advised to give careful consideration to the following material when, in consultation with the Academic Advisory Committee, the doctoral degree plan is prepared.

The following courses comprise the required 36 hours in the nursing major:

NURS 6002: Multicultural Nursing Focuses on development of the student as a member of a culture within the context of a global paradigm. Students will develop an appreciation for their own culture as well as appreciation of other cultures. Universal view will result in the development of theoretical framework for the incorporation of cultural competence at each level of doctoral study and post-doctoral practice. Two credit hours.

NURS 6004: Theory and Foundations of Nursing Research Critical analysis of theory and study of qualitative and quantitative methods. Emphasis on inductive and deductive logic involved in knowledge development and testing. Examines limitations posed by quantitative and qualitative methods. Prior statistical and philosophical content is applied in examining current problems of concern to nurses. Independent literature reviews and utilization of basic research theory provide opportunities to pose questions for future research. Prerequisites: Completion of statistics research tool, NURS 6023; Co-requisite: Nursing 6053. Four credit hours.

NURS 6014: Theory and Methods of Quantitative Nursing Research Application of quantitative theories and methods through proposal development and participation in ongoing research to address substantive health problems. Prerequisite: NURS 6004. Four credit hours: 3 lecture hours and 3 research practicum hours per week.

NURS 6023: Philosophy of Nursing Science Overview of concepts related to philosophy, philosophy of science, and philosophy of nursing. Includes exploration and analysis of major philosophers, comparison of Eastern and Western philosophy, and the contribution of these philosophies to the origin and development of nursing philosophy and science. Three credit hours.

NURS 6024: Theory and Methods of Qualitative Nursing Research Explores methods of qualitative research including the choice of design and methods to address substantive human health problems. Examines qualitative data analysis techniques, including the use of software programs. Practicum provides opportunity to collect data for analysis and prepare a report. Prerequisites: NURS 6004. Four credit hours: 3 lecture hours and 3 research practicum hours per week.

NURS 6033: Ethical Dimensions of Nursing Examines ethical issues in contemporary nursing practice from the perspective of nursing as a moral enterprise. Focuses on nurses making informed and responsible choices that shape the future of society as well as the nursing profession. Traditional and contemporary ethical positions will be explored as they apply to common ethical and moral problems found in nursing. Three credit hours.

NURS 6034: Research /Theory Synthesis Synthesizes theory development knowledge with strategies for testing theoretical statements pertaining to the student's selected research. Students will develop a formal proposal and conduct a pilot study. Students will present work for critique and engage in scholarly critique of peers' work. Prerequisites: NURS 6014, NURS 6024. Four credit hours: 1 lecture hour and 9 research practicum hours per week.

NURS 6043: Policy, Power, and Politics Examines concepts of social policy, power and political behaviors and generates strategies for exercising professional leadership in effecting change in health disciplines. Exploration and analysis of theories supporting policy making as a decision-making body or power base for action or inaction. Role of health politics in the work place, organization, government, and community will be examined with special emphasis on the politics of women's health care. Three credit hours.

NURS 6053: Exploring Scholarship Introductory course will prepare the doctoral student to examine scholarship in detail and identify mechanisms to enhance own scholarship. Three credit hours.

NURS 6983: Dissertation Three credit hours; may be taken one time only.

NURS 6993: Dissertation Three credit hours, may be repeated until the dissertation project is complete. Credit is awarded after the final enrollment in which the completed dissertation is successfully defended.

Unless otherwise indicated by prerequisites, courses will be taken in the sequence approved by the Academic Advisory Committee. Students who are working need to consult closely with their advisor and the Doctoral Program Coordinator in order to plan their schedules so that they can take the required courses in the semesters in which the courses are offered.

### **Electives**

Twenty-four hours of approved electives are required for the doctoral degree in nursing. Eighteen of these hours may be selected from any of the University departments or colleges offering graduate level work (courses numbered 5000 and 6000). Six of the 24 credit hours must be chosen from courses focusing on women's health and education. These six credit hours may be chosen from nursing electives or other courses offered by other disciplines. Elective courses chosen should be supportive of the individual student's research interest and professional goals. The Academic Advisory Committee must approve the electives stated on the student's degree plan. Courses taken to prepare for a research tool or a research proficiency examination are not accepted as electives.

The nursing faculty also offers courses which may be taken as electives. These courses include, but are not limited to, the following:

NURS 6003: Grant Writing Comprehensive introduction to the components of a grant. Basic steps for skill development in preparation, design and evaluation are included. Three lecture hours a week. credit: Three hours.

NURS 6143: Irregular Time Series Statistical Analysis Survey of the theory and methods relative to nonlinear dynamics. Provides opportunity to examine time series data using a variety of methods. Provides opportunity to participate in activities of the Center for Nonlinear Science. Focuses on randomness, probability theory, time series, nonlinear dynamics, chaos, fractals, and scaling. Pre-requisite: Completion of statistics research tool or permission of instructor. Three credit hours.

NURS 6163: Health Outcomes: Measurement, Management, and Analysis Explores changes in health care system and emerging health care priority agenda that are placing focus on outcomes. Emphasizes importance of outcome indicators and need for new or revised measures in selected health conditions and related settings. Analyzes relationships among process, outcomes, and costs. Focuses on development of research programs addressing clinical, institutional, or systems research. prerequisites: NURS 6014 or consent of faculty. Three lecture hours a week. Credit: Three hours.

NURS 6203: Women's Issues--Fifty and Over Discusses feminist perspectives raised by health, social, and family issues the mature woman faces. Reviews pathophysiology of common diseases. Analysis of ramifications of social and family issues and review of extant research literature. Addresses influence of race and class and explores emotional and psychosocial experiences of women. Explores impact on future research. Three credit hours.

NURS 6213: Multicultural Women's Health Research Compares, contrasts, and analyzes issues related to past and present research on the health of women in various cultures. Future research needs prioritized with an emphasis on funding sources and collaborative opportunities. Emphasizes the quality, quantity, and foci of research on women's health with analysis of issues which have precluded women from health-related research in the past and from full participation in the health care delivery systems of today. Focuses on empowerment of women in health promotion within a cultural context and explores and analyzes strategies to improve health delivery to women in various cultural settings from a research-based practice model. Three credit hours.

NURS 6223: Threats to Women's Health Familiarizes students with the leading causes of morbidity and mortality among American women. Identifies feminist issues raised by the health of American women. Addresses influence of race, class, and gender upon health. Current analyses of women's health by contemporary scholars provides context for raising research questions. Explores potential research projects. Three credit hours.

NURS 6243: Feminist Pedagogy in Nursing Education Feminist pedagogy provides paradigm for teaching strategies used in classrooms and clinical or practicum experiences. Critically examines teaching strategies founded on behaviorism and patriarchal perspectives. Emphasizes how teaching/learning experiences can move from training toward education, from memorization toward critical thinking, and from students as recipients of information to students as fully empowered participants in knowledge discovery. Three credit hours.

NURS 6253: Workplace Wellness Examines current policies practices, regulations, and environmental issues impacting workplace wellness. Includes workplaces in selected countries around the globe, particularly those represented to a significant extent by immigrants to the U.S. Focuses on psychosocial, cultural, and physiological issues in the workplace. Application of theoretical framework to provide direction for health policy and promotion of workplace wellness. Three credit hours.

NURS 6273: Aging and Chronic Health Conditions Analyzes knowledge about chronic health conditions in older adults to determine health care needs not currently well addressed. Synthesizes theory and knowledge to design an intervention addressing a specified need. Focuses on multidimensional and interdisciplinary approaches promoting the best possible health status of individuals. Designs an evaluation of the intervention including measurement of appropriate health status indicators. Three credit hours.

NURS 6613: Introduction to Clinical Investigation in Nursing Quantification and interpretation of clinical nursing phenomena with emphasis on analysis of relational statements and propositions in theories and conceptual frameworks. Three lecture hours a week. Credit: Three hours.

NURS 6623: Systematic Inquiry in Nursing Analysis of clinical nursing phenomena with emphasis on advanced quantification and interpretation of clinical data in analysis of models and theoretical statements in nursing. Three lecture hours a week. Credit: Three hours.

NURS 6633: Advanced Systematic Inquiry in Nursing Experimental investigation of relational statements in testing of nursing theories and conceptual frameworks. Emphasis on application in clinical settings. Three lecture hours per week. Credit: Three hours.

NURS 6903: Special Topics Selected current topics in nursing. Three credit hours.

NURS 6913: Individual Study Individual study of a selected problem in nursing. Student must complete Independent Study form and receive approval from the instructor and the Dean of the College of Nursing prior to enrolling in independent study. Prerequisite: Permission of Dean and Instructor. Three credit hours.

### **Minor**

Doctoral students (particularly those on the Denton campus) may choose to apply their open elective hours towards a minor. A minor is available only in the areas in which the University offers a major at the doctoral level. A minimum of 15 hours, or more if required by the department in which the minor is being pursued, is required for the minor. A student choosing a minor must have a faculty member from the minor area on the Academic Advisory Committee and on the Dissertation Committee. Comprehensive exams in the minor area, if any, will be according to the policy of the department in which the minor is pursued. Students must obtain approval and advisement from the minor area prior to pursuing the minor.

**Research Tools** - To complete the **first research tool requirement**, students must take statistics. The student must complete six hours of graduate level statistics. To complete the **second research tool requirement**, students may choose one of the following options:

- Library Science
  - Course 1 – LS 5533 Internet Research for Non-Library Science Majors

- Course 2 – LS 5553 Electronic Information Retrieval for Non-Library Science Majors
- Informatics in Health Care
  - Course 1 – NURS 6323 Informatics and Research in Nursing and Health Care
  - Course 2 – NURS 6333 To be developed
  - Additional option – LS 5363 Health Sciences Information Services and a second course at the approval of the academic advisory committee and/or program coordinator
- Instrumentation
  - Course 1 – NURS 5273 **Measurement and Assessment in Nursing**
  - Course 2 – **NURS 6173** Instruments in **Nursing** Research
  - Alternate course series at the approval of the academic advisory committee and/or program coordinator
- Professional Writing Course
  - Course 1 – NURS 6903 Professional Writing
  - Course 2 – NURS 6003 Grant Writing
  - Alternate course series at the approval of the academic advisory committee and/or program coordinator
- Population Health and Epidemiology
  - Course 1 – NURS 6313. Epidemiology, Health Promotion, and Research in Advanced Nursing Practice
  - Course 2 – Advanced course taken with approval of academic advisory committee and/or program coordinator
  - Additional option – a two course (6 credit) sequence at the approval of the academic advisory committee and/or program coordinator
- Global Citizenship (To Be Developed)

Credit hours for research tools do not count toward the total hours required for the degree. As a general guide, an effort should be made to complete the Graduate School Research Tool requirements early in the program of study.

***PLEASE NOTE: ANY COURSE WORK TAKEN TO SATISFY RESEARCH TOOL REQUIREMENTS IS NOT CREDITED TOWARD THE REQUIRED HOURS FOR THE DOCTORAL DEGREE.***

### **The Preliminary Examination**

The Preliminary Examination presents questions that integrate and synthesize knowledge gained from required preliminary doctoral course work, including the statistics research tool. The goals of this examination are to assess students' ability to:

- integrate and synthesize required preliminary doctoral course work,
- critically synthesize knowledge to articulate meaningful conclusions, and
- clearly and logically communicate in written text.

The examination will be given during the semester following NURS 6004. Students must pass the Preliminary Examination in order to progress in the program. The examination can be repeated one time only.

Students are eligible to take this examination if they have completed the statistics research tool and the following courses: NURS 6004: Theory and Foundations of Nursing Research, NURS 6023: Philosophy of Nursing Science, and NURS 6053: Exploring Scholarship.

At each testing, all students will be asked to respond to the same questions in a single testing period. Every attempt will be made to ensure that examinations will be graded anonymously. Students will receive written notification of the results of the examination within 30 working days of the exam. A 'pass' means that the student exhibits competence at, or above, the level necessary to continue doctoral level work; a 'fail' means that the student has a need to increase competence to the level required to do the independent scholarly work required at the doctoral level.

Students whose performance is judged to be inadequate will be given feedback about their performance by their Academic Advisory Committee. The student will collaborate with this committee in developing a plan to address the areas needing improvement. The committee may advise the student regarding review procedures or recommend an Individual Study, or other course work, to address problem areas. Students who are unsuccessful on the exam will be permitted to remain enrolled in their course work for the current semester. Students will only be allowed six (6) hours of course work approved by the advisory committee which is directly related to remediation until the exam is passed.

The examination will be offered once a semester at a regularly scheduled exam period. The student will notify the Doctoral Coordinator when ready to repeat the examination. The examination must be repeated and successfully passed before the student will be allowed to take further degree requirements.

### **Admission to Candidacy**

Admission to candidacy occurs following completion of all doctoral work, except dissertation, and recommendation of the Research Committee. Students who have an unconditional admission to the Graduate School, are in good academic standing, have successfully completed the qualifying exam and have completed all pre-dissertation course work, including electives and research tools, are eligible to be considered for candidacy.

Admission to candidacy is based on the student's demonstrated:

- Depth of knowledge within an identified area of research interest.
- Expertise of theoretical and methodological issues related to the area of research interest.
- Ability to successfully propose and potentially implement the dissertation process.

The initial step of formally applying for candidacy is the selection of a doctoral research committee. The student initiates this by contacting and obtaining the consent of potential committee members. Committees are composed of at least three members, two of whom must be College of Nursing faculty members. The third member and any additional members may be TWU faculty members from disciplines other than nursing or may be persons from outside the University who represent the student's research interests and meet the criteria for committee participation. Qualifications of members must be consistent with the student's area of research and special interest and also with the requirements for doctoral committee participation as stated in the Admission to Candidacy section in the TWU Graduate Catalog. The student will make a written recommendation for proposed committee

members, along with rationale for their selection, to the Dean of the College of Nursing (Appendix D). In approving appointments, the Dean will consider the student's recommendation, though changes may sometimes be necessary before forwarding the approved appointment to the Associate Vice-President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School. If necessary, changes in committee membership may also be made after the committee has been appointed. A request for a change may be initiated by the student, committee member, or Dean of the College of Nursing. Requests for change should be written and routed through the chair of the committee to the Dean of the College of Nursing to the Associate Vice-President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School.

Following research committee appointment, the student will:

1. Arrange a candidacy meeting with the Research Committee.
2. Prepare and submit a five page candidacy paper to the committee at least 10 days prior to the meeting. The candidacy paper will:
  - Describe the purpose of the proposed dissertation study.
  - Delineate the importance of the study.
  - Indicate a theoretical framework.
  - Outline an appropriate research methodology.
3. At the candidacy meeting, the student will critically discuss the need for, and conduct of, the proposed study.
4. The student's candidacy paper and oral presentation will be evaluated by the following criteria:
  - Relevance of research area and its significance for nursing.
  - Evidence of evaluation and synthesis of relevant literature.
  - Evidence that the methodological approach is feasible and conceptually sound.
  - Logical development of the research idea -- demonstrating intellectual creativity and the ability to conceptualize.
  - Evidence of scholarly writing.

If the Research Committee finds that the student meets these criteria, the student will be recommended for advancement to candidacy. The Research Committee sends this recommendation to the Doctoral Program Coordinator who forwards it to the Dean and the Graduate School. If the student does not meet the criteria, the committee will suggest remediation to address problem areas. When the student has completed remediation, the Research Committee will reconvene to consider the student's re-application for candidacy.

Students may, in the last semester of coursework and with the Doctoral Program's Coordinator's approval, select the Research Committee and apply for candidacy. Candidacy will not, however, be forwarded until both the final coursework has been successfully completed and candidacy has been recommended by the Research Committee. In the semester in which the student applies for candidacy, the student will enroll in a 1 hour Individual Study with the Research Committee chairperson for the purpose of preparing the candidacy proposal. As with the research tools, this 1 hour Individual Study does not "count" in the 60 hours toward the degree.

### **Completion of the Doctoral Degree**

Each candidate is required to conduct an independent research project (the dissertation) which exhibits evidence of scholarship and potential for adding to the body of nursing knowledge. The dissertation should be an original research study worthy of publication.

After the student has been admitted to candidacy, she/he may enroll in the first dissertation course (NURS 6983). After one semester of enrollment in this course the candidate receives 3 hours of credit. Subsequent enrollments are in the second dissertation course (NURS 6993) and a grade of progress (PR) is given in NURS 6993 until the semester in which the candidate graduates, at which time credit (CR) is assigned. Thus the candidate earns a total of 6 hours of credit for the dissertation.

The proposal and prospectus may be defended during enrollment in NURS 6983. If not defended during that semester, it may be defended in a subsequent enrollment in NURS 6993. However, the prospectus and the dissertation may not be defended in the same semester.

Graduate School policy requires that only an officially registered candidate may hold conferences with faculty concerning the preparation of a dissertation. This rule applies to both the candidate in actual residence and to the candidate not in residence who is receiving faculty assistance through conferences or correspondence. Therefore, candidates must be enrolled in NURS 6983 or NURS 6993 during semesters when they are working with their dissertation chair.

The choice of a dissertation chair is an important mutual decision between the candidate and faculty member. The candidate, the chair, and the committee should have a shared interest in the research topic and work together to develop the dissertation. The student may request a meeting of the committee to discuss the research project and receive guidance prior to the preparation of the proposal. Please consult the [Graduate Catalog](#) and the [Guide to the Preparation and Processing of Dissertations, Theses, and Professional Papers](#) for a comprehensive discussion of the Policies and Guidelines for Graduate Committees on Theses, Dissertations, and Professional Papers.

In some circumstances, doctoral students may wish to pursue research under the guidance of a professor in a different administrative unit (host department). This cooperation between the program unit (nursing) and the host department requires the approval of the administration of both. To initiate this cooperation, the doctoral student should confer with the Academic Advisory Committee or the Research Committee and the faculty in the other department. If all are in agreement, the student can proceed with formalizing this arrangement. The necessary form (Agreement on Cooperation in Graduate Research) can be found in Appendix E.

### **The Dissertation Proposal**

The candidate prepares a draft of the dissertation proposal for review by the dissertation chair and, following the chair's approval, submits it to the dissertation or research committee. The proposal represents the candidate's cumulative work on the research topic and consists of the 10 page prospectus and chapters 1, 2, and 3, the reference section, and relevant appendices. Even though committee members will read and comment upon these chapters, their approval does not mean that work on these chapters should not continue during the entire dissertation process.

The prospectus must be approved by the Dissertation Committee and the Dean of the College of Nursing. The prospectus typically includes an introduction, a statement of

purpose or problem statement, research questions or hypotheses, a selected review of the literature, and a description of the research methods and procedures. The prospectus should contain a maximum of 10 pages, including references, in addition to the title page (which is the Prospectus Approval Form - Appendix F) and the reference page. Although the instruments are included in the appendices for the proposal, they are not submitted with the prospectus. All proposals must be approved by the TWU Human Subjects Review Committee (HSRC) before the prospectus will be accepted by the Graduate School. The prospectus will, if approved by the committee and the Dean of the College of Nursing, be filed in the Graduate Office. A copy of the HSRC review form (Appendix G) and the prospectus should be placed in the student's file in the College of Nursing.

The content of the proposal will vary somewhat depending on whether the proposed study is quantitative or qualitative. The student should follow the instructions of the dissertation committee regarding the format of the proposal. APA format is to be used for all proposals. Candidates should follow the TWU Graduate School's Guide to the Preparation and Processing of Dissertations, Theses, and Professional Papers. This guide contains information which will assist the candidate to meet the requirements of the Graduate School in preparation of the prospectus and the dissertation. This guide specifies margin, type, appendices, and other requirements for the completed dissertation. Copies are available at the University Bookstore, for reference in the libraries, in the graduate office, and by accessing <http://www.twu.edu/o-grad/> (the Graduate School website). The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) is the reference manual to be used by all students in the College of Nursing for the dissertation prospectus and the dissertation.

After receiving approval from the dissertation chair to defend the proposal, the candidate arranges for a committee meeting time and reserves a meeting room with the Graduate Secretary in the College of Nursing. Candidates cannot defend their proposal during the first two weeks of a semester or the last two weeks of a semester (this includes final exam week). Committee members must receive a complete copy of the proposal a minimum of 10 working days before the defense date.

When the proposal is ready to be defended, the following steps are suggested:

1. The dissertation chair, the student, and the committee determine that the proposal is ready to be defended.
2. The student is responsible for:
  - Contacting all dissertation committee members to find a suitable time for defense.
  - Notifying the Graduate Secretary and reserving a room for the defense.
3. The proposal defense is convened by the dissertation chair when the committee members are present. The student will give a brief presentation of the proposed research and methodology; committee members will assess the prospectus and the candidate's ability to carry out the research. The committee will also specify whether the study will need to be submitted to the Human Subjects Review Committee for approval, if such approval has not already been sought.
4. After an appropriate period of discussion, the chair will ask the student (and any others attending the defense) to leave and the committee will discuss the student's proposal and arrive at one of the following conclusions:

- Unqualified approval: The committee recommends the candidate be approved for the degree by the Dean of the College and the Dean for Graduate Studies and Research.
- Qualified approval: Suggested changes are made under the direction of the chair without another meeting of the committee; the committee will then recommend that the Dean of the College of Nursing and the Associate Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School approve granting the degree.
- Qualified disapproval: The research needs to be repeated or modified, or the major study rewritten extensively and resubmitted for another meeting of the committee. If a second formal defense of the major study is scheduled, two such meetings may not be scheduled in the same semester. (Two consecutive summer terms are considered one semester.)
- Unqualified disapproval: The candidate is advised to withdraw from the program without completing the degree.

If the proposal receives unqualified approval, the committee members will sign the Prospectus Approval Form (Appendix F) at the meeting. If the proposal receives qualified approval, the committee members may wait to sign until the changes are made and circulated to all members, depending upon the nature of the specified changes. However, all committee members should receive a copy of the prospectus as approved by the Dean of the College of Nursing and the Associate Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School.

5. The candidate is called back into the room and informed of the decision. When the committee has granted unqualified approval to a prospectus, the student may proceed to the next step. If unqualified approval is not given, the candidate must work with the chair and the committee in making the needed changes or preparing a new proposal.
6. The candidate submits to the Dean of the College of Nursing an original and a copy of the approved prospectus and the signed Prospectus Approval Form (Appendix F). If approved, the Dean forwards the signed copy to the Graduate School to be filed and retains the second copy for the candidate's file. The application to the Human Subjects Review Committee (Appendix G) and the Agency Permission Form (Appendix H) should accompany the prospectus provided these documents have not already been submitted to the Human Subjects Review Committee.

Guidelines for the protection of human subjects are followed for each study (see Appendix G). Guidelines for preparation of the Application to the Human Subjects Review Committee are available through the Research and Grants Office on the Denton campus or from the College of Nursing at the Houston center. If needed, approval from any participating agency (Appendix H) where subjects are being sought must also be completed prior to initiation of data collection.

7. The candidate may begin collecting data after receiving notification from the Associate Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School that the prospectus has been approved.

## **The Dissertation Defense**

When the dissertation is ready to be defended, the committee meets. Candidates must be currently enrolled during the semester in which the dissertation is defended and the semester in which the candidate files the dissertation for graduation. The prospectus and the dissertation cannot be defended in the same semester. A typical expectation would be that the candidate would defend the prospectus during the first semester of candidacy, collect and analyze data during the second semester of candidacy, and write chapters four and five (as well as revise chapters one, two, and three) during the third semester. When the dissertation is ready to be defended, the following steps are suggested:

1. The dissertation chair and the candidate, in consultation with the committee, determine that the dissertation is ready to be defended.
2. The candidate is responsible for:
  - Contacting all dissertation committee members to find a suitable time for defense.
  - Notifying the Graduate Secretary and reserving a room for the defense.
3. The defense is convened by the dissertation chair when the committee members are present. The candidate will give a brief presentation of the research methodology and findings; committee members will then question the student regarding the study.
4. After an appropriate period of discussion, the chair will ask the candidate (and any others attending the defense) to leave and the committee will discuss the candidate's defense and arrive at one of the following conclusions:
  - Unqualified approval: The committee recommends the candidate be approved for the degree by the Dean of the College of Nursing and the Associate Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School.
  - Qualified approval: Suggested changes are made under the direction of the chair without another meeting of the committee; the committee will then recommend that the Dean of the College of Nursing and the Associate Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School approve granting the degree.
  - Qualified disapproval: The research needs to be repeated or modified, or the major study rewritten extensively and resubmitted for another meeting of the committee. If a second formal defense of the major study is scheduled, two such meetings may not be scheduled in the same semester. (Two consecutive summer terms are considered one semester.)
  - Unqualified disapproval: The candidate is advised to withdraw from the program without completing the degree.
5. The candidate is called back into the room and informed of the decision. If the decision is in the category of qualified or unqualified disapproval, the Doctoral Program Coordinator and Associate Dean of the campus or center are notified, as well as the Dean of the College of Nursing and the Associate Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School. The decision is also further reiterated to the student in writing.
6. The Certificate of Final Exam (Appendix I) and Dissertation Approval (or Signature Page) forms (Appendix J) are signed by the chair after all corrections are made. The Signature Page should meet the margins set forth by the Graduate School and should be in the same type face as the rest of the paper. The Signature Page also must be printed on bond paper, and the original and copies of the Dissertation

Approval (Signature Page) form accompany the copies of the completed and approved dissertation which are filed with the Graduate School (see #8 below). [The original signed copy of the Certificate of Final Exam must be filed with the Graduate School; a copy is retained for the student's file.]

7. After the corrections have been made and the forms are signed, the chair will make a copy of the forms for the candidate's file.
8. The candidate is then responsible for preparing 5 copies for the Graduate School (6 copies if the student wishes a bound copy for themselves). Students are responsible for taking these copies to the Graduate School.
9. Students should complete the final checklist (Appendix K) to insure that they have completed all the necessary forms and paperwork for graduation as well as the Sigma Theta Tau form (Appendix L) which is filed with the College of Nursing.

Students are responsible for knowing the most recent information regarding the filing dates, graduation application dates, and fees required for graduation. This information is available in the Graduate School office and on the Graduate School's website.

### **Tuition Reduction for Final Enrollment in Dissertation**

Doctoral students who are Texas residents (those paying in-state tuition) are eligible for a reduced tuition rate when enrolling in the final semester of the dissertation (NURS 6993). Students should complete the Code 3 form (Appendix M), have their major professor sign it and submit it to the Graduate Office. Code 3 can only be assigned for one semester or one summer session; any subsequent enrollment will be at the full tuition rate.

### **Financial Assistance**

#### **Traineeships**

Federally funded traineeships are sometimes available from the College of Nursing to full-time (9 credit hours per semester) students who are in good academic standing and hold unconditional admission status. Traineeships are awarded for the nine month academic year (Fall and Spring semesters). The purpose of the traineeship is to provide assistance to those students who choose to pursue full-time doctoral study.

Eligible trainees must be:

- unconditionally admitted to the College of Nursing's doctoral program,
- a United States citizen, non-citizen national, or foreign national who possesses a visa permitting permanent residence in the United States,
- currently licensed as a registered nurse in a state, and
- enrolled full-time in graduate courses.

Length of support is limited to a maximum period of 36 months. Traineeship support may not be transferred from the institution which provided the support. An eligible student who has had a traineeship at one institution might subsequently be appointed at another institution and receive traineeship support, but only if the cumulative total of traineeship support received by the student has not exceeded 36 months.

Each appointment or reappointment may not be for less than 9 months, except to assist a trainee completing the required program of study. However, no appointment may exceed 12 months. Appointed trainees are expected to: (1) provide the institution with the information required for completing a statement of appointment form, and (2) respond to

communications from the Division of Nursing in regard to professional activity following training.

Students who receive traineeships are obligated to keep the College of Nursing informed of their current name and address for a period of 3 years following graduation.

A traineeship appointment shall be terminated if a trainee is unable to carry out the study for which the traineeship was awarded or if the trainee withdraws from the institution prior to the scheduled termination date. Failure to meet the academic standards of the College of Nursing and the Graduate School is cause for withdrawal of traineeship support.

Applications for traineeships (Appendix N) may be obtained from the Doctoral Program Coordinator or the College of Nursing Graduate Secretary. Traineeships are usually awarded at the beginning of the Fall term. Eligible students need to complete the applications several months in advance.

### **Scholarships and Financial Aid**

Students desiring a university scholarship or financial aid should contact the University Financial Aid Office for information. Students should apply for scholarships or university financial aid and scholarships several months in advance of enrollment.

### **Teaching and/or Research Assistantships**

A limited number of nursing teaching and research assistantships, and nursing scholarships are available. Students desiring an assistantship should contact the Doctoral Program Coordinator on the Denton Campus or the Houston Center for information and applications (Appendix O). Graduate Assistant applications must be filed with the Associate Dean of the College of Nursing (on the campus for which the student is applying) for review and recommendation.

Students receiving full-time assistantships (20 hours per week) are eligible for in-state tuition and health insurance. In order to take advantage of the health insurance benefits, the student must: (1) work at least 20 hours per week, (2) have an appointment of 4 1/2 months or greater, and (3) enroll for the health insurance with the Human Resources Office within 31 days of their employment/eligibility data. Students interested in this benefit should contact the Human Resources Office for specific details.

If an assistantship is approved the student is required to complete certain forms in the Human Resources Office before the payroll deadline and before the Graduate Assistant can be paid. Graduate Assistants will need to present proof of citizenship and employment eligibility to the Office of Human Resources.

Graduate Assistants are paid monthly on the first working day of the month following the month worked. Before a paycheck can be received all of the necessary Human Resources Office forms must have been completed.

A doctoral student may hold an assistantship for not more than four years. A graduate student who pursues both the master's degree and the doctoral degree at TWU may hold an assistantship for no more than six years. Students holding assistantships are expected to be enrolled for a minimum of 9 credit hours; the maximum credit hours in which an assistant can be enrolled are 12. Under special circumstances, the Dean of the College of Nursing and the Associate Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School may grant special permission for an assistantship for a student enrolled for 6 hours.

Opportunities also exist for students to be research assistants for faculty who have received funding for their research projects. These research assistants will be selected by the funded faculty. Research assistants are generally funded at the same level as teaching assistants.

**Additional Information**

Each candidate for the doctoral degree in the College of Nursing is personally responsible for meeting the requirements and deadlines. If there are any questions concerning any of the requirements or deadlines, students should contact the chair of their Academic Advisory Committee.

Every student should keep the Graduate School and the College of Nursing informed of the student's current address and phone numbers.

Students should keep a personal copy of all forms and papers filed with the Graduate School, e.g. Doctoral Degree, Program, Prospectus Approval Form, etc.

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