

Donna M. and Robert J. Manning College of Nursing & Health Sciences



Graduate Nursing Program Student Handbook

2025-2026 Academic Year

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Section 1

Purpose of This Handbook

The Nursing Department Graduate Handbook at the University of Massachusetts Boston (UMB) is a comprehensive guide for nursing students across the Master's and Doctoral Programs. The handbook is a dynamic document subject to periodic updates and improvements. Students are notified of changes through official UMB communication channels, maintaining transparency and accountability. This handbook supplements the online University publications, which contain general information related to student rights, academic policies, registration, financial aid, campus facilities, and course descriptions.

About the College

The Dean of the College oversees the overall direction and operations of the College, including 4 departments: Exercise and Health Sciences, Gerontology, Nursing, and Urban Public Health. The Dean is supported by an Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, an Associate Dean of Research, and an Assistant Dean for Administration and Finance. The Nursing Department is one of four departments within the Donna M. and Robert J. Manning College of Nursing and Health Sciences.

The Department of Nursing Chairperson reports to the Dean. The Chairperson is supported by the Assistant Chair in Nursing, Program Directors and their Program Assistants. The Department of Nursing Chairperson facilitates implementation of curricula and policies developed by the faculty. Undergraduate Program Directors are responsible for implementing curricula and policies with support from the Department of Nursing faculty and Program Assistants. Undergraduate Nursing Program Directors oversee the programs professional staff working therein.

Nursing Department Philosophy

The philosophy of the Department of Nursing has been developed by the departmental faculty and is in accordance with the missions and visions of the University and the College. This philosophy contributes to the development of program goals and provides direction for students, faculty, and graduates. The faculty believes that the nursing meta-paradigm concepts include human beings, health, the environment, and nursing and that the nursing discipline can be studied within a systems framework.

Nursing is an art and science with a body of knowledge concerning human beings, their environments, and their levels of functioning in health and illness in interaction with multiple systems- family, health care, community, and society. Many patterns of knowing undergird nursing knowledge, including empirics, ethics, personal knowing, aesthetics, and sociopolitical knowing. Ethical knowing includes rights and justice, responsibility, integrity and ethical comportment, and caring as a moral imperative. As an essential human service, nursing responds to the needs of society by implementing culturally sensitive, evidence-based nursing practice. The accumulation of evidence is facilitated by the use of the nursing process and research guided by theory, augmented by knowledge from other disciplines such as the physical, biological, medical, social, and behavioral sciences. Current and historical contexts from political, social, legal, ethical, and economic perspectives are also considered in determining nursing practice.

Entry into the practice of professional nursing requires a baccalaureate degree with a major in nursing. Professional nurses use the nursing process to work with individuals, families, groups, and communities to achieve optimal levels of wellness. Professional nurses are accountable and

responsible for their nursing practice, applying leadership and management skills and collaborating with members of the health care team as they apply the nursing process. Advanced practice nurses, who hold earned master's or doctoral degrees in nursing, assume leadership roles in healthcare delivery systems through research, practice, teaching, and/or administration. The human being is an integral, whole, and open system with biological, psychological, social, developmental, spiritual, and cultural attributes. Humankind is the focus of nursing practice and is made up of diverse multicultural populations. The faculty believes that human beings possess the right and ability to function on their own behalf in health promotion and disease prevention, detection, and management.

Health is a dynamic process occurring on a wellness/illness continuum across the lifespan. Health care is approached through concepts such as patient-centered care, evidence-based practice, quality, safety, informatics, teamwork and collaboration to promote, maintain, and restore health. To achieve man optimal state of health, individuals, families, and communities respond with a variety of strategies that are influenced by multiple factors, such as culture, gender, genetic endowment, age, socioeconomics, and the environment. The environment includes all conditions, circumstances, and influences surrounding and affecting individuals, families and other groups, communities, and society. Health is affected by the environment; some aspects may be altered to promote wellness, whereas others are fixed and require accommodations.

Education is a process in which changes, and learning is facilitated through interactions with teachers, learners, and the environment. Learning includes acquiring and generating new knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, and exercising sound clinical judgment, critical thinking, and reflection on actions. Optimal learning occurs when both the teacher and learner are motivated, open, engaged, and actively participate in creative, innovative, and integrative processes. Learning is fostered by freedom of inquiry in an environment of acceptance, trust, responsibility, and commitment to social justice.

Mission, Vision and Values

The Graduate Programs adheres to the mission and values of UMB and the mission, vision and values <https://www.umb.edu/nursing-health-sciences/departments-centers/nursing/> within the nursing department in the Manning College of Nursing and Health Sciences

Accreditation

The MCNHS Baccalaureate, Master's, and Doctor of Nursing Practice degrees are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, 655 K Street, NW, Suite 750, Washington, DC 20001, 202-887-6791. The baccalaureate pre-licensure program is fully approved by the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing. The University of Massachusetts Boston is accredited by New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE)

Professional Nursing Standards

The department identifies the AACN Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education to guide the implementation of its curriculums. In our nurse practitioner program, we use the 2022 Standards for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs [National Task Force on Quality Nurse Practitioner Education (NTF), 2016].

Shared Governance

Faculty, students, and staff contribute to the evaluation and continuous improvement of the

Nursing department and its programs. Students and faculty provide input into program evaluation and improvement through service on program and departmental committees. The College maintains the right to amend published policies, procedures, and requirements at any time to achieve stated missions and objectives.

Student Involvement in the University

The Graduate Student Government is comprised of representatives from the graduate student body, acts as the voice of UMB students and is dedicated to enhancing the academic and professional development of graduate students. The GSA provides information about resources available to graduate students such as graduate traineeships, assistantships, funding sources, and student services. See information at Government - UMass Boston (umb.edu)

Program Communication Policies for Students and Faculty

All communications with the University must be conducted through student UMB emails, and this includes communication with the Graduate Programs. Students are expected to check their University e-mail on a frequent and consistent basis to ensure that they are staying current with all official communications generated by the graduate program but also by the Manning College of Nursing and Health Sciences and the University at large.

Students can find their email address by logging into WISER and selecting the link to their "Personal Portfolio" and then viewing "Email Addresses". All students receive a default email account. The link to access UMB email is found at <https://www.umb.edu/it/software-systems/email/>.

Section 2: Academic Policies, Procedures, and Requirements

Academic Policies, Procedures, and Requirements

All graduate nursing students should familiarize themselves with the University's Graduate Academic Policies available at <http://catalog.umb.edu/index.php>

Admission

Admission to graduate nursing programs is competitive and requires the submission of appropriate application and related documentation. Specific admissions criteria for each program are listed separately on the MCNHS website.

The MCNHS complies with the U Mass Boston policies on admission. UMass Boston prohibits discrimination and harassment based upon a legally defined protected class such as an individual's race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age, religion, sex, gender, religion, marital status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information, disability, and any other class of individuals protected from discrimination under applicable federal, state or local law, in employment, admission to and participation in academic programs, activities, and services, and the selection of vendors who provide services or products to the University.

Disability-Related Accommodations

Both the College and University adhere to the Americans with Disabilities Act as Amended

(ADAAA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

[The Ross Center for Disability Services](#) approves and coordinates academic accommodations, provides resources, and offers training in assistive technology. If you are a student at UMass Boston and have a disability, you may be eligible for accommodations through the Ross Center. For more information about the Ross Center, including eligibility information and a description of the process for applying for reasonable accommodation of a qualified disability, contact the Ross Center via their website (www.umb.edu/academics/vpass/disability), or email ross.center@umb.edu.

Pregnancy, childbirth, pregnancy loss, and early parenting accommodations are provided by the [Office of Civil Rights and Title IX](#). For more information about this process or to seek accommodation contact CRTIX via their website (https://www.umb.edu/titleix/pregnant_and_parenting_rights) or email CivilRights.TitleIX@umb.edu.

Attendance

MCNHS follows the university policy for [attendance](#).

In addition, MCNHS requests that students who anticipate excused absences for religious observances, university sanctioned activities, or governmental obligations notify course faculty within the first week of classes so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Attendance in class, clinical, and labs is expected of all students. Students are responsible for meeting all course requirements and learning objectives. Should a situation arise that prevents a student from attending class, clinical or labs, the student is expected to notify the faculty member as soon as possible. The faculty member is not obligated to provide make-up work for absences, and students with excessive absences may be advised to withdraw from the course.

Grading Policy

Letter grades are given in accordance with the grading criteria indicated in the UMB Graduate Student Handbook. Students must earn a B minimum of (83 total points) to pass a graduate level course.

For graduate students, the University uses a system of letter grades that are equivalent to numerical quality points according to the following table:

Letter Grade	Percentage	Quality Points
A	93-100%	4.00
A-	90-92%	3.75
B+	87-89%	3.25
B	83-86%	3.00
B-	80-82%	2.75
C+	77-79%	2.25
C	73-76%	2.00
F	0-72%	0.0
W	Received if withdrawal occurs before the withdrawal deadline.	N/A
AU	Audit (only permitted on space-available	N/A

	basis)	
NA	Not Attending (student appeared on roster but never attended class. Student is still responsible for tuition and fee charges unless withdrawal form is submitted before deadline. NA has no effect on cumulative GPA.)	N/A

Graduate students may also be given grades of: NA (Not Attending), Inc (Incomplete), Y (In Progress), SAT (Satisfactory), and/or AUD (Audit).

Incomplete

See policy on incomplete grade at the following link

<https://www.umb.edu/registrar/policies/incomplete>

Transfer Credit Policy

Applicants who have completed graduate course work at other accredited institutions may transfer coursework toward the completion of a UMass Boston graduate degree. Transfer credits are restricted to up to 6 credits from such courses in which the applicant received a grade of B or higher. These courses may be accepted for transfer if they have not been used to fulfill requirements for another degree and were earned no more than seven years before matriculation in the program. There is a 24-credit residency requirement for the DNP program. See graduate catalog for transfer of credit policy <https://catalog.umb.edu/index.php>

The Graduate Program Director determines what credits are eligible for transfer based on a review of the official transcript at the time of admission to the program and a review of the course description or syllabus if requested. Once enrolled in the Graduate Program, students also can request transfer credit. Requests should be made to the Program Director and include a copy of the student's transcript and a copy of the course syllabus. Transfer credit decisions for either core or elective courses are made on a course-by-course basis. Courses accepted for transfer will show in student Wiser accounts but will not be included in the student's grade point average.

Requests to Take Non-UMB Courses during Program

Students who wish to take a class off-campus need to contact their Graduate Program Director to ensure the class is acceptable for transfer. The Transfer Credit Approval form is sent to external.credit@umb.edu to record the approval of the students. The Registrar's Office will confirm receipt and provide information for submitting an official transcript once the class is done.

Course Waiver Policy/Advanced Standing

A student may seek a waiver/Advanced standing from a prescribed course in the Program if they have completed a course with substantially equivalent content at another institution or in another college of UMass Boston. Courses are waived for course-by-course based upon equivalency and relevance. Courses must have been taken at an accredited institution, no more than seven (7) years prior to matriculation at UMB and received a grade of B or better. If a course waiver is granted, the student will receive 0 credits towards degree requirements and must take additional courses to complete the required credits for the degree.

Course waivers will be decided on a case-by-case basis, through negotiation between the student

seeking the waiver and the Graduate Program Director. All waived courses require a written request submitted to the Program Director. Approved waivers are documented as W on the plan of study.

Advance Standing applies to students in the PhD and DNP program and the course waiver policy above applies along with the Advanced Standing cannot reduce the number of credits below 24 credits as part of the doctoral residency requirement including research hours and dissertation credits. Students who fail to complete their doctoral program cannot apply for their Advanced Standing master's courses for an additional master's degree from UMass Boston

Independent Study NU 796

Students may complete an independent study to fulfill required or elective credits. Independent study credits vary from one to three depending on the scope of the project. The independent study should consist of study and work at the graduate level with a specified written product. The faculty member who agrees to work with the student in independent study must be a recognized expert in the content area. The student and faculty member must agree to the UMass Boston number of credits, scope of the work and the amount of supervision required (for example, weekly or biweekly meetings). A written agreement, signed by the student and the faculty member, must be approved by the Graduate program director in all cases of independent studies.

Academic Progress

The office of Graduate Studies specifies that a student must make satisfactory academic progress (SAP) toward completion of a degree within the Statute of Limitations for the graduate degree. The determination of SAP is based on the student's GPA and credits completed vs. attempted. Failure to meet SAP requirements may result in the loss of eligibility for financial assistance. Please note that the determination of SAP is not a substitute for determining student academic standing.

Statute of Limitations

Each graduate matriculated student in the PhD and DNP must complete all degree requirements within eight (8) calendar years of entering the program. Students in the master's program must complete all degree requirements within 5 calendar years of entering the program. Any semester where a student is not enrolled in coursework requires payment of a continuation fee or the student will be removed from the program. A student may request an extension in extenuating circumstances. To apply for an extension, students should submit a statute of limitations extension form to their graduate program director with a letter of explanation accompanied by a detailed schedule for completion. If supported, the form is then reviewed by the Office of Graduate Studies and Admissions and submitted to the Registrar's Office for processing if approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

All degree-seeking graduate students must maintain continuous registration. Students can register for a program fee (CAS 600) on the WISER online registration system. Continuous registration must also be maintained even when a student is on a leave of absence from the program. Continuous registration requires a fee to be paid to maintain matriculation. Failure to register prior to the registration deadline for the semester in which the student is registering may result in late fees and classification as an inactive student.

<https://www.umb.edu/registrar/policies/graduate-student-statute-limitations/>

Full and Part-time Status

Students will meet with the program director prior to beginning the program to determine their academic plan. Students qualifying for federal financial aid must carry at least six credits per semester in the fall and spring.

Leave of Absence

The Office of Graduate Studies requires that a student seeking a leave of absence (LOA) must petition the Program Director who provides justification for the request to the Dean of Graduate Studies. An approved LOA extends the statute of limitations for degree completion by the length of the leave. [Graduate - University of Massachusetts Boston \(umb.edu\)](http://graduate.universityofmassachusettsboston.edu)

For the PhD program, students will only be granted a 6-month SOL extension with the program director and the Dean of Graduate Studies approval. The request must be put in writing with a rationale. PhD students can take up to 9 months to complete their dissertation defense if supported by their chairs and the director (i.e., this time frame will realistically allow for completion).

Academic Standing

Academic standing is the basis for decisions regarding student progression, probation, graduation, and dismissal in the Graduate Nursing Programs. Academic standing is determined by the student's cumulative quality point average, a measure of all the grades the student has earned at the University which are applied to the course requirements of the Graduate Program.

At Risk of Course Failure Policy and Procedures

At any time during the academic program that the student is determined to be at risk of failing, the student will be advised by the faculty course member. The student will be asked to meet with the course faculty to discuss his/her deficiencies and develop a plan for meeting the course objectives. An email will be sent to the student outlining a plan for the remainder of the semester. It is recommended that the student and faculty member set up a schedule to meet and discuss the student's progress in meeting the course objectives. If a student does not make sufficient progress in meeting course objectives, the student will receive a non-passing grade.

Progression Policies

All full and part time students must maintain a cumulative average of 3.0 to graduate. Students must earn a grade of B (3.00) in all required courses listed on the student's program of study. Any grade below a B (3.00) is considered a failure in a required course. All full and part-time students who fail to maintain a 3.0 GPA may be subject to academic dismissal. If a satisfactory grade (B) is not achieved when the student repeats the previously failed course, the student will be recommended by the Program Director to the Dean of Graduate Studies for dismissal.

Academic Probation, Dismissal & Appeal

Refer to [the Graduate Handbook](#) for policy on academic probation, dismissal and appeal.

Graduate Probation and dismissal decisions are based on the criteria stated below.

1. Graduate students whose cumulative grade point average falls below 3.0 will automatically be placed on academic probation and are not considered to be in good standing academically. Both the student and their graduate program director will be notified of this probationary status.
2. A student who in any two semesters, consecutive or otherwise, has semester grade point averages of below 2.8 is subject to academic dismissal for failure to make satisfactory progress, upon recommendation by the program director to the Associate Vice Provost for Graduate Education.
3. Any graduate student who has accumulated four (4) or more INC or IF grades will be considered not to be making satisfactory progress toward the degree, will be placed on probation, and will normally be barred from registering for additional classes until the INC/IF grades are cleared.
4. Students may also be placed on probation for failure to meet program requirements upon the request of the graduate program director.

A student who has been placed on academic probation in any two semesters, consecutive or otherwise, will automatically be dismissed from the program and the University. The dismissal decisions will be initiated by the Office of Graduate Studies, in collaboration with the Registrar's Office, after reviewing transcripts of graduate students who, based on approved program criteria, are subject to dismissal. The Office of Graduate Studies will then refer cases for dismissal to the appropriate Graduate Program Director for review and recommendations. A recommendation for dismissal can be waived by the Graduate Program Director upon request to the Associate Vice Provost for Graduate Education. A request for a waiver should include the basis for the recommendation and the terms for successful continuation in the program. Final dismissal decisions will be made by and communicated to the affected graduate student, the Graduate Program Director, and the Office of the Registrar by the Associate Vice Provost for Graduate Education. Dismissal Policies.

Additionally, a student may petition to repeat up to two failed courses a total of one time for each course during their entire program of study. If a satisfactory grade (B) is not achieved when the student repeats the previously failed course, the student will be recommended by the Program Director to the Associate Vice Provost for Graduate Education for dismissal.

Graduate students may appeal dismissal decisions to the MCNHS Standards & Credit Committee. Instructions will be sent to the student on how to submit their appeal to the Standards and Credits Committee. Based upon review of the student's record and letter of appeal, the MCNHS Standard & Credits Committee will recommend conditions of Probation, or Dismissal and forward these to the Department Chair and Program Director. The Associate Vice Provost for Graduate Education makes a final determination as to whether to rescind the dismissal. In addition, the Associate Vice Provost for Graduate Education may add further stipulations to the reinstatement. All students for whom the dismissal is rescinded automatically remain on academic probation. Failure to meet any terms identified within the probationary letter will result in automatic dismissal without recourse to appeal.

Readmission of Students Who Voluntarily Withdraw

In general, graduate students who withdraw from the program of study in good standing may resume their studies by completing a readmission form obtained from the Registrar's Office.

Applicants will be notified in writing of their request for readmission status. Graduate students are referred to the Office of the Registrar website [graduate re-enrollment](#).

Readmission of Students Who are Dismissed

All requests for readmission by dismissed students must be submitted to the Standard & Credits Committee. The letter requesting readmission should contain: new and pertinent information not previously presented to the Standard & Credits Committee that will assist the Committee in re-evaluating the dismissal. Students should make an appointment with the Program Director to discuss the appeal.

Code of Student Conduct

All students are encouraged to review the Code of Student Conduct located at the following link: https://www.umb.edu/life_on_campus/dean_of_students/student_conduct

Ethical Conduct

Our graduate faculty are dedicated to sustaining an environment of respect and inclusivity. The graduate faculty strives to achieve the highest level of professional comportment and expects all students to do the same. We aim to prepare you to be a respected, independent licensed provider with professional behaviors that match your new role as collaborators and providers in the health care of persons, families, and societies. Therefore, we demand a high level of professional comportment consistent with graduate-prepared nurses. Unprofessional behaviors that may result in an academic warning include:

- Uncivil language with faculty or peers or in discussion postings
- Non-responsiveness to emails from faculty/staff (i.e., staff have sent 3-4 emails with no response)
- Unprofessional language with preceptors or staff
- Failure to notify a clinical site of illness
- Failure to adhere to policies at a clinical site
- Tardiness at clinical practice

Human Subjects

Any study that involves human subjects must comply with relevant University and Federal requirements. The campus Institutional Review Board (IRB) must approve all research involving human subjects. Only after the dissertation proposal has been accepted by the committee may the student submit the required documents to the IRB. Data collection, subject recruitment, or consenting of potential subjects cannot start until IRB approval has been obtained. Forms and information about Human Subjects review can be obtained from the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) [website](#), along with forms and timelines.

All research and research-related activity proposed by any member of the UMass Boston community that involves human subjects in any way must be reviewed by the university's IRB. This requirement is based upon the university's assurance given to the Federal Department of Health and Human Services that UMass Boston researchers—faculty, students, administrators, staff—are aware of and follow all federal rules and regulations concerning the protection of human subjects in research as contained in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45, Part 46 (45 CFR 46).

Umass Boston has contracted with the University of Miami to provide free online training through the

Collaborative IRB Training Initiative (CITI) for members of the Umass Boston community on issues related to the protection of human subjects in research. The CITI modules span a variety of areas including the assessment of risk, informed consent, and research involving special populations such as children or prisoners. The required modules can be completed in more than one sitting at the researcher's convenience. At the completion of the training, CITI notifies Umass Boston that the training has been completed, and the researcher's name is added to a dynamic database monitored by the university's IRB administrator, Sharon Wang. See website for contact information <https://www.umb.edu/research/orsp/> or [Required Training – Umass Boston](#).

To register for the CITI training, log on to <http://www.citiprogram.org> and click on the link "Register." Enter organization full name "University of Massachusetts Boston" from the "Select Your Organization Affiliation" section. Continue to Step 2. Students will then be asked to select a username and password. Follow the registration prompts until the main menu is reached, reach the main menu and select one of 2 basic courses on protection of human subjects, the Biomedical track or the Social Behavioral track to begin the training. The selection of the focus should reflect the primary research activities of the student. Of note, if the student is conducting research at other institutions as part of their academic program or training, they should determine the training requirements of these respective institutions in deciding which course to take. For example, students working on research projects in the academic medical centers will likely be required to take the Biomedical human subjects training.

Questions concerning Umass Boston policy and procedures relating to research with human subjects, or questions concerning the CITI training and how to register for the training should be directed to Sharon Wang, IRB Administrator at (617) 287- 5374 or sharon.wang@umb.edu.

Student Rights and Grievances

All concerns will be handled in accordance with written policies of the University of Massachusetts Boston and MCNHS. The college encourages direct communication for resolution of the concern. Concerns may relate to, but are not limited to, the course expectations, the overall program of study, faculty, classmates, college staff, or other college activities.

For Course-related concerns or complaints, the course faculty member will serve as the student's first resource and primary contact for communication.

For Program-related concerns or complaints, the Graduate Program Director will serve as the student's first resource and primary contact for communication.

For College-related concerns or complaints, the Senior Director of Student Support, Success, and Engagement (OSSE) will serve as the student's first resource and primary contact for communication.

Should grievances or concerns arise as part of the educational experience, students have the right to due process by following the steps outlined below. The following Grievance Procedure applies to all undergraduate and graduate degree programs.

1. Directly address the concern with the faculty member or staff member concerned.

2. If no resolution, let the faculty or staff member know your concern is unresolved and contact the graduate program director.
3. If no resolution, let the Program Director know your concern is unresolved and contact the Senior Director or the Office of Student Success, Support and Engagement (OSSE)
4. If no resolution, let the Senior Director or the Office of Student Success, Support and Engagement know your concern is unresolved and contact the Nursing Department Chairperson. *For grade appeals, the nursing department chairperson's decision is final.
5. If no resolution, let the Nursing Department Chairperson know your concern is unresolved and contact the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs
6. If no resolution, let the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs know your concern is unresolved and contact the Dean.

Appeals of Grades

Students who dispute a grade received for a paper, examination, or course must first meet with the involved faculty within two weeks of receiving the grade. Discussion should focus on understanding the evidence for the grade. If a mutually accepted understanding is not reached, either party may ask to meet with the Program Director. The Program Director will make an effort to help parties involved to reach a mutually accepted understanding. If a satisfactory resolution is still not reached, students may appeal to the Nursing Department Chairperson, whose decision will be final.

University Policy on Non-Discrimination and Harassment Policy

The University of Massachusetts complies with applicable state and federal laws on non-discrimination, harassment, and retaliation including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, and the Massachusetts anti-discrimination law. This policy states the University's commitment to assure compliance. Access the full [policy](#) here. The Administrative Standards for the Non-Discrimination and Harassment Policy can be found here. [Office for Civil Right and Title IX](#) handles concerns related to discrimination or harassment, including sexual harassment.

Rights as a Student and FERPA Guidelines

The following link brings you to important information for graduate students at UMass Boston. It covers the required Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA):

<https://www.umb.edu/registrar/policies/ferpa/>

Filing for Graduation

All graduate students are eligible to apply for graduation during their final semester of degree work. Applying for graduation assumes that the student will have completed all of the university and degree requirements as outlined by the student's major program by the end of the term selected. For further information, go to <https://www.umb.edu/registrar/graduation/applying>

All students are charged a commencement fee regardless of whether they will participate in the commencement ceremony. The MCNHS recognizes students as eligible for graduation in December and June.

University Support for Specific Concerns

[Ombuds Services](#) is a confidential resource for any member of the UMass Boston community experiencing a university-related problem, conflict, or concern. The Ombuds can help you think

through complex issues, understand your options, and consider next steps. Where appropriate, the Ombuds can provide practical assistance toward a resolution.

Section 3: MCNHS Student Advising & Services

MCNHS Office of Student Success & Engagement (OSSE)

The mission of the Office of Student Success and Engagement (OSSE) is to strengthen the educational experience of UMass Boston's diverse student population through comprehensive resources and support. Please visit the [OSSE web site](#) for further information.

Academic Advising and Registration

The Program Director or track coordinator (for the Master's Program) serves as an academic advisor to all students. An academic plan of study for the entire program is developed and filed with the Program office. Students are expected to follow this plan of study and if changes are needed, then the student should meet with the program director to revise their academic plan. Students should access their [WISER](#) account to register for classes.

Information on dates related to drop, add, withdrawal, UMB holidays/breaks can be found posted online. Refer to the University [Academic Calendar](#).

Clinical & Internship Placement Office (CIPO)

The (CIPO) is led by a Coordinator and supported by Clinical Placement Specialists. The CIPO oversees relationships with clinical agencies as well as the clinical clearance and placement of students within their clinical agency sites for clinical courses, preceptorships, and internships. To maintain partner compliance per our affiliation agreements, the CIPO staff regularly communicates with various outside constituents, such as healthcare partners and their legal counsel, the Office of General Counsel, the Board of Health, the Center for Disease Control, the Massachusetts Centralized Clinical Placement System, and others

MCNHS Grants and Scholarships

There are a wide variety of nursing scholarships for graduate nursing students. Several hospitals and hospital systems support nursing student education through a variety of scholarships. https://www.umb.edu/academics/MCNHS/nursing/scholarships_and_aid

Requirements for Writing Papers & Writing House Office (WHO)

The MCNHS has uniformly adopted the American Psychology Association (APA) style for all academic/student papers. All students should obtain the most current copy of the Publication Manual for use throughout the program.

Writing House (WHO) is CNHS's dedicated academic writing support center, serving all CNHS students, in any class, from the first year through graduate level. Students and faculty have access to writing, learning, and teaching resources on the Writing House Online Blackboard site.

Schedule a live tutoring session (on-campus or online) or request asynchronous written feedback on your paper via WHO's scheduling system: <https://umb.mywconline.net/>

For more information, please email WritingHouse.CNHS@umb.edu, or call (617) 287-7372. Please also visit their web page for further information <https://www.umb.edu/nursing-health-sciences/student-success-engagement/who/>

Section 4: University Services

Financial Aid

UMB graduate students may apply for assistantships, grants, loans, and federal work-study jobs. Please see our web site for the most up to date information, including how to apply: <https://www.umb.edu/financial-aid/graduate-student-financial-aid/>

Funding Opportunities

There are a wide variety of scholarships, grants, and funding opportunities available to our Doctoral students. These opportunities include:

1. Eligibility for university research and teaching assistantships that may include tuition remission and health insurance benefits
2. Scholarships funded by the federal government
3. Loans
4. Professional traineeship grants
5. Competitive scholarships
6. Grant funding from Sigma Theta Tau, the International, the Honor Society of Nursing*
7. Other professional societies and clinical agencies

*Department of Nursing Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International is called Theta Alpha Chapter. Leadership, Scholarship, and Dissertation funding awards are available annually and are bestowed in the Spring at the annual induction event.

Graduate Assistantships

The University offers a limited number of graduate assistantships in teaching or research to qualified students. Applicants for admission to the graduate programs and currently enrolled students should consider applying. Graduate Assistantships are in the form of research and teaching assistantships (RA/TA). The assignments may require a commitment of 9.00 (0.50 FTE) to 18 (1.0 FTE) hours per week, depending on the percentage of assistantship held, for the entire semester. A student may not hold more than the equivalent of one full-time graduate assistantship appointment at any time. These graduate assistantships require weekly service in the areas of teaching, research, or administrative support. In return, the University pays a stipend and provides a tuition waiver and a waiver of a certain percentage of the fees. Students are also eligible for a contribution towards the cost of university- provided student health insurance (SHI), and dental (HMO) and vision care (HMO) as provided in the current collective bargaining agreement. Students may obtain more information about assistantships by contacting the Graduate Program Director. General information about assistantships is also available from the Office of Graduate Studies.

Graduate Assistantships Definition, Eligibility & Time Commitment

1. Teaching Assistant (TA) - A graduate student employed on a salaried basis who is primarily assigned to instructional support activities such as the following: Coordinate, lead or assist in the instructional process in preparation and direct interaction with students in lab, discussion, quiz, examination, or problem sessions. Provide tutoring and student

consultation periods. Grade homework, papers, reports, and other work assigned to the enrolled students of a course. Grade and proctor course examinations. Prepare experiments and set up/dismantle laboratory materials and equipment for lab sessions. Additional related duties as assigned.

2. Teaching Fellow (TF) - A graduate student employed on a salaried basis who is instructor of record for a lecture or independent lab section of a course and has independent responsibility for its teaching and grading
3. Research Assistant (RA) - A graduate student who is employed on a salaried basis to perform work primarily related to academic research or other similar work including, but not limited to, the gathering and analysis of data, conducting bibliographical searches, the development of theoretical analysis and models, the production or publication of scholarly journal and research reports, which are for the benefit of the University, its faculty, centers, institutes, or an academic staff supervisor, or a granting agency, and is secondarily for the graduate student employee's own research. Graduate students may be employed to perform research work not directly related to their own research.
4. Administrative Assistant (AA) - A graduate student who is employed on a salaried basis to perform work of an administrative or technical nature which is not otherwise described in Sections 1.03 (a) and (b) above.

Assistantship Eligibility: 1) matriculated in graduate program, 2) good academic standing (GPA $\geq$ 3.0), and 3) international students hold an F-1 Visa

FTEs for Assistantships	Number of Hours
1 FTE	18 hours
.75 FTE	13.5 hours
.50 FTE	9 hours

IT Service Desk

The IT Service Desk offers a variety of services including technical support for Blackboard, Canvas, WISER, and Email. Discounts on hardware and software is available through the IT department. Information on support is located on this link <https://www.umb.edu/it>

Library

The library [web site](#) for details on interlibrary loans, access to databases, e books and e resources. [Single Sign-On \(SSO\)](#) to access library services provides access to all library services. [UMBrella](#) provides an easy-to-use, one-stop search and discovery tool for books, e-books, videos, articles, digital media, and helps the student manage his/her research. Students sign in using their UMass Boston ID and password.

[Zotero](#) and [Mendeley](#) are citation tools and free to all UMass Boston students, faculty, staff and alumni. They are web-based citation management tools that facilitate collecting and organizing references and formatting research papers. The library provides [online documentation](#) to help identify the features between Zotero and Mendeley.

Graduate Writing Center

The purpose of the [Graduate Writing Center](#) is to offer various services tailored to meet the needs of graduate writers. Our individual writing consultations provide writers with the

opportunity to work with a trained writing consultant on any writing at any stage of the writing process.

WISER

[WISER](#) is the student information system used by UMass Boston students to manage registration, grades and student records. Directions and videos are available from the [WISER help page](#).

University Health Services

University Health Services (UHS) provides medical and mental health services. Click on this link to learn more: <https://www.umb.edu/healthservices>

- Medical Support | Call 617.287.5660
- Counseling Support | Call 617.287.5690

Section 5: Overview of the Master's in Nursing: Family Nurse Practitioner, Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner Programs & Post Masters Certificate for Family Nurse Practitioner

The Master of Science (MS) Adult/Gerontological Primary Care or Family Nurse Practitioner Primary Care curricula have been designed to accommodate part-time study. A total of 48 credits are required for AGNP and FNP programs. The MS FNP and AGNP program of study is located here: <https://www.umb.edu/academics/program-finder/nursing-ms/>

The PMC Program is designed for RNs who have an MS degree in nursing (MSN) from an accredited institution to acquire the knowledge and clinical experience that will prepare them to be certified as a Family Primary Care Nurse Practitioner through the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) or the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) Certification Program.

Graduate Nursing Program Director
Elizabeth Russet, DNP, FNP-BC, PMHNP-BC
Elizabeth.Russet@umb.edu

Family Nurse Practitioner Track Coordinator
Elizabeth Russet, DNP, FNP-BC, PMHNP-BC
Elizabeth.Russet@umb.edu

Adult/Gerontology Nurse Practitioner Track Coordinator
Jessica.Bardina@umb.edu

Graduate Clinical Placement Specialist
Eva Benoit-Allien, M.Ed.
Eva.benoitallien@umb.edu

Graduate Clinical Support Faculty

Carolyn O'Brien, PhD, AGNP-BC
Carolyn.obrien@umb.edu

*For questions about the Master's Program email postmasternp@umb.edu
This is your **first point of contact** and will help guide you and answer questions.

As an accredited program of the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), the UMB Master's Program aligns with the American Association of College of Nursing (AACN) 2021 -[The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education](#). The scope of knowledge addressed in the core and specialty courses in the Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner (AGNP) and Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) programs reflect the Domains, Competencies and Sub-Competencies included therein.

MS Program Outcomes

1. Demonstrate competence in advanced nursing practice and the management of health and illness for individuals, families, and aggregate populations using critical thinking and evidence-based clinical decision making
2. Apply theories and research-based evidence from nursing and other disciplines to advance clinical decision making as the foundation for the highest level of advanced practice
3. Promote and deliver person-centered care that is holistic, just, respectful and facilitates positive healthcare outcomes for all
4. Collaborate across healthcare settings and in the community to assess population needs, for the improvement of equitable population health outcomes.
5. Enhance nursing scholarship by researching healthcare issues, evaluating relevant literature, and integrating findings into practice to deliver optimal care across diverse populations.
6. Apply quality improvement principles to support a culture of safety for patients, providers and the workplace.
7. Plan comprehensive, continuous care through interdisciplinary collaboration across health care settings with an emphasis on diverse and urban populations.
8. Optimize system effectiveness by engaging in care coordination and technologies to deliver safe, high-quality equitable nursing care in accordance with professional and regulatory standards.
9. Demonstrate a professional identity of accountability, advocacy and ethical decision making that is collaborative and is reflective of nursing's values and characteristics.
10. Engage in self-reflection to promote professional growth, self-care, well-being, and resilience, while supporting the development of nursing expertise and the cultivation of leadership skills.

Clinical Practicum Purpose, Hours, and At-Risk of Failure Policies

The clinical practicum provides graduate students with the opportunity to integrate theory and research with practice. A specific number of clinical practice hours is required for each clinical course and is necessary prerequisites for students to register for the specialty certification exams upon graduation from the program of study. Preceptors and agencies have a contractual agreement with UMass Boston to precept students for a predetermined number of clinical hours for a determined time. Students are expected to comply with the times and days that have been arranged with their clinical preceptors. Deviations from prearranged contractual hours are permitted only by agreement with the agency and preceptor and must be in writing. Students may arrange actual clinical days with the preceptor, but arranging an earlier start or a later finish always requires the permission of the course faculty.

The graduate clinical nursing courses have two components, theory and practicum, and both components must be successfully completed in order to pass the course. The clinical practicum of the course is pass/fail. At the mid-term of the semester (week 6-7) students in clinical courses must demonstrate that they are meeting course objectives as demonstrated by a satisfactory mid-term clinical evaluation and a sufficient number of clinical logs (approximately one-half of the expected number of logs for the semester) in order for faculty to assess their performance. Students with insufficient numbers of clinical hours logged will receive an academic warning. Students must contact the course faculty within 48 hours of receiving an academic warning to develop a plan for meeting the course objectives.

If a student fails the clinical practicum portion of the course, then the student will receive an F for the entire course. A grade of F for the clinical portion of the course is determined by the preceptor and is communicated to the faculty through the Clinical Evaluation Tool. The preceptor and faculty of the course may request that additional hours beyond the minimum required for the course be completed to achieve “competent” in all areas of the tool. If at any time during the clinical practice experience a preceptor, course faculty member or other licensed agency personnel determines that a graduate student's performance is below the minimum standards consistent with safe clinical nursing practice or whose professional comportment is deemed below what is expected of a licensed registered nurse, the graduate student will not be permitted to continue their clinical practicum. The student will be referred to the Track Coordinator and course faculty to be notified of the specifics of the alleged unsafe practice and/or professional comportment and of sanctions to be imposed.

Students who are dismissed from clinical placements will work with faculty to determine a plan for remediation. Students who are dismissed from clinical placements will not return to the site nor have any other contact with the site. If a problem or misunderstanding ever arises at a clinical site, the student shall inform the faculty immediately.

Any student who is currently on medical leave (FMLA or MLOA) and is unable to work in their personal clinical/work-related role due to a serious health condition, and planning to participate in a clinical experience, must notify the proper clinical faculty and track coordinator at UMass Boston. The instructor of the clinical course is responsible for supervising all student's clinical hours and needs to be notified of any potential impairment that impacts the student. Your clinical faculty and/or track coordinator reserves the right to determine the extent that a student may participate in clinical if the student is incapacitated and undergoing treatment.

Setting up The Clinical Practicum

The Master of Science program at UMB requires students to complete a total of 600 hours for graduation. All clinical practica are subject to the approval of the Clinical Faculty or Track Coordinator. Preceptors may be NPs, CNMs, CNSs, PAs, MDs, or DOs. **UMBs programs are all in primary care; therefore, clinical practica are highly encouraged to be done in the primary care or outpatient settings. Inpatient settings will not be accepted.**

Students must submit documentation prior to beginning every clinical rotation. It is the student's responsibility to make sure that completed clinical clearance materials are submitted correctly, completely, and on time. If the documentation is not submitted in a timely manner, the student will be prevented from entering clinical and may be required to drop the course. Additional requirements beyond those of UMass Boston may be required by the agency. Students are

expected to comply with these requests, or else the clinical site will be forfeited by the student, and a new one must be found.

Steps for Securing Clinical Placements

- Students should secure clinical sites **in collaboration with track coordinators/clinical support faculty and the MCNHS** Clinical Internship and Placement Office (CIPO) in primary care as close to home as far ahead as possible, preferably 2 to 3 semesters ahead of time.
- Once a site has agreed to precept a student, the student collects necessary information from that site and enters it into InPlace.
- An immediate determination is made by the CIPO staff in collaboration with clinical support faculty, as to whether the site is acceptable.
- After the student has entered their placement site information into the InPlace, the CIPO office will immediately check to see whether a working agreement exists for the site. If not, CIPO sends a working agreement to the site.
- For Massachusetts students, working agreements exist for all large hospital systems. The CIPO staff enters the student's information into the Centralized Clinical Placement (CCP) system which is a consortium of clinical agencies and colleges in those states who agree to match students with their preceptors, thus avoiding students contacting the sites directly. This does not guarantee a placement, so students should continue to identify and submit to other sites.
- Students are advised by the CIPO office to avoid direct contact with potential preceptors at the following CCP organization. This list is subject to change:
 - Massachusetts General Hospital
 - Atrius Healthcare System
 - Dana-Farber Cancer Institute
 - Boston Children's Hospital
 - Tufts Medical Center
 - Cambridge Health Alliance
- No students can begin clinical until they receive clinical clearance which occurs when they are copied on an email that goes to their clinical preceptor stating that the student is ready to begin. Once you receive a copy of the email to your preceptor, you may start clinical.
- Students who begin clinical placements prior to being cleared will receive an academic warning. However, students may meet informally with the preceptor at the site to discuss the clinical expectations of the practicum.
- All clinical practicum hours should be completed *during the semester* in which students are taking the clinical courses (NU 640, NU 670, NU 672, NU 682). Students who wish to start 1 week early may do so with the consent of the Track Coordinator in conjunction with the faculty.
- If the clinical practicum hours are not completed during the semester, INC will be given until clinical experience is completed. Once both the minimum hours and the minimum level of clinical competency for all domains of practice are achieved, faculty will replace the INC with a course grade. Students may not assume that their preceptors will continue to be available to continue the preceptorship role beyond the weeks stated in the working agreements; all clinical incompletes will require renegotiation of terms between the student, clinical site, clinical faculty and course faculty to support the student in building the competencies for the course.
- UMB provides malpractice insurance at no cost to students while they are in the clinical

- practicum setting.
- Students without a clinical placement by the add/drop date will be asked to drop from a clinical course.

Policies for the FNP and AGNP Program

Change of Track/Concentration

Matriculated students wishing to change concentrations (from FNP to AGNP or AGNP to FNP) must first contact their faculty advisor and then complete a petition form: [change of program form](#). Permission to change concentrations will be granted on a space available basis for students who are in good academic standing with a minimum GPA of 3.0. This typically occurs in the final two semesters of the program, when students can be reasonably confident they have a clinical placement in the desired course. The Manning College reserves the right to deny requests for a change in the program of study.

If the request to change concentrations is approved, the student is expected to meet with their new advisor as soon as possible. Graduate students cannot register for courses until a new program plan has been filed.

Request for Extending Five Year Limitation

A student may request an extension in extenuating circumstances. To apply for an extension, students should submit a [statute of limitations extension form](#) to their graduate program director with a letter of explanation accompanied by a detailed schedule for completion. If supported, the form is then reviewed by the Office of Graduate Studies and Admissions and submitted to the Registrar's Office for processing if approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Family Primary Care Nurse Practitioner (FNP) Post Masters Certificate Program

Clinical Practicum for the Post Masters Certificate Program

All students in the 21-credit program must complete a total of 600 hours of documented direct clinical care hours. Students in the 12-credit option must complete 300 hours of direct clinical care hours in the chosen concentration.

State rules for clinical hours vary by state, and it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the total clinical hours of our program will fulfill the state requirements where the student plans to be licensed. For example, the Texas BON requires 500 clinical hours for each NP specialty. Therefore, students from Texas are responsible for identifying specifically what their board requires. Any hours required that are over the 300 hours that are provided in our program, will be obtained through the student taking a 3-credit Independent Study Course.

All clinical practicums are subject to the approval of the clinical faculty. Preceptors may be NPs, CNSs, PAs, MDs, or DOs. **Since this program is primary care, clinical practice must be done in the primary care setting.** A limited number of hours may be completed in other settings (urgent care, ER, specialty clinic), but the number of hours are determined on a case-by-case basis by clinical support faculty (NU 682, NU 670, NU 672).

***Refer to the pages above for information on clinical placements.**

Section 6: Overview of The University of Massachusetts Boston (UMASS Boston) Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Programs

As an accredited program of the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), the UMB DNP Program uses the American Association of College of Nursing (AACN) [The Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice](#) (2006) as the foundation for the curriculum.

The UMASS Boston DNP program is an accredited program of the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). The UMass Boston (UMB) DNP Program uses the American Association of College of Nursing (AACN) [2021 Domains, Competencies, and Sub-Competencies for Advanced-level Nursing Education](#) as the foundation for the curriculum to prepare nursing students for advanced professional nursing practice.

UMASS Boston: DNP Programs of Study (BS-DNP & Post Masters to DNP)

Both DNP programs of study have as their core goal and value the improvement of patient care and systems outcomes by increasing DNP graduate's knowledge through the application of theory, applied evidenced based research, and leadership skills in the advanced clinical practice and professional role.

The two terminal Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degrees (BS-DNP & Post Master's to DNP) are designed to prepare nurses for advanced practice roles and leadership positions in diverse health care settings. Both programs emphasize the application of evidence-based practice to enhance patient outcomes and strengthen healthcare systems. Each DNP program follows its own distinct plan of study. The DNP program focuses on and prepares advanced practice nurses for roles in health systems leadership, policy development, and interdisciplinary collaboration.

BS-DNP Program:

The BS-to-DNP program is structured so that students become eligible to earn the MSN Nurse Practitioner (NP) credential at the midpoint of the program upon completion of required credits. By the conclusion of the BS-DNP program, after completing a total of 73 credits, graduates are prepared as advanced practice nurses with the terminal Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree.

Post Master's to DNP Program:

The Post-Master's to DNP program builds on the professional and clinical expertise of advanced practice nurses, preparing them to lead and transform healthcare systems while driving improvements in patient outcomes as they achieve their terminal Doctor of Nursing Practice degree.

In the DNP programs at UMass Boston, the DNP student will focus on:

- Improving health care quality
- Advocating for health policy at the local, state, national, and global level
- Applying theories and conceptual models to the analysis of health care disparities
- Applying scientific evidence to improve patient outcomes
- Utilizing informatics to monitor care, control costs, and improve efficiencies
- Increasing health care access to all communities and groups, especially diverse underserved populations, across the lifespan

DNP Program Contact Information

Program Assistant: The DNP program assistant serves as a general resource for the DNP program students. The DNP program assistant can provide help with answering questions **and** direct DNP students to appropriate support as needed.

Email: Nursing@umb.edu

DNP Program Director: MaryAnn Martin DNP, FNP B.C, PMHNP B.C, MBA

Email: maryann.martin@umb.edu

10 Domains of the Essentials of Advanced Level Nursing Education

The 10 Domains of the Essentials of Advanced Level Nursing Education are core competencies for professional nursing education that provides a framework for preparing individuals as members of the discipline of nursing, reflecting expectations across the trajectory of nursing education and applied experience. The 10 domains of the Essentials of Advanced Level Nursing Education represent the essence of professional nursing practice required by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) for schools seeking accreditation for DNP programs. These 10 Domains of the Essentials of Advanced Level Nursing Education outline the foundational competencies that are core to all advanced nursing practice roles (AACN, 2021).

Advanced Level DNP Program Outcomes

AACN 10 Domains	Advanced Level DNP Program Outcomes
Domain 1: Knowledge for Nursing Practice	Critically appraise, synthesize and translate knowledge from nursing and other disciplines to inform and guide the practice of nursing in developing, implementing, evaluating, and disseminating evidence-based practices with advanced clinical judgment and decision making focused on improving healthcare outcomes across populations.
Domain 2: Person-Centered Care	Integrate and apply principles of evidenced-based person-centered care at an advanced level to promote accessible, safe, high-quality delivery of healthcare.
Domain 3: Population Health	Apply population health principles to analyze and interpret all levels of evidence to address priority health problems at the local, state, national, and global levels and identify trends related to healthcare equity for vulnerable populations.
Domain 4: Scholarship for Nursing Practice	Uses analytic methods to critically appraise empirical, qualitative and non-research evidence to create positive change and transform healthcare.
Domain 5:	Collaborate with nursing colleagues, interprofessional

Quality, Safety, and Domain 6: Interprofessional Partnerships and Systems Based Practice	teams and other relevant stakeholders to design, lead, and implement changes at a systems level that will achieve quality of care that is safe, accessible and equitable for all.
Domain 7 & 8: Informatics and Healthcare Technologies	Integrate information and healthcare technology to make data driven decisions to optimize healthcare delivery and empower patients, families and caregivers to lead healthy lives, while upholding standards for privacy, security, and ethical use of health information.
Domain 9: Professionalism	Embody a professional nursing identity that reflects nursing values, legal and ethical principles that are essential to the advanced nursing practice role.
Domain 10: Personal, Professional and Leadership Development	Engage in practices that foster professional growth, resilience, well-being, self-awareness, leadership, and lifelong learning to support nursing in the advanced practice role.

Posts Master's to Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Program

The UMass Boston Post Master's to DNP (MS-DNP) student holds a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree and also a Master's in Nursing degree. To apply to the DNP program, the prospective candidate needs to hold a Massachusetts RN license. The Post Master's (MS-DNP) student is an Advanced Practice Nurse (APN), nursing leader, and educator that is considered an expert clinician and health care leader in their respective field that seeks and strives to improve patient care and health services for all populations, especially the under-represented. The UMass Boston post-masters DNP program was developed as a clinical practice doctorate. By the completion of the post-masters DNP program, students have attained the leadership skills necessary to be a change agent.

Post Master's DNP (MS-DNP) Degree Requirements

A total of 31 credits and 400 practicum hours are required for this program. Students are guided by faculty throughout the program in completing a Scholarly Project that demonstrates the student's ability to analyze and guide a change in health care delivery. The MSN-DNP program of study can be found at [Doctor of Nursing Practice - DNP - UMass Boston \(umb.edu\)](https://www.umb.edu/nursing/dnp)

Post-Masters DNP Course Sequence for MS to DNP Students

Course Work/ Seminar	Fall YR1	Spring YR1	Summer YR1	Fall YR2	Spring YR 2
	NU 714 EBP I	NU 716 EBP II	NU717 DNP Seminar <i>Implementation</i>	NU 718 DNP Seminar <i>Synthesis</i>	NU 719 DNP Seminar <i>Dissemination</i>
	NU 765 Leadership	NU 715 Informatics	NU 618 Health Policy	Elective or NU 735 Clinical Immersion (80+ hours)	NU 745 Population Health I
	NU 722 Quality				
					
Scholarly Project Process	Exploring Ideas Evaluating the evidence Pre-Project Seminar	DNP Scholarly Project Develop project proposal Write proposal paper	Finalize proposal paper Scholarly Project Proposal Hearing and Advance to Candidacy Implementation of Scholarly Project	Data Analysis of Scholarly Project Inferences and recommendations	Scholarly Project Final Paper Scholarly Project Defense Dissemination of Scholarly Project

BS to Doctor of Nursing Practice Program (BS-DNP)

The UMass Boston BS-to-DNP program is designed for registered nurses holding a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) who aspire to advance their careers by becoming clinical nurse practitioners and earning a terminal Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree. This integrated and accelerated program combines master's and doctoral-level coursework into a cohesive curriculum, allowing students to achieve both clinical expertise (MSN NP) and advanced leadership and systems-thinking skills with a focus on population health, healthcare policy, and quality improvement serving diverse and underserved populations.

Clinical training for the Nurse Practitioner role is completed at the midpoint of the BS to DNP program. Upon completion of the selected MSN NP requirements, the student can advance to the final DNP coursework and complete the terminal degree requirements. The BS-DNP Program prepares the student in advance practice nursing in one of the population health MSN NP tracks: Adult/Gerontological Primary Care Nurse Practitioner or Family Primary Care Nurse Practitioner. See Section 5 of this handbook for more information on the MSN NP tracks and program information and requirements.

The BS-DNP program prepares BS nurses to develop advanced practice skills to excel as leaders and clinicians in health care as advanced practice nurses. The student first obtains an MS degree after 48 credits and 665 clinical hours in their selected MSN NP program of study. Students take the national certification exam as an advanced practice nurse (APRN) at the completion of the MS portion of the BS to DNP program. The DNP portion of study is an additional 22 credits that is completed at the end of the program plan.

BS-DNP Degree Requirements

A total of 73 credits and 1,065 clinical hours are required to complete this BS-DNP program. The program of study culminates in the Scholarly Project experience. Students are guided by

faculty throughout the program in completing a Scholarly Project that demonstrates the student's ability to analyze and guide a change in health care delivery. The BS-DNP program of study can be found at [Doctor of Nursing Practice - DNP - UMass Boston \(umb.edu\)](http://Doctor of Nursing Practice - DNP - UMass Boston (umb.edu))

Post-Master's DNP Course Sequence for BS to DNP Students

Course Work/ Seminar	Fall YR1	Spring YR1	Summer YR1	Fall YR2	Spring YR 2
	NU 714 EBP I	NU 716 EBP II	NU 717 DNP Seminar <i>Implementation</i> (200 hours)	NU 718 DNP Seminar <i>Synthesis</i> (100 hours)	NU 719 DNP Seminar <i>Dissemination</i> (100 hours)
	NU 765 Leadership	NU 745 Population Health I		NU 735 Clinical Immersion (80+ hours)	
	NU 722 Quality				
					
Scholarly Project Process	Exploring Ideas	DNP Scholarly Project	Finalize proposal paper	Data Analysis of Scholarly Project	Scholarly Project Final Paper
	Evaluating the evidence	Develop project proposal	Scholarly Project Proposal Hearing and Advance to Candidacy	Inferences and recommendations	Scholarly Project Defense
	Pre-Project Seminar	Write proposal paper	Implementation of Scholarly Project		Dissemination of Scholarly Project

DNP Program Course Electives

The purpose of electives in the DNP Program is to enhance the student's competence in meeting the 10 Domains of the Essentials of Advanced Level Nursing Education. Electives can be accepted from a certificate program, but they cannot be transferred as an elective if the course is used to meet credits for a degree requirement. Up to 6 credits can be transferred into the DNP program from another graduate program. Elective courses that students wish to transfer into the DNP program must be reviewed and evaluated for approval by the Program Director. The list of electives offered at UMASS Boston can be found at [Doctor of Nursing Practice - DNP - UMass Boston \(umb.edu\)](http://Doctor of Nursing Practice - DNP - UMass Boston (umb.edu))

Academic Advising

The DNP Program Director serves as each student's academic advisor. Academic advising sessions with the Program Director are required to be held bi-annually during the fall & spring semesters. During the initial advising session, the student's plan of study and required practicum hours will be reviewed and determined. Monitoring of DNP practicum hours will be evaluated at each academic advising session. Any changes to the DNP program study plan require the student to meet with the Program Director for approval. DNP students may not register for any courses unless the course is included in their approved plan of study or has received prior authorization from the DNP Program Director for adjustments. Additional information pertinent to academic advising can be found in Section 3 of this Handbook. (MCNHS Student Advising and Services).

Guidelines for DNP Practice Hours

The UMass Boston (MCNHS) DNP Program prepares graduates to attain the highest level of nursing practice and to demonstrate synthesis and application across the core competencies outlined in the AACN 2021 Essentials for Advanced-Level Nursing Education. Practicum hours are designed to demonstrate synthesis and application of expanded knowledge acquired within the DNP curriculum and contribute to preparing fit-for-purpose, practice-ready advanced practice nurses who thrive and lead across all healthcare settings. The practicum hours signify the capability of the student to meet the core competencies of the DNP degree as established by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN). Students are required to have completed a minimum of 1000 practice hours for completion of the DNP program as required by The Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice (AACN, 2021).

The practice hours required encompass both clinical practice hours and indirect practice hours in health care settings or related environments that broaden the experience of the student across the 10 Domains included in the Essentials of Advanced Level Nursing Education. Clinical practice hours/experiences can be accrued either in the clinical training courses included in a BS to DNP program, or in a practice (APN) Masters. The post master's practicum hours include 400 hours focused on attainment of the Essentials of Advanced Level Nursing Education. The practicum hours are to be related to the scholarly project and /or to advance knowledge in the student area of specialization. A total of 1,000 clinical/practice hours is required at completion of the DNP program.

- BS to DNP Students accumulate 600 clinical practice hours as part of the clinical training component of the MS program. Guidance around the practice requirements for the clinical training component of the program is outlined in an earlier section of the Graduate Student Handbook.
- Post-Masters DNP students apply up to 600 hours from their MSN program which results in national certification (e.g. APN). For students who did not complete a practice-focused master's program, the DNP Program Director will review the student's master's curriculum to assess the number of post-masters practice hours needed to meet the required 1,000 practice hours required for DNP program completion. The table below is a general guide to the distribution of post masters practicum hours however practice hours/experiences can be accumulated in any of the DNP courses.

Course	DNP Post-Masters Practicum Hours
NU 717	200
NU 718	100
NU 719	100
Total= 400 hours	

Guidance for Post Masters Practice Hours

Practice Hours Per the 10 Domains of the Essentials of Advanced-Level Nursing Education

Students are required to attain practice hours in all 10 Domains of the AACN Essentials of Advanced-Level Nursing to ensure the required DNP Program outcomes are attained. The majority of direct care clinical experiences/practice hours (Domain 2, Person-Centered Care) are accumulated during the MS clinical training component. For the indirect care experiences/practice hours, no minimum or maximum number of hours is required in each Domain as long as the student is able to demonstrate experiences in each of the 10 Domains. Attestation to completion of the practice hours and evidence of the attainment of the core competencies outlined in the Domains is integrated into the DNP Practice Hours Log and DNP portfolio throughout the DNP program.

Hours at Place of Employment

Many DNP students are in settings or positions that align with the ability to carry out the DNP scholarly project at their place of employment. Practice hours and experiences within this setting are acceptable as long as they are linked to one of the well-defined Domains. Practice hours should not include activities that would be considered part of the students' paid role responsibilities/duties within their place of employment.

Hours working on the DNP Scholarly Project

DNP students track their hours related to work on their scholarly project as it relates to the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation components of the project. Do not include hours spent on graded assignments such as the literature search and writing the paper. Do include hours spent meeting with stakeholders, leaders and your project committee as well as all activities related to the implementation and evaluation of the project.

Practice Hours Documentation

Students maintain documentation (logs) of their DNP Practice Hours. The DNP Post Masters Practice Hours Log (Excel spreadsheet) documents the student's DNP direct care hours spent on the scholarly project and cross-maps these experiences with the DNP Domains and student goals. The spreadsheet is divided into separate sheets (tabs), one for each of the five DNP Seminar courses (NU 714, NU 716, NU 717, NU 718, & NU 719). The Excel sheet for each course includes the date of the experience, a description of the experience, the duration of the experience, and the relevant domains associated with that experience. The hours accrued in each course are detailed as described above. In addition, students track the cumulative practice hours accrued as student progress through the curriculum.

DNP Post Master's Clinical Practice Hours Log

The DNP Post-Masters Practice Hours Log is reviewed by the course faculty in each of the DNP Seminar courses (NU 714, NU 716, NU 717, NU 717, NU 717, NU 717, NU718, & NU719) and included in the student's DNP Portfolio. The DNP Program Director has access to the log through the student's DNP Portfolio for the purpose of Academic Advising sessions. At the conclusion of the program, students have a log that includes documentation of all (Clinical: direct care hours and post-masters: practicum/indirect care hours) accrued throughout the DNP Program.

****Note: For BS to DNP students**

Documentation of their clinical practice hours will follow the format required in the MS clinical courses and will be reviewed by faculty in those courses. The above sections apply only to the

Post Master's practicum hours completed as part of the DNP Program. Upon entering into the DNP portion of the program, all clinical hours will be reviewed by the Program Director of the DNP program.

Fulfillment of the DNP Program Requirements for Graduation

To fulfill the DNP program requirements for graduation, the student must:

1. Successfully complete all coursework and DNP practicum hours
2. Complete the DNP portfolio
3. Complete the DNP Scholarly Project (oral defense, written paper, & dissemination)

Successful Completion of Coursework & Practicum Hours

Successful completion of all coursework and practicum hours stipulated in the DNP Program of Study is required in fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Nursing Practice degree. The requirements for successful completion of coursework, including the grading, incomplete and appeals policy, are found in Section 2 Academic Policies, Procedures and Requirements in this Handbook.

Portfolio of DNP Experiences

Throughout the DNP program, students will compile evidence of the acquisition of the 10 Domains of the Essentials of Advanced-Level Nursing Education of the DNP Program under the guidance of the DNP Seminar faculty. A program-specific google web-based template of the portfolio is to be utilized by each DNP student and should begin upon entering and are used throughout the DNP program. The portfolio includes relevant professional information, links coursework and practice hours to the 10 Domains of the Essentials of Advanced-Level Nursing Education of the DNP Program which provides an overview of the student's scholarly journey. As the student progresses through coursework and practicum hours and completes course assignments the student reflects on the 10 Advanced Level of DNP Domains of the Essentials of Advanced-Level Nursing Education and then places the assignment in the portfolio according to the 10 Domains of the Essentials that are fulfilled. The DNP portfolio is reviewed each semester as part of the seminar coursework and a completed portfolio is required to pass the final seminar NU 719 course. The portfolio reflects the attainment of the 10 Domains of the Essentials of Advanced-Level Nursing Education of the DNP Program and the process of completing the DNP Scholarly Project. Detailed information related to the portfolio workflow including how to set up and populate the portfolio, can be found in each relevant year's Seminar course syllabi.

DNP Scholarly Project

The DNP Scholarly Project is the culmination of the doctoral candidate's engagement in the DNP program and is expected to reflect the highest levels of nursing practice competencies. The project is practice focused, evidence-based, and utilizes sound quality improvement methods.

DNP Scholarly Project Timeline and Process

What it Means	What is Required	Signatures and Dates

<i>Project Development Phase</i>		
Under the guidance of course faculty, project ideas are explored in NU 714, and the project is developed and designed in NU 716.	Successful completion of NU 714 and NU 716 (Course grade in Wisser)	Due dates per the NU 714 and NU 716 Course Syllabi
<i>Project Proposal Phase</i>		
With the advice and guidance of the 716-course faculty member, a DNP Scholarly Project Committee is formed to guide the student throughout their project. The committee is comprised of the Faculty Advisor/mentor, the Practice Site Mentor, and the Committee Mentor.	Students identify a Practice Site Mentor; course faculty serves as the Faculty Mentor and suggests the Committee Mentor. Student's complete DNP Tracking Form Part 1 and relevant information and upload to the DNP Program OneDrive. The DNP Program Administrator sends the document out for signatures and submits the signed form to OGS.	Committee members, DNP Program Director, Office of Graduate Studies (OGS). Due dates per the NU 716 Course Syllabus
Under the guidance of the NU 717 course faculty, the project design and evaluation strategy are finalized.	Students submit their Proposal paper to the course faculty for final approval and a grade.	Due date per the NU 717 Course Syllabus
When the NU 717-course faculty member feels the student is ready, students present their project to their committee (DNP Scholarly Project Proposal Hearing) for their input.	Once the date is set, the student distributes a copy of the proposal paper to their committee 10 days in advance of the Proposal Hearing.	The proposal hearing is completed by mid-semester (NU 717).
Students query the committee for a mutually agreeable date and time for the Proposal Hearing. Proposal Hearings are done individually via zoom and last 60 minutes.	At the end of the student's Proposal Hearing The committee meets in executive session and determines if the student is approved, approved with major or minor revisions or not approved. They inform the student of changes that need to be made (if any) and provide a timeline for changes.	Students are informed of the committee's decision and any changes to be made within one week of the Proposal Hearing.

If the Proposal Hearing is successful, students proceed to project implementation.	Students' complete DNP Tracking Form Part 2 and upload to the DNP Program OneDrive. The DNP Program Administrator sends the document out for signatures and submits the signed form to OGS.	Committee Members, DNP Program Director, OGS. Complete before the end of NU 717
At the conclusion of the Proposal Hearings, the NU 716-course faculty submits a compendium of projects to the UMass Boston IRB. DNP projects are quality improvement projects and do not need IRB approval as human subject research. However, the program does file a compendium of DNP projects with the IRB for their records.	Students submit a copy of their approved Project Proposal Abstract, Determination of Clinical Quality Improvement Checklist and CITI certificate to the course faculty in accordance with the workflow described in the syllabus. The NU 717-course faculty member compiles individual students' documents into one group document and files with the UMass Boston IRB.	Complete before the end of NU 717
<i>Project Defense Phase</i>		
At the conclusion of the project, students present their project outcomes to their committee, peers, and the practice and academic community (DNP Scholarly Project Oral Defense). The cohort of students graduating in May defend their DNP Scholarly Project Oral Defenses on the same day. Students attend and present in person; committee members can attend via remote webinar if needed. Students graduating in August or December defend their DNP Scholarly Project individually via remote webinar.	NU 718 course faculty works with the DNP Program Director and Administrator in the Fall to set the date for the cohort graduating the following spring, and to reserve the room and create the zoom link. Students inform their committee of the date so they can plan and "save the date". Students, the course faculty and the DNP Program Administrator collaborate to develop and distribute a Program that announces the defenses. Project Defenses are public. The program announcement is distributed to the academic and practice community at least one month in advance.	For May graduates, the date is set for 1 month in advance of the NU 719-semester end. For August and December graduates, individual dates are set as needed.

		grade deadline
<i>Project Dissemination Phase</i>		
Once the 719-course faculty member deems the paper to be of publishable quality, the paper is submitted to the UMass Boston ScholarWorks repository.	Students upload to ScholarWorks using the established DNP ScholarWorks workflow.	End of NU 719 semester.
Students complete this step by the end of the NU 719 semester. In rare situations, a student may need additional time to finalize the required formatting. In this case, the NU 719-course faculty member works with the student to finalize the paper. All students must meet the OGS deadline to meet the requirements for graduation.		OGS deadline
		1 August for May degree date
		1 November for August degree date
		1 March for December degree date

*Additional information for each phase is included and can be reviewed in the course sequence schematic diagram for each DNP Program of study.

The DNP Program: Advancement to Candidacy

Advancement to candidacy signifies that the student has successfully completed the first part of their DNP program of studies. Specifically, to advance to candidacy, the student must have:

1. Successfully completed required coursework
2. Successfully completed the DNP Scholarly Project Proposal Paper (NU 716)
3. Formed a Scholarly Project Committee
4. Successful Proposal Hearing

Once a student has advanced to candidacy, they are eligible to use the DNP Candidate OR Doctoral Candidate Degree Credentials. Please see the information at the bottom of Section 6 on how to properly utilize the candidacy degree credential convention/signature block

Advancement to Candidacy Steps

1. Successful Completion of Coursework

The first step in advancing to candidacy involves the successful completion of all core, required courses deemed pre-requisites for advancing to candidacy. Refer to the program of study for the specific courses required throughout the program. Refer to Section 2 of this Handbook (Academic Policies, Procedures, and Requirements) for guidance on what constitutes a passing grade for DNP courses.

2. DNP Scholarly Project: Proposal Paper

The DNP Scholarly Project proposal paper is written in stages. The student writes the initial

draft in NU 716 under the direction of the course faculty. At the end of NU 716, the student will have the majority, if not all of DNP scholarly proposal paper completed with continued work in NU 717. The DNP Scholarly Project and paper are expected to be of sufficient quality and rigor to meet the requirements of doctoral study. At all stages of the paper, the student should expect multiple iterations in response to faculty and committee suggestions. This paper is graded and factors into the course grade for NU 716 and 717. The grading rubric for this paper can be found in the NU 716 and NU 717 course syllabi.

The DNP Scholarly Proposal paper is to be written using the SQUIRE 2.0 guidelines. The proposal paper includes all content contained in the first three Squire sections: specifically, 1) title page and abstract, 2) introduction and 3) methods sections as well as references and appendices. Formatting, references and in-text citations should be in APA 7th edition format. Detailed instructions for writing the paper and the grading rubric, as well as a timeline and workflow can be found in the relevant year's NU 716 and NU 717 syllabi.

3. Formed a Scholarly Project Committee

Formed a DNP Scholarly Project Committee Students develop, implement, evaluate and disseminate their DNP project under the guidance and direction of a DNP Committee. This committee is formed at the end of NU 716 with guidance from the Seminar faculty and is a prerequisite for having a proposal hearing. The committee is made up of three individuals who serve as content, process and leadership mentors. The seminar faculty serves as the DNP Project Faculty advisor and must have a terminal degree. Students identify a content and/or leadership expert at the site where the project will take place to serve as the Practice Site Mentor. This person does not need to be a nurse or have a higher degree. A third committee member, the Committee Mentor, provides content expertise and should ideally have a terminal degree. This person is typically a faculty member from the Manning College of Nursing and Health Sciences but may also come from outside UMass Boston. The DNP candidate will work closely with the faculty advisor and other committee members throughout the DNP Scholarly Project, including project development, implementation, evaluation, writing phases and dissemination. The timeline and workflow for forming the committee can be found in the NU 716 and NU 717 seminar course syllabi.

4. Scholarly Project Proposal Hearing

When the DNP Project Faculty Advisor feels the student is ready, the student's DNP Committee will convene to review and approve the project. The proposal hearings are remote with students and committee members attending via a web conferencing platform. The hearing is closed to non-committee members unless additional attendees are agreed upon by the student, faculty and committee. The student is expected to work closely with the DNP project faculty advisor to develop a proposal paper that is of doctoral level rigor and quality and a project that is suitable to be presented to the full committee. Once the proposal paper meets the expectations of the faculty advisor, the proposal hearing will be scheduled. The student will share the proposal paper with the committee in advance of the proposal hearing. A detailed timeline and workflow for the proposal hearing can be found in the NU 717 course syllabus.

The proposal hearing presentation follows the proposal paper format adapted from the SQUIRE 2.0 guidelines for reporting practice improvement/quality improvement projects. Additional information on SQUIRE 2.0 guidelines may be retrieved from <http://squirestatement.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Page.ViewPage&pageId=471> . The presentation should provide sufficient information for the committee to determine if the project

is academically rigorous, uses sound quality improvement science, feasible, and meets ethical standards at both the university and practice site.

The length of the proposal hearing is 60 minutes, with time allotted for the student to present and for the committee to ask questions. At the end of the proposal hearing, the committee meets in the executive session and determines if the project is approved, approved with minor revisions, approved with major revisions, or not approved.

In the case of approved as is or approved subject to minor revisions, the candidate may proceed with the project. In the case of an approved subject to minor revisions, the DNP candidate will revise their proposal in accordance with the committee instructions and submit the revised proposal to the faculty advisor for approval, but they may proceed with project implementation as they do this. In the case of a determination of requires major revisions or is not approved within ten (10) days of the proposal hearing, the faculty advisor will provide the student with an email detailing the revisions required by the committee and a plan, including a timeline, for completing the revisions. The project cannot proceed until the proposal is revised to the satisfaction of the faculty advisor and committee. If not completed to the committee's satisfaction, the student will not advance to candidacy. Without successful completion of the DNP Scholarly Project proposal and proposal paper, the student will receive an Incomplete for NU 717. The student will not be allowed to continue with coursework until the Incomplete is converted to a passing grade.

**Once the student has successfully completed their proposal hearing this means they have Advanced to Candidacy.*

DNP Tracking Forms

The DNP Scholarly Project Tracking Forms serve as the official document that chronicles the student's progress through the process of forming a committee, advancing to candidacy, delivering the final oral defense, and completing the final paper. There are three parts to the DNP Tracking form (available in NU 717, 718, and NU 719 Canvas course). For each form, students populate the form with relevant information and the DNP Program Administrator is responsible for sending out for committee and university leadership signatures. A detailed timeline and workflow for each tracking form can be found in the relevant course syllabi.

DNP Tracking Form: Part 1 is completed after you form your committee and under the guidance of the faculty advisor in NUR 717. This form needs to be completed and signed prior to your proposal hearing. If committee members are added or dropped during the time you are working on your project, you will need to consult with your DNP Project Faculty Advisor and complete an updated Part 1 form.

DNP Tracking Form: Part 2 DNP Scholarly Project Advance to Candidacy Tracking Form: Part 2 is completed after the proposal hearing in NUR 717. This form indicates the outcome of the proposal hearing (approved, approved with minor revisions, needs major revisions, not approved).

DNP Tracking Form: Part 3 DNP Scholarly Project Oral Defense Tracking Form: Part 3 is completed after the DNP Scholarly Project Oral Defense in NU 719 and indicates the outcome of the project oral defense (approved, approved with minor revisions, not approved). Students who do not upload Tracking Form 3 by the end of the semester will receive an Incomplete in the course which could affect graduation date.

The DNP Scholarly Project Final Stages

1. The DNP Scholarly Project: Oral Defense

At the conclusion of their DNP Project, students present their project outcomes to an audience that includes their DNP Project Committee, their peers, the academic and practice communities, and the public. The session is hybrid. Students attend in person while committee members and guests attend either in person or via a web conferencing platform. The date of the oral defense for all students is held on the same day and requires an on-campus visit towards the end of the NU 719 semester. It is expected that all students in the graduating cohort will attend.

To be eligible to participate in the oral defense, the student must have completed their project, including the data analysis, results, and discussion sections to the satisfaction of the faculty advisor and committee. The session is 60 minutes long, which includes the student presentation as well as committee and guest questions. At the end, the committee meets in executive session and determines if the student met the criteria for a scholarly project presentation and paper (A) or did not meet the criteria for a scholarly project presentation and paper (N). If the requirements for presentation of the scholarly project are not met, the student will meet with the faculty advisor to determine the next steps. A detailed timeline and workflow for the project oral defense can be found in the relevant year's syllabus for NU 719.

2. DNP Scholarly Project Paper

The final DNP Scholarly Project paper summarizes your project design and outcomes as well as your mastery of improvement science methods. It is a culmination of the iterative process which began in NU 716, builds on the project proposal paper and includes all phases of the project (development, implementation and evaluation). The paper is written under the guidance of the student's faculty advisor and committee and utilizes the SQUIRE 2.0 format. The paper should include all content specified in the sections of the Squire 2.0 guidelines: Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion. References and in-text citations should be in APA 7th edition format. Detailed directions for writing the paper, grading rubric, and the workflow can be found in the NU 719 course syllabus.

The paper must be approved by the full committee before it is accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree. At the conclusion of the Oral Defense, Committee members indicate if they deem the paper to be:

1. **Approved**-without changes.
2. **Approved with minor revisions**-In the case of approval with minor revisions, the candidate will resubmit the revised Scholarly Project Paper to the faculty advisor within the timeframe set by the faculty advisor. The faculty advisor is responsible for summarizing the revisions requested by the committee and sending them to the student within a week of the oral defense.
3. **Major revisions**- In the case of major revisions, the candidate must resubmit the Scholarly Project paper to all committee members. The faculty advisor is responsible for summarizing the revisions requested by the committee and sharing with the student within one week of the oral defense. The candidate must complete the required revisions by the date indicated by the faculty advisor. If the scholarly paper does not reach approval by this

date, the student's graduation date will be changed to a later date (even if the oral defense has been completed).

4. **Not approved-** the faculty advisor will meet with the candidate and decide how to proceed.

A grade for the final DNP Scholarly Project paper is factored into the grade for NU 719 based on the grading rubric found in the course syllabus and input from the committee. A passing grade for NU 719 is required to meet the criteria for graduation.

3. The Dissemination Product in UMass Boston ScholarWorks

The student must fulfill requirements for dissemination as part of the requirements of the DNP degree. The DNP Scholarly Project paper is required to be submitted to the UMass Boston ScholarWorks. The paper is submitted to ScholarWorks once the faculty advisor feels the paper is ready. A detailed timeline and workflow for uploading the paper into the UMass Boston ScholarWorks repository can be found in the NU 719 syllabus.

Once the project paper is sufficiently developed to be uploaded to ScholarWorks, students are also encouraged to submit their project as a journal article, a poster that is presented at an approved professional conference, or a podium presentation. The faculty advisor and all committee members must be made aware of the plan for dissemination and approved prior to the student disseminating the project.

Authorship, Acknowledgements, and Attribution

Dissemination of work done while at UMass Boston doctoral student, including the DNP Scholarly Project, should provide attribution to UMass Boston. The project's site affiliation is also appropriate to list, but the primary affiliation on any dissemination related to a student's project should list the student as a DNP student (or simply as a doctoral student) at UMass Boston.

Determination of authorship of books or manuscripts based on Scholarly Projects can be challenging. The doctoral student, as author of the scholarly project, holds the position of primary authorship of any subsequent publications based on it. Including co-authors, such as members of the committee, is appropriate if such persons meet the requirements of authorship set out in the International Guidelines that are abstracted below.

Authorship: Authors submitting a paper do so on the understanding that the manuscript has been read and approved by all authors and that all authors agree to the submission of the manuscript to the journal. ALL named authors must have made an active contribution to the conception and design and/or analysis and interpretation of the data and/or the drafting of the paper, and ALL must have critically reviewed its content and have approved the final version submitted for publication.

The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) authorship criteria state that authorship should be based on 1) substantial contributions to conception and design of, or acquisition of data or analysis and interpretation of data, 2) drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content and 3) final approval of the version to be published. Authors should meet conditions 1, 2, and 3.

Acknowledgements: Contributors who do not qualify as authors should be mentioned under Acknowledgements.

Under acknowledgements, students can specify contributors to the article other than the authors accredited. It is helpful to include specifications of the source of funding for the study and any potential conflict of interest if appropriate. Suppliers of materials should be named, and their location (town, state/county, country) included.

Ethical Assurance

Assuring that the DNP Scholarly Project meets ethical standards is a core value of the DNP program. The range of activities involving human participants in healthcare settings comprises patient care, teaching, and research; however, not all of these activities constitute human subject research. For example, training, education, quality improvement, and review of case reports are activities in which faculty and staff are commonly engaged in addition to research. The UMass Boston Office of Research and Sponsored Projects, in collaboration with the DNP faculty, has determined that projects which meet the following criteria and do not involve human subjects and therefore do not need to be reviewed by the IRB.

- The project is designed to implement knowledge or assess a process or program considered standard practice that provide immediate and continuous improvement and feedback in the local setting
- While the activities described may involve accidental discoveries and/or innovative practices, they do not constitute research unless they also involve a systematic investigation with the intent to contribute to generalizable knowledge.
- The project translates established evidence to practice.
- The intention of the project is not theory generating or theory testing; the efficacy of new devices or drugs will not be tested.

If it has been determined the project meets the criteria for practice improvement, then the student must have an ethics section in their DNP Scholarly Project paper which includes the following statement: “ *The project or innovation [proposed (proposal paper); implemented (final paper)] is quality improvement and does not meet the definition of human subjects research because it is not designed to generate generalizable findings but rather to provide immediate and continuous improvement feedback in the local setting in which the project is carried out.*”

If a project deviates from the above-stated guidelines for practice improvement, then the student will need to discuss the project with the faculty advisor. In the rare case where it is determined that a student’s project meets the criteria for human subject research, the student will need to apply to the UMass Boston Institutional Review Board (IRB) as well as the project site IRB. Directions for completing a UMass Boston IRB application can be found on the UMass Boston website. If IRB approval is required, the student must obtain this prior to implementation of the project.

In all cases, the student should discuss the details of the DNP project with the practice site mentor to understand the organization’s process for determining whether the project fits their definition of practice improvement or would be considered human subjects’ research. In the case of the latter, the student will need to obtain institutional IRB approval prior to implementing the project.

DNP Candidacy and Degree Credentials

DNP Candidacy and degree credentials (e.g., AD, BS, BSN, MS, MSN, PhD, EdD, DNP, DNSc) are commonly used and indicate completion of a particular educational program. The highest degree attained is usually placed immediately after the last name, followed by certifications, licenses, and fellowships. All or some degrees can be used. Terms used to indicate partial completion of a degree or student status, such as “DNP(c) (DNP candidate) or “ABD” (all but dissertation), are fabricated terms and are not to be used. Students completing their proposal hearing in NU 717 can then use DNP(c) after their name.

DNP candidates should use the following convention: Joanne Doe, MSN, RN (Doctoral Candidate OR DNP Candidate).

See APA <http://www.apa.org/monitor/2016/09/misuse-phd.aspx> for rationale.

If you have any questions regarding the UMASS Boston DNP Program, please contact the DNP program assistant or the DNP program director.

Section 7: Overview of The University of Massachusetts Boston PhD Program

PhD in Nursing Program Goals

The PhD Nursing Program focus is Health Policy within the context of Population Health. Our PhD graduates obtain conceptual, theoretical, and research methods skills to study health policies for populations to attain the highest possible population quality of life by means of health policy-focused nursing activities directed to promote or restore and maintain wellness across the life course and to prevent illness and disease (Fawcett & Ellenbecker, 2015)

Our PhD program focuses on the intersection of nursing and health policies for populations and prepares its graduates for leadership roles as researchers and educators who:

1. Analyze historical, sociological, economic, political, and healthcare perspectives of and health policies within the context of population health issues.
2. Evaluate health policies that influence the access, quality, and cost of healthcare delivery and nursing practice of diverse populations to advance social justice locally and globally.
3. Generate rigorous, innovative, and high-quality theory-guided qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods research that advances nursing science research that advances nursing knowledge of health policies for populations addressing inclusion, equity, equality, and anti-racism.
4. Create innovative, evidence-based strategies to shape population-focused health policy development at local, national, and global levels based on contemporary nursing and interdisciplinary research.
5. Relate new inquiries, activities, and **values** to role development as a nurse scientist, steward of the discipline, and educator for the next generation.

Our PhD Graduates are prepared to meet the American Association of Colleges of Nursing expected outcomes of PhD Programs in Nursing as below:

Develop the Science: Assume leadership in the conduct of culturally competent scholarship to improve nursing practice (Master in-depth knowledge in a substantive area; Critique and integrate different science perspectives in the conduct of research; Communicate research findings to lay and professional audiences and identify implications for policy, nursing practice, and the profession)

Steward the Discipline: Integrate the components of scholarship: research, teaching, mentoring, and service to the profession (Communicate scholarship including peer-refereed publications and presentations for professional interdisciplinary audiences; Understand the evolving roles and responsibilities of a nurse scholar)

Educate the Next Generation: Contribute to a global community of scholars

PhD Contacts

The Program Assistant for the PhD nursing program will assist students with any questions and direct students. Email: Nursing@umb.edu

PhD Program Director. Lingling Zhang Lingling.Zhang@umb.edu

PhD in Nursing Curriculum

Our PhD Nursing Program offers two tracks—BS-PhD and MS-PhD.

All students are encouraged to meet with their academic advisor each semester to review completed course work and plan for future course work prior to registration time at the university (usually October/November/ and March/April each academic year). The program director and program assistant are always available to help with any questions related to courses and requirements (https://www.umb.edu/registrar/academic_calendar)

PhD Nursing Program Plans of Study

Please note that the plans of study are subject to revision.

BS-PhD Track

PhD in Nursing Program Advising Form: BS to PhD

Student Name:

Student ID:

Admitted Term (semester/year):

Advisor:

Year	Course Number	Course Title	Credits	Semester Completed	Final Grade/Notes
Fall Year 1	NU760	Biostatistics I	3		
	NU702	Doctoral Seminar	3		
	NU616	Evidence Based Practice I	3		
Spring Year 1	NU770	Biostatistics II	3		
	NU757	Social and Behavioral Determinants	3		
	NU715	Health Informatics	3		
Summer Year 1	NU765	Health Systems Leadership	3		
Fall Year 2	NU700	Philosophy of Nursing Science: Ways of Knowing	3		
	NU607	Evidenced Based Teaching Practices	3		
	NU750	Contemporary Disciplinary Knowledge	3		
Winter Inter-Session Year 2	Elective--only if an elective is needed in place of spring or Summer Year 2	NU 609, or other with permission of advisor			
Spring Year 2	NU741	Health Policy I	3		
	NU745	Population Health I	3		
	Elective	NU 608, 618 , 637, or other with permission of advisor	3		
Summer Year 2	Elective	NU 612, 618, or other with permission of advisor	3		
Fall Year 3	NU/EHS 825 OR NU 780	Advanced Quantitative Research Methods OR NU780 Epidemiologic Methods (Spring only) *****	3		
	Methods Elective	*****	3		
	Methods Elective		3		
Spring Year 3	NU790	Integrating Concepts & Methods for Research Development	3		

	QUAL	Qualitative Research Methods	3		
	Methods Elective		3		
	Comprehensive Exam				
	Dissertation Proposal Hearing				
Fall Year 4	NU899	Dissertation Research	6		
Spring Year 4	NU899	Dissertation Research	3		
Dissertation Defense					
Total Credits			69		

- **Electives must be research methods courses that provide the methods knowledge and skills to support the dissertation research**
- Each degree-seeking graduate student is required to maintain continuous registration until the degree that the student is seeking has been formally awarded. See student handbook.
- Once students have defended successfully, the chair of the dissertation committee is required to submit a letter grade using the Change of Grade Form for all dissertation credits (NU899).

**Either NU/EHS 823 or NU 780 can be taken as the required quantitative methods course (as indicated in the plan of study OR one of the courses can be taken as the required course and the other course can be taken as a methods elective.

MS-PhD track

PhD in Nursing Program Advising Form: **MS to PhD-Full Time Study**

Student Name:

Student ID:

Admitted Term (semester/year):

Advisor:

Semester	No.	Course Title	Credits	Semester Completed	Final Grade/Notes
Fall Year 1	NU700	Philosophy of Nursing Science: Ways of Knowing	3		
	NU702	Doctoral Seminar	3		
	NU750	Contemporary Disciplinary Knowledge	3		
Spring	NU741	Health Policy I	3		

g Year 1	NU745	Population Health I	3		
	NU770	Biostatistics II	3		
Fall Year 2		Evidenced Based Teaching Practices	3		
	NU607		3		
	Method s Elective		3		
	NU/EH S 825 OR NU780	Advanced Quantitative Research Methods I OR Epidemiologic Methods (substitute, Spring)	3		
Sprin g Year 2	Method s Elective		3		
		Integrating Concepts & Methods for Research Development	3		
	NU790		3		
	QUAL	Qualitative Research Methods	3		
	Method s Elective		3		
Comprehensive Exam					
Dissertation Proposal Hearing					
Fall Year 3	NU899	Dissertation Research	3		
Sprin g Year 3	NU899	Dissertation Research	6		
Dissertation Defense					
Total Credits			48		

- Electives must be research methods courses that provide the methods knowledge and skills to support the dissertation research
- Each degree-seeking graduate student is required to maintain continuous registration until the degree that the student is seeking has been formally awarded. See student handbook.
- Once students have defended successfully, the chair of the dissertation committee is required to submit a letter grade using the Change of Grade form for all dissertation credits.

Collaboration Across the UMass System

The PhD Nursing Program at UMass Boston collaborates with the PhD Nursing programs at the other four UMass campuses and the UMass Boston Donna M. and Robert J. Manning College of Nursing and Health Sciences Exercise and Health Sciences, Urban Public Health, and Gerontology PhD Programs Because of the collaborative nature of the UMass hD Nursing Programs. some of the required courses are taught on one campus or the other. Students may be required to travel from one campus to the other if hybrid options are not available. Students also may enroll in courses at any of the UMass campuses for methods elective credits.

Collaboration with faculty and students at UMass PhD programs who have similar research interests or expertise is encouraged. This collaboration enriches and expands the program within the UMass system. When registering for courses at other UMass campuses, students need to fill out an [Intercampus Registration Form](#). It is delivered to the registrar's office for processing. The completed form should be submitted to our Program Assistant of the PhD Program for processing with the registrar.

Dual Degree Programs

BS-to-PhD obtaining Master's Degree (En Route Master's Degree)

The En Route Master's (MS) Degree is available to interested PhD Nursing students who are in the BS-PhD track. An En Route MS degree can be awarded after completion of 30 credits in the PhD program and successful performance on the comprehensive examination. Students need to submit a [degree application](#) to the Office of the Registrar to formally request the MS degree to be awarded upon fulfilling the requirements. Students receiving the generic En Route MS degree will not be eligible for certification in an APN specialty without further didactic and clinical courses.

The 30 credits comprise 21 credits from the BS-to-PhD curriculum plus 9 credits required as part of the AACN essentials (NU 615 Advanced Health Assessment, NU 634 Advanced Pharmacology, and NU 614 Advanced Pathophysiology).

The Plan of Study is given here:

Student Name and ID:		Advisor:	
Advising Form: Nursing PhD Program		Student Workload:	
BS-to-PhD (En Route Master's)			
Application for this degree occurs only after completion of the Comprehensive Examination			

Seme ster	No.	Course Title	Credits	Semes ter Compl eted	Notes
Fall Year 1	NU702	Doctoral Seminar	3		
	NU700	Philosophy of Nursing Science: Ways of Knowing	3		
	NU760	Biostatistics I	3		
	NU750	Contemporary Disciplinary Knowledge	3		
Spring Year 1	NU770	Biostatistics II	3		
	NU745	Population Health I	3		
	NU780	Epidemiologic Methods	3		
Summ er Year 1	NU614	Advanced Pathophysiology (online)	3		
	NU634	Advanced Pharmacology for the Advanced Practice Nurse (online)	3		
	(both can be taken concurrently)				
Fall Year 2	NU615	Advanced Health Assessment Practicum (in class)	3		
	(followed by the rest of courses on plan of student BS-PhD)				
	*If students want to complete clinical work to become advanced practice nurses, they can do so at the END of their PhD curriculum after completion of the dissertation				
Total Credits			30		

**Each degree-seeking graduate student is required to maintain continuous registration until the degree that the student is seeking has been formally awarded.

Note: An NP certification is offered if students choose to take an additional 18 credits after successful defense of their PhD dissertation. Please ask the PhD Program Director for more details.

Academic Advising and Course Registration

The program director serves as a general advisor to all students. When entering the PhD program, students are assigned to an individual academic adviser. The academic advisor will guide in choosing courses and staying on target with the curriculum plan until comprehensive examinations are passed.

Individual Development Plan (IDP)

An Individual Development Plan (IDP) for each semester and academic year is prepared by the student and the academic advisor and is placed on file in the PhD Program office. Each semester, the IDP will be reviewed with the student, and revisions will be placed on file. Students taking courses need to meet with their academic advisor in the spring to plan for fall and in the fall to plan for spring during the designated time by the university calendar periods.

Registration holds will be placed on each student and released after advisement is received. Students should access their [WISER](#) account to register for classes.

The Individual Development Plan form is given here:



**Robert and Donna Manning College of
Nursing and Health Sciences**

University of Massachusetts Boston
100 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, MA 02125-3393
P 617.287.7500 | F 617.287.7527 | www.cnhs.umb.edu

PHD Individual Development Plan

Please note the plans of study are subject to revision

Student Name	
Student ID	
Year Entered Program	
Faculty Advisor	
Program of Study Topic	
Mentor(s) within Nursing	
Mentor(s) outside of Nursing	
Comprehensive Exam Committee	
Dissertation Committee (Chair, internal member, external member(s))	

Instructions

This individual development plan should be used as a working document to guide discussion and planning between a student and their faculty advisor. Each semester, the student should review and update the form in collaboration with their advisor. At the end of each year, the form should be signed by both the student and advisor, submitted to the PhD program assistant, and reviewed by the program director for planning purposes.

BS TO PHD REQUIRE D COURSE	MS TO PHD REQUIRE D COURSE	COURSE NAME	CREDITS	PROJECTED SEMESTER	SEMESTER COMPLETED
NU760		Biostatistics I	3	Fall Year 1	
NU702	NU702	Doctoral Seminar	3		
NU616		Evidence Based Practice I	3		
NU770	NU770	Biostatistics II	3	Spring Year 1	
NU757		Social and Behavioral Determinants	3		
NU715		Health Informatics	3		
NU765		Health Systems Leadership	3	Summer Year 1	
NU700	NU700	Philosophy of Nursing Science: Ways of Knowing	3	Fall Year 2	
NU607	NU607	Evidenced Based Teaching Practices	3		
NU750	NU750	Contemporary Disciplinary	3		

		Knowledge			
NU741	NU741	Health Policy I	3		
NU745	NU745	Population Health I	3		
Elective		NU 608, 609, 618, 637 or other with permission of advisor	3	Spring Year 2	
Elective		NU 608, 609, 618, 637 or other with permission of advisor	3	Summer Year 2	
NU/EHS 825	NU/EHS 825	Advanced Quantitative Research Methods I <i>This can be substituted with NU780 Epidemiologic Methods offered in Spring</i>	3	Fall Year 3	
Methods Elective	Methods Elective		3		
Methods Elective	Methods Elective		3		
NU790	NU790	Integrating Concepts & Methods for Research Development	3		
QUAL	QUAL	Qualitative Research Methods	3	Spring Year 3	
Methods Elective	Methods Elective		3		
NU899	NU899	Dissertation Research	6	Fall Year 4	
NU899	NU899	Dissertation Research	3	Spring Year 4	
		Total Credits	69/ 48		

Comprehensive Pathway:

There are two options for the Comprehensive Exam. Regardless of the option, students must complete two papers. One paper must focus on a conceptual issue (health policy analysis, concept analysis, or review and synthesis of literature) and one paper must focus on a methodological issue (critique of

instruments to measure a concept; diverse research methods used to measure a concept).

- o Traditional 2 Paper Option
- o 1 Paper + 1 Scholarship Option
 - o 1 paper written specially for the comprehensive examination
 - o 1 published or in-press first author manuscript

PROGRAM MILESTONE	REQUIRED DOCUMENTS COMPLETED/DATE FILED	DATE COMPLETED
Comprehensive Oral Exam	Stage 1- Topic and Committee	
	Stage 2- Oral Examination Assessment	
Dissertation Proposal Hearing	Stage 1- Notification of Candidacy	
	Stage 2- Notification of Proposed Dissertation Committee	
	Stage 3- Notification of Proposal Acceptance	
Dissertation Defense	Stage 4- Notification of Intent to Defend Dissertation	
	Stage 5- Approval of Dissertation Defense	

ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES SELF-ASSESSMENT	
STRENGTHS	DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS
Year 1:	
Year 2:	
Year 3:	
Year 4:	
Years 5:	

GOALS

SHORT-TERM NEEDS FOR IMPROVING CURRENT PERFORMANCE

What are your short-term goals? (next 12 months)

Please complete each year to reflect upon what you hope to accomplish.

Year 1:

Year 2:

Year 3:

Year 4:

Year 5:

What additional competencies do you need?	How are you going to acquire these competencies?	When will you acquire them?	Completion Date (est)	Completion Date (act)

LONG-TERM CAREER GOALS

What are your career goals?

What additional competencies do you need?	How are you going to acquire these competencies?	When will you acquire them?	Completion Date (est)	Completion Date (act)

STUDENT SUMMARY OF GOAL ATTAINMENT

This section is meant to provide an overview of the students' specific accomplishments, such as research activities, publications, presentations, and conference attendance.

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Year 1	
PLAN	
Year 2	
PLAN	
Year 3	
PLAN	
Year 4	
PLAN	

ADVISOR COMMENTS		
Year 1		
Progress: Satisfactory _ Needs Consultation_ Review Required _		
Faculty Advisor Signature_____ Date:		
Year 2		
Progress: Satisfactory _ Needs Consultation_ Review Required _		
Faculty Advisor Signature_____ Date:		
Year 3		
Progress: Satisfactory _ Needs Consultation_ Review Required _		
Faculty Advisor Signature_____ Date:		
Year 4		
Progress: Satisfactory _ Needs Consultation_____ Review Required _		
Faculty Advisor Signature_____ Date:		

PHD END-OF-PROGRAM OBJECTIVES	
<i>This section should be completed by the faculty advisor.</i>	
EOP objectives	Please evaluate student's overall progress towards each of these objectives.

1. Analyze historical, sociological, economic, political, and healthcare perspectives of and health policies within the context of population health issues.	
2. Evaluate health policies that influence the access, quality, and cost of healthcare delivery and nursing practice of diverse populations to advance social justice locally and globally.	
3. Generate rigorous, innovative, and high-quality theory-guided qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods research that advances nursing science research that advances nursing knowledge of health policies for populations	

addressing inclusion, equity, equality, and anti-racism.	
4.Create innovative, evidence-based strategies to shape population focused health policy development at local, national, and global levels based on contemporary nursing and interdisciplinary research.	
5.Relate new inquiries, activities, and values to role development as a nurse scientist, steward of the discipline, and educator for the next generation.	

Research Portfolio

In addition to the Individual Development Plan, students may want to create a Research Portfolio to record their goals and progress for their scholarly work during the PhD nursing program, such as conference presentations and published papers.

Annual Reporting of Student Progress

At the end of each semester, the Program Director will review each student's transcript and assess the adequacy of each student's progress in achieving university and program objectives. Students will be required to complete the Individual Development Plan in collaboration with the academic advisor annually in April, submit the Plan to the Program Director and the Program Assistant.

If students are not progressing as expected within the UMass Boston Statute of Limitations (SOL; 8 years), the Program Director, in consultation with the academic advisors, will prescribe a course of action to be completed for the student to return to good standing in the program.

The Program Director will inform students in writing that they are not meeting minimum academic standards and what the committee prescribes as corrective action. Students may notify the Program Director that they would like to voluntarily withdraw from the program. If students exceed the SOL or withdraw from the program, they may apply for reenrollment if they fully intend to complete all program requirements.

Course Load—Full and Part-Time Enrollment

International students are required to register as full-time students (9 credits) each semester and maintain a 3.0 GPA. See the International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) site for FAQs. ([ISSS](http://issss.umb.edu)) | [Current Students - UMass Boston \(umb.edu\)](http://issss.umb.edu) and other current information..

Furthermore, all students and students in the BS-PhD track must maintain full-time enrollment throughout the program. Full-time students are expected to take at least nine (9) credit hours per semester. Full-time continuous MS-PhD track students should complete all coursework in the relevant Plan of Study by the end of the second academic year of study, whereas full-time continuous BS-PhD students should complete all coursework in the relevant Plan of Study by the end of the third academic year.

The university considers graduate students engaged in dissertation research to be full-time students, regardless of the number of dissertation credits for which they register, provided the Program Director certifies they are working full-time on research. A student may not take more than 6 dissertation credits in one semester.

Part-time MS-PhD students must carry at least six (6) credits per semester in each of the fall and spring semesters. Part-time MS-PhD students should complete their coursework in three years. A student may take up to 15 credits during the fall and spring semesters and up to 9 credits in the summer. Any student who wishes to register for more than the maximum credit load must secure written permission from the Program Director and approval from the Office of Graduate Studies.

Electives

Electives should enhance the student's knowledge and skills in research methods to complete the dissertation requirement, Program Director.

Courses offered by the Donna M. and Robert J. Manning College of Nursing and Health Sciences at UMass Boston, any of the campuses within the UMass system, or other PhD or Master's programs on either campus that are at the **600-level or above** and focus on research methods can be taken as electives. Each course will appear on the student's transcript with the course title and grade.

Students may take graduate-level courses at other universities with the approval of the UMass Boston PhD Nursing Program Director. The student must make the request in writing and submit a copy of the course syllabus. Only six (6) credits from other universities outside of the UMass System may be applied to this program (see section on "waivers").

Comprehensive Examination

Draft: November 14, 2023/January 15, 2024/February 5, 2025/Approved by PhD Nursing Program Committee March 2025/Approved by Department of Nursing Faculty April 2025; Additional editorial clarifications added in May 2025

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON

PhD Nursing Program Comprehensive Examination

1. Introduction

The comprehensive exam should demonstrate the student's conceptual knowledge of a phenomenon of interest and research methods that give the chair and other committee member confidence that the student is prepared to progress to their dissertation research. The goal of the comprehensive examination is to establish the foundation for a high-quality rigorous dissertation.

2. Two Options for Comprehensive Exam

There are two options for the Comprehensive Exam format

- traditional 2 papers
- scholarship and 1 other paper.

Specifically, students can choose the traditional 2 paper option OR a 1 paper + scholarship option. Scholarship combines 1 paper written specially for the comprehensive examination and one paper that is accepted as qualified scholarship activities. Qualified scholarship includes a student first-authored paper that is in press or published in a peer-reviewed journal. The option selected by the student must be approved by the comprehensive examination committee members (chair plus second reader).

Regardless of the selected option,

- one paper must focus on a conceptual issue (health policy analysis, concept analysis, or review and synthesis of literature) and
- one paper must focus on a methodological issue (critique of instruments to measure a concept; diverse research methods used to measure a concept. Note that the concept should be identified in the conceptual paper)

After the approval of the option selected by the student, the student will prepare an outline for each paper, which is to be reviewed and approved by the faculty members who will be the comprehensive examination committee members.

Following approval of the outlines, the student prepares the papers, which are to be reviewed and approved by the comprehensive examination committee members.

Following approval of the papers, the student proceeds to an oral examination.

More specifically, there are two components for the comprehensive examination: the written component and oral component.

Committee Structure

Comprehensive Exam committee consists of two members:

- 4) The student will select one Chair of the Committee- The Chair must be a tenure track faculty member in the Department of Nursing.
- 4) The student and Chair will select the second reader. The second reader must be a member of the UMass Boston faculty. If the student's work is produced within a faculty member's program of

research or a research team, the second reader for the committee must come from outside that team to offer an outsider's objective perspective.

- 4) The PhD Program Director will select a standard reader if the two members cannot reach consensus about the comprehensive examination outcome.
- 4) The student will submit the **Comprehensive Examination Form Stage 1** with the list of the proposed committee members to the Program Director.

Timeline Summary

All students are required to submit a timeline to the comprehensive examination committee and the PhD nursing program assistant. The timeline pertains to either option for the comprehensive examination.

Timeline Summary

***Note:** The actual timeline (start date) for initiating the Comprehensive Exam procedures will be determined on an individual basis.*

Step 1: Student and Chair collaborate on creation of the outline for either option with input from the second reader. Student will submit the **Comprehensive Examination Form Stage 1** and timeline to Program Director. See Process 5.3 below for guidelines for the outline. **See additional file for the Stage 1 form.**

Step 2: The Chair and second reader approve the papers for the selected option. The student then has 4 weeks to complete the papers. See 7 below for additional guidelines for the papers.

Step 3: The student submits the papers to the committee members and to the PhD Nursing Program Office. The committee members have 2 weeks for their review and decision about the papers.

Decision about the written papers component of the comprehensive examination

Pass – The student works with the PhD Nursing Program Assistant to schedule the oral exam.

Conditional Pass – The student must revise and resubmit in two weeks; the committee determines Pass or Fail within one additional week.

Fail – Do not progress – If a student fails the written exam, one retake of the written component is allowed within one year at the discretion of the committee.

Step 4: Student participates in a one to two-hour oral examination. The oral exam should be a **summary** of the two papers (conceptual and methods), and may be presented as a PowerPoint file. The oral exam may be virtual. Prior to the oral examination, student will submit the **Comprehensive Examination Form Stage 2**. **See additional file for the Stage 2 form.**

Decision about the oral component of the comprehensive examination on

Pass – The student becomes a PhD candidate and proceeds to develop the dissertation proposal and takes any other needed research methods elective(s) that will support the dissertation proposal

Conditional Pass – The student must retake of the oral examination, which will be scheduled within one week. The committee determines pass or fail.

Fail – The student may not proceed to dissertation proposal development. The student is permitted one retake of the comprehensive exam within one year, at the discretion of the committee.

Step 5: Student will submit a copy of their committee approved papers.

5. Process

5.1. Responsibilities of the Comprehensive Examination Committee: See 3 Committee Structure above. The comprehensive examination committee is responsible for reviewing and approving the option selected by the student, reviewing and approving the papers, and conducting the oral component of the comprehensive examination, as well as making the decision about the written and oral components of the comprehensive examination.

2. **Determination of Comprehensive Examination Format and Content:** After discussion and negotiation with the comprehensive examination committee, the student will select the option for the comprehensive examination (see 2 and 5.1 above) and will indicate the specific topic (phenomenon of interest) for the papers, which should reflect the student's research interest and be related to the proposed dissertation research.

3. **Development of the Outline:** After discussion and negotiation with the committee members, the student will create a detailed outline for each paper. Each outline is limited to no more than 3 double-spaced pages. The outlines should identify the content and content organization for each paper and must clearly indicate how the conceptual paper and the methods paper differ. The papers must reflect the student's ability to think critically and analytically, as well as their ability to synthesize the published literature about the topic. *Guidelines are available for each type of paper in the Graduate Student Handbook and are also included at the end of this document.*

The outline for each paper is to be sufficiently detailed for the committee to be able to follow the logical flow of the papers. Following approval by the committee, the outlines serve as an agreement regarding the content for each paper.

6. **Approval of Outline and Writing the Papers:** In accordance with the timeline (see 4 Timeline Summary above) the committee approves the outlines and the student then works independently to write the papers. The comprehensive examination papers are to follow the format of the most current version of the American Psychological Association Manual for Publication.

7. The papers will be evaluated in terms of accuracy of content, clarity of writing, critical thinking, content organization, and appropriate format. The student's original analytic thinking is emphasized over extensive compilations and summaries of literature. Each paper must be between 15-20 pages, excluding title page, abstract, references, any tables and/or figures, and appendices. The format for each paper must adhere to the most recent edition of American Psychological Association Manual guidelines. Students have a maximum of four weeks to complete the papers.

8. **Paper Submission:** An electronic copy of each paper must be submitted to the comprehensive examination committee members and to the PhD Nursing Program Office by 5:00 P.M. Eastern Time on the due date, which must be no later than 4 weeks following approval of the outline for each paper.

9. **Paper Review:** Once the papers have been submitted, the committee members will have two weeks to review the papers. Each written paper will be assigned one of three grades: Pass, Conditional Pass (Revise and Resubmit), or Fail. Students who are given a "Conditional Pass" will be given comments from the committee describing why revisions are deemed necessary and will be given two weeks from the time they receive the comments to submit revisions. If a student receives a grade of Pass, the student will work with the Program Assistant to schedule the oral component of the comprehensive examination. If a student receives a grade of Fail for one or both papers, the student will not progress to the oral examination. The student may retake the comprehensive examination within one year.

10. **Oral Examination:** The purpose of the oral component of the comprehensive exam is to evaluate the student's *overall understanding of research* related to the student's area of research interest. During the oral component, students will have the opportunity to clarify any questions arising from the written papers. The oral component of the comprehensive examination will focus on questions relevant to the written papers as well as questions regarding overall objectives of the PhD program. *At no time during the oral component should the examination be recorded by faculty or the student unless expressly approved in advance and in writing by the committee chair and student.*

10.1. Students are expected to make a 15-minute in-person presentation for each papers to the committee. PowerPoint slides and/or handouts are recommended. The remaining time for the oral component of the comprehensive examination will be for questions from the committee members and answers by the student.

10.2. Questions will be developed by the committee members and reflect the PhD program objectives and overall content of the coursework in the program. Examples of questions faculty could ask:

- a. Your work is grounded in a specific conceptual or theoretical perspective. What other conceptual and/or theoretical perspectives did you or could you consider for your work?
- b. In your study of population health disparities, you are proposing to use existing population-based datasets. What are the main strengths and limitations of this approach for your study topic?
- c. Explain how a different conceptual model would change the approach to your research.
- d. You discuss the analytic strategy you might plan to use for your research. Why is this the best analytic method for your research and what other methods of analysis might be applicable?
- e. You have chosen to conduct, for example, a survey of school nurses to understand knowledge and skills associated with management of asthma in elementary school children. Given that a substantial body of knowledge in this area already exists, how will your proposed survey add to the existing knowledge in this area? What other study designs might serve to move the field forward beyond what we already know?
- f. Please discuss the validity and reliability of the measurement instrument(s) you plan to use.

11. **Outcome of the Comprehensive Examination:** The committee will meet in closed session immediately following the oral examination of each student. The committee members' final evaluation of the student is a consensus. The examination outcome is Pass, Conditional Pass, or Fail.

Pass indicates the student has successfully completed the Comprehensive Examination written and oral parts and is admitted to candidacy.

Conditional Pass indicates that one component (one or both written papers and/or the oral examination) of the Comprehensive Examination must be retaken.

- If one or both papers receive a Conditional Pass, students will have 2 weeks to submit the required revisions. The Committee will then have 1 week to review the paper(s) and determine the outcome: Pass or Fail.
- If the oral component of the examination receives a Conditional Pass, a retake will be scheduled within 1 week. The Committee will then determine the outcome: Pass or Fail.

Fail indicates the student did not successfully pass both components of the comprehensive examination and may have the option to retake the one additional time within one year. Note that the student must maintain matriculation during that time by paying the program fee for each semester when no courses are being taken.

12. The Committee Chair completes **Comprehensive Examination Form Stage 2** and forwards it to the PhD Program Office.

- 12.1 If the student passes the comprehensive examination, the PhD Program Director completes and forwards the **Stage 1 of Dissertation Tracking Form** (Notification of Candidacy) to the Office of Graduate Studies.
- 12.2 If the student fails the comprehensive examination, one retake is allowed at the discretion of the comprehensive examination committee. The student should meet with the committee chair to determine an approach for addressing deficiencies and to identify a time frame for retaking the examination.
- 12.3. If a student fails the comprehensive examination, and the committee recommends the student not be offered the opportunity to retake the exam, they will be presented to the PhD Program Committee for consideration of dismissal from the program.

Both components of the comprehensive examination (written and oral) must be passed before the student progresses to PhD candidacy (designated as PhD candidate) and development of the dissertation proposal. The comprehensive examination content should guide and inform the substantive content and methodology used in preparation of the dissertation proposal.

Academic Integrity/Honor System: The comprehensive examination will be administered on the honor system. Students are not allowed to consult anyone (other students, faculty, outside professionals, or any other person) in completing the comprehensive examination. After acceptance of the outline for each paper by the comprehensive examination committee, papers are to be entirely the student's work, without additional assistance including the assistance of technical writers or editors. Any violation of this rule will constitute the basis for dismissal from the program. Note that use of an artificial intelligence program is not permitted, nor is any instance of plagiarism. It is understood that an in-press or published paper used for the written component of the comprehensive examination may have been written with input from faculty, although the topic for the paper must have been selected by the student and the student must be the first author.

Note: Content from either or both of the comprehensive exam papers (conceptual and methods) can be used for the dissertation (for example, the content from the conceptual paper could be used for Chapter 2 and parts for Chapter 1 for the traditional dissertation, or for the introduction "bookend" for the 3-paper dissertation. The content from the methods paper could be used for part of Chapter 3 for the traditional dissertation or perhaps as part of the methods section of the introduction "bookend" or for one of the data-based papers for the 3-paper dissertation. How much content from either paper depends on the dissertation topic and the dissertation committee advice.

Guidelines Review and Synthesis of the Literature

Overview

This document provides guidelines for students writing their review and synthesis of the literature paper as partial completion of the PhD Comprehensive Examination. Reviewing and synthesizing the literature allows the student to explore and articulate the current state of the knowledge and

priorities for future research in relation to a socially and theoretically significant research topic. In keeping with the goals of the PhD Nursing Program, students will analyze the current knowledge regarding a population health or health policy issue. The review will be a synthesis of what is known and what gaps exist in the literature, concluding with a recommendation for future research.

General Instructions

Students are expected to submit a detailed outline of no more than 3 double spaced pages to the Committee Chair before beginning the paper. The paper must be between **15-20 pages** excluding title page, abstract, references, any tables and/or figures, and appendices. The paper format must adhere to the American Psychological Association Manual (6th ed.) guidelines.

Outline

The outline should identify the content and content organization for the paper.

Critical Elements of the Paper

The paper should contain the following:

- Abstract: Write a clear and concise abstract.
- Research problem: Clearly identify the population health issue or health policy.
- Background/Introduction: State the social and theoretical significance of the population health issue or health policy. Identify and describe the conceptual model of nursing used to guide the review.
- Methods: Describe the search strategy, databases used, keyword search terms, and the inclusion and exclusion criteria.
- Results: Report and display in a PRISMA or similar diagram the results of the literature search, including types of literature selected for the review. Synthesize the research findings in narrative form. Include a table with details of the literature reviewed. Link the theoretical concepts identified in the literature with relevant concepts of the conceptual model used to guide the review in a narrative and a diagram.
- Discussion: Identify the gaps in the literature and the utility of the conceptual model used to guide the review.
- Conclusion: Identify the descriptive, explanatory, or predictive middle-range theory that emerged from the review and synthesis of the literature, including the theory concepts and propositions.
- Recommendations: Identify recommendations that have clear implications for research (knowledge development), and/or translation of research findings to practice (practice improvement) and/or policy (policy formulation or implementation).

What to Avoid, Writing Style

- Students should keep in mind that they are not reporters; they are research analysts. The paper content must go beyond descriptions of the literature reviewed to include a detailed analytic discussion and critique.
- Any overlaps between the review and synthesis of the literature paper and methodological paper should be kept to a minimum. Each paper is to be distinct from the other. Quote only when you want to strengthen your argument through another writer's work. The Committee members expect to read the student's analysis and interpretation of the literature (main findings and gaps). Please keep in mind that publication does not guarantee high quality work, that methods can be misapplied or results misinterpreted, and that all literature has limitations.
- The paper should be written in an objective, scientific, and professional way without colloquialisms. It is expected that the student will fully edit the paper before submission to Committee members, including improvements in clarity, correction of typographical errors, and avoidance of redundant sentences, paragraphs, and concepts.

References

Fawcett, J. (2013). Thoughts about conceptual models, theories, and literature reviews. *Nursing Science Quarterly*, 26, 285-288

Grant, M. J., & Booth, A. (2009). A typology of reviews: An analysis of 14 review types and associated methodologies. *Health Information and Libraries Journal*, 26, 91–108.

<http://www.cochranelibrary.com/>

Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA). Retrieved from www.prisma-statement.org.

See also *Journal of Advanced Nursing* author guidelines for systematic literature review papers: [http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/\(ISSN\)1365-2648/homepage/systematic_review_or_other_type_of_review_paper.htm](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1365-2648/homepage/systematic_review_or_other_type_of_review_paper.htm)

Guidelines Concept Analysis Paper

Overview

This document provides guidelines for students writing their concept analysis paper as partial completion of the PhD Comprehensive Examination. In keeping with the goals of the PhD Nursing Program, students will analyze the current knowledge regarding a concept that is relevant for population health or health policy. A concept analysis paper is a report of an in- depth exploration of a concept. A concept analysis is a first step in communicating meanings, understandings, and feelings to create a shared definition of the concept.

General Instructions

Students are expected to submit a detailed outline of no more than 3 double spaced pages to the Committee Chair before beginning the paper. The paper must be between **15-20 pages** excluding title page, abstract, references, any tables and/or figures, and appendices. The paper format must adhere to the American Psychological Association Manual (6th ed.) guidelines.

Outline

The outline should identify the content and content organization for the paper.

Critical Elements of the Paper

The paper should contain the following components:

1. Abstract: Write a clear and concise abstract.
2. Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to present an analysis of [name the concept].
3. Background: State the need for the concept analysis by addressing the social and theoretical significance of the concept. (Do not write that no one has done an analysis of the concept as the need.) Identify and describe the conceptual model of nursing that guided the concept analysis.

4. Data Sources: Identify the databases used, the years of literature searched, the search terms used, and the inclusion and exclusion criteria.
5. Review methods: Identify the approach to concept analysis used.
6. Results: Identify the number and types of papers used for the analysis, the attributes of the concept, the antecedents to and consequences of the concept, and the definition of the concept.
7. Discussion: Link the attributes of antecedents to, and consequences of the concept with relevant concepts of the conceptual model used to guide the concept analysis in a narrative and a diagram. Identify the descriptive, explanatory, or predictive middle-range theory that emerged from the concept analysis, including the theory concepts and propositions. Evaluate the utility of the conceptual model used to guide the concept analysis.
8. Conclusion: State the implications of the concept analysis for research (knowledge development), and/or translation of research findings to practice (practice improvement) and/or policy (policy formulation or implementation).

What to Avoid, Writing Style

- Students should keep in mind that they are not reporters; they are research analysts. The paper content must go beyond descriptions of the literature reviewed to include a detailed analytic discussion and critique.
- Any overlaps between the concept analysis paper and methodological paper should be kept to a minimum. Each paper is to be distinct from the other. Quote only when you want to strengthen your argument through another writer's work. The Committee members expect to read the student's analysis and interpretation of the literature about the concept. Please keep in mind that publication does not guarantee high quality work, that methods can be misapplied or results misinterpreted, and that all literature has limitations.
- The paper should be written in an objective, scientific, and professional way without colloquialisms. It is expected that the student will fully edit the paper before submission to Committee members, including improvements in clarity, correction of typographical errors, and avoidance of redundant sentences, paragraphs, and concepts.

References

- Fawcett, J. (2012). Thoughts about concept analysis: Multiple approaches, one result. *Nursing Science Quarterly*, 25, 285-287.
- Paley, J. (1996). How not to clarify concepts. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 24, 572-578.
- Parse, R. R. (1997). Concept inventing: Unitary creations. *Nursing Science Quarterly*, 10, 63-64.
- Risjord, M. (2009). Rethinking concept analysis. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 65, 684-691.
- Rodgers, B. L., & Knafl, K. A. (2000). *Concept development in nursing: Foundations, techniques, and applications* (2nd ed.). Philadelphia: Saunders.

Journal of Advanced Nursing author guidelines for concept analysis papers:
[http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/\(ISSN\)1365-](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1365-)

Guidelines Policy Analysis Paper

Overview

This document provides guidelines for students writing their policy analysis paper as partial completion of the PhD Comprehensive Examination. The policy analysis paper provides an opportunity for the student knowledge of the policy process and the ability to conduct a policy analysis.

General Instructions

Students are expected to submit a detailed outline of no more than 3 double spaced pages to the Committee Chair before beginning the paper. The paper must be between **15-20 pages** excluding title page, abstract, references, any tables and/or figures, and appendices. The paper format must adhere to the American Psychological Association Manual (6th ed.) guidelines.

Outline

The outline should identify the content and content organization for the paper.

Critical Elements of the Paper

1. Introduction: What is the issue, problem or policy you are examining?
2. Background of the Health Policy: Identify and describe the social significance of a health policy that addresses an individual health condition or a population health issue. Identify and describe the conceptual model of nursing that guided the analysis of the health policy, including associated guidelines for health policy analysis. Describe (a) the historical roots of the problem, (b) the sociological forces that have shaped the problem and the past attempts by society to address the problem (if there are past attempts), (c) the political forces that have resulted in the current status of the problem (if any), and (d) the economic forces or factors that have shaped the current health policy.
3. Agenda Setting: Explain how or why the health policy addresses an individual health condition or population health issue that is on the national agenda? Identify relevant stakeholders: who and why are some stakeholders support the health policy and who and why some other stakeholders are opposed to the health policy? Discuss how important stakeholder support or opposition is to implementation or continued implementation of the health policy.
4. Policy Alternatives: Consider alternatives to the health policy. Are there other policies or solutions that would be better to address the individual health condition or population health issue? What other solutions have been tried? What do we know about the success of this and other health policies from the findings of empirical research?
5. Implementation: What agencies, organizations, or branches of government would most likely be or already are involved in implementing this health policy? What barriers to implementation exist? What has or would facilitate success of implementation of the health policy?
6. Evaluation: If the health policy has been or will be enacted into law, how would you determine its success? Describe the process a researcher might use to explore, describe, or test the outcomes of the policy, including intended and unintended consequences.
7. Discussions and Conclusions: Summarize the key points of the analysis. Evaluate the utility of the

conceptual model used to guide the health policy analysis. Describe the role that doctorally prepared nurses have in facilitating any needed refinements in the health policy and how these nurses can influence implementation or continued implementation of the health policy. Identify the relevant concepts and propositions of the middle-range theory that constitute the health policy.

What to Avoid, Writing Style

Students should keep in mind that they are not reporters; they are research analysts. The paper content must go beyond descriptions of the literature reviewed to include a detailed analytic discussion and critique.

Any overlaps between the health policy analysis paper and methodological paper should be kept to a minimum. Each paper is to be distinct from the other. Quote only when you want to strengthen your argument through another writer's work. The Committee members are expecting to read the student's analysis and interpretation of the literature about the health policy. Please keep in mind that publication does not guarantee high quality work, that methods can be misapplied or results misinterpreted, and that all literature has limitations.

The paper should be written in an objective, scientific, and professional way without colloquialisms. It is expected that the student will fully edit the paper before submission to Committee members, including improvements in clarity, correction of typographical errors, and avoidance of redundant sentences, paragraphs, and concepts.

References

- Aronowitz, T., & Fawcett, J. (2015). Analysis of the public policies for sexuality education in Germany and the Netherlands. *American Journal of Sexuality Education, 10*, 140–157.
- Fawcett, J., & Russell, G. (2001). A conceptual model of nursing and health policy. *Policy, Politics, and Nursing Practice, 2*, 108-116.
- Kingdon, J. W. (2011). *Agendas, alternatives, and public policies* (2nd ed. updated). Boston: Longman.
- Russell, G.E., & Fawcett, J. (2005). The conceptual model for nursing and health policy revisited. *Policy, Politics, and Nursing Practice, 6*, 319-326.
- Stone, D. (2012). *Policy paradox: The art of political decision making* (3rd ed.). New York: Norton.

Guidelines Methods Paper

Overview

This document provides guidelines for students writing their methods paper as partial completion of the PhD Comprehensive Examination. In keeping with the goals of the PhD Nursing Program, students will analyze methodological issues associated with a specific population health issue or

health policy.

General Instructions

Students are expected to submit a detailed outline of no more than 3 double spaced pages to the Committee Chair before beginning the paper. The paper must be between **15-20 pages** excluding title page, abstract, references, any tables and/or figures, and appendices. The paper format must adhere to the American Psychological Association Manual (6th ed.) guidelines.

Outline

The outline should identify the content and content organization for the paper.

Critical Elements of the Paper

The paper should contain the following components:

1. Abstract: Write a clear and concise abstract.
2. Background/Introduction: Identify and describe a concept or middle-range theory that addresses an individual health condition or a population health issue. State one or more relevant research questions about the concept or theory.
3. Data sources: Identify the databases used, the years of literature searched, the search terms used, and the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Describe the numbers and types of literature retrieved.
4. Results: Critically analyze and evaluate the methods that have been used to study the population health issue or the health policy, with emphasis on (a) philosophical paradigms evident in the literature reviewed, (b) specific types of qualitative, quantitative, and/or mixed methods theory-generating and/or theory-testing research designs, (c) strategies for selection of populations and/or samples, and (d) data analysis techniques. Evaluation of the methods should include consideration of (a) historical evolution of the research designs, strategies for selection of populations and/or samples, and data analysis techniques, (b) the extent to which the research designs allowed the research question(s) to be answered, (c) appropriateness of the strategies used for selection of populations and/or samples, and adequacy of sample sizes, and (d) appropriateness of data analysis techniques and validity of the statistical conclusions.
5. Conclusion: Discuss the advantages, disadvantages, and limitations of the research designs, strategies for selection of populations and/or samples, and data analysis techniques found in the literature.
6. Prepare a brief (no more than 2 pages) proposal for an **ideal** research design, population or sample selection, and data analysis techniques for one research question about a concept or middle-range theory that addresses an individual health condition or a population health issue. The content of the proposal should emphasize the advantages and avoid or minimize disadvantages and limitations of the research designs, strategies for selection of populations and/or samples, and data analysis techniques found in the literature.

What to Avoid, Writing Style

- Students should keep in mind that they are not reporters; they are research analysts. The paper content must go beyond descriptions of the literature reviewed to include a detailed analytic discussion and critique.
- Any overlaps between the methods paper and conceptual paper should be kept to a minimum. Each paper is to be distinct from the other. Quote only when you want to strengthen your argument through another writer's work. The Committee members expect to read the student's analysis and interpretation of the literature about the concept. Please keep in mind that publication does not guarantee high quality work, that methods can be misapplied or results misinterpreted, and that all literature has limitations.

- The paper should be written in an objective, scientific, and professional way without colloquialisms. It is expected that the student will fully edit the paper before submission to Committee members, including improvements in clarity, correction of typographical errors, and avoidance of redundant sentences, paragraphs, and concepts.

References

- Burns, N., Grove, S. K., & Gray, J. (2011). *Understanding nursing research: Building an evidence-based practice* (5th ed.). Maryland Heights, MO: Elsevier/Saunders.
- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Cohen, J. (1992). A power primer. *Psychological Bulletin*, 112, 155-159.
- Cook, T. D., Campbell D. T. (1979). *Quasi-experimentation*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design, Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Fawcett, J. (2015). Invisible nursing research: Thoughts about mixed methods research and nursing practice. *Nursing Science Quarterly*, 28, 167-168.
- Fawcett, J. (2015). Thoughts about theories and statistics. *Nursing Science Quarterly*, 28, 245- 248.
- Johnson, R. B., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004). Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational Researcher*, 33(7), 14-26.
- Munro, B. H. (2005). *Statistical methods for health care research* (5th ed.). Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams and Wilkins.
- Polit, D. E., & Beck, C. T. (2012). *Nursing research: Generating and assessing evidence for nursing practice* (9th ed.). Philadelphia: Wolters Kluwer Health/Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

Guidelines Measurement Paper

Overview

This document provides guidelines for students writing their measurement paper as partial completion of the PhD Comprehensive Examination. In keeping with the goals of the PhD Nursing Program, students will analyze measurement issues associated with a specific population health

issue or health policy.

General Instructions

Students are expected to submit a detailed outline of no more than 3 double spaced pages to the Committee Chair before beginning the paper. The paper must be between **15-20 pages** excluding title page, abstract, references, any tables and/or figures, and appendices. The paper format must adhere to the American Psychological Association Manual (6th ed.) guidelines.

Outline

The outline should identify the content and content organization for the paper.

Critical Elements of the Paper

The paper should contain the following components:

1. Abstract: Write a clear and concise abstract.
2. Background/Introduction: Identify and define a concept of middle-range theory that addresses an individual health condition or population health issue; the appropriate middle-range theory should guide the examination of the selected concept's measurement.
3. Data sources: Identify the databases used, the years of literature searched, the search terms used, and the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Describe the numbers and types of literature retrieved. The literature should include the original reports of development of the instruments and reports of the use of the instruments for research and practice purposes.
4. Results: Identify, describe, critically analyze, and evaluate existing qualitative and/or quantitative research instruments that have been used to measure the middle-range theory concept. Summarize the information found in the literature about the trustworthiness (involving credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability) of any sources of data collection and instruments (e.g. research tools such as focus group or interview guides, document data) used to obtain qualitative (word) data and the psychometric properties (types of reliability and validity) of any instruments used to obtain quantitative (numerical) data. Description of the research instruments should include the number and type of items; methods used to analyze word data; and rating scales, scoring procedures, and interpretation of scores for numerical data. Evaluation of the research instruments should include consideration of (a) historical evolution of the research instruments, such as refinements in each instrument and/or use of newer instruments over time, (b) extent to which existing estimates of trustworthiness and/or psychometric properties are adequate, (c) cultural equivalence of any instruments used for studies of population or samples from diverse cultures, and (d) consistency of the measurement with translation from concept into measure (theoretical or conceptual system to research or operational system).
5. Conclusion: Discuss the overall strengths and weaknesses of the existing research instruments found in the literature.
6. Prepare a brief (no more than 2 pages) proposal for an **ideal** approach to the development of a new research instrument or to further development and testing of an existing research instrument that will measure the middle-range theory concept within the context of a conceptual model of nursing. The content of the proposal should emphasize the strengths and avoid or minimize weaknesses of the existing research instruments found in the literature.

What to Avoid, Writing Style

- Students should keep in mind that they are not reporters; they are research analysts. The paper content must go beyond descriptions of the literature reviewed to include a detailed analytic discussion and critique.

- Any overlaps between the methods paper and conceptual paper should be kept to a minimum. Each paper is to be distinct from the other. Quote only when you want to strengthen your argument through another writer's work. The Committee members expect to read the student's analysis and interpretation of the literature about the concept. Please keep in mind that publication does not guarantee high quality work, that methods can be misapplied or results misinterpreted, and that all literature has limitations.
- The paper should be written in an objective, scientific, and professional way without colloquialisms. It is expected that the student will fully edit the paper before submission to Committee members, including improvements in clarity, correction of typographical errors, and avoidance of redundant sentences, paragraphs, and concepts.

References

- Burns, N., Grove, S. K., & Gray, J. (2011). *Understanding nursing research: Building an evidence-based practice* (5th ed.). Maryland Heights, MO: Elsevier/Saunders.
- Cook, D. A., Beckman, T. J. (2005). Current concepts in validity and reliability for psychometric instruments: Theory and application. *The American Journal of Medicine*, 119, 166.e7-166e16.
- Flaherty, J. A., Gaviria, F. M., Pathak, D., Mitchell, T., Wintrob, R., Richman, J. A., & Birz, S. (1988). Developing instruments for cross-cultural psychiatric research. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases*, 176, 257-263.
- Nunnally, J. C., & Bernstein, I. H. (1994). *Psychometric theory* (3rd ed.). New York: McGraw- Hill.
- Polit, D. E., & Beck, C. T. (2012). *Nursing research: Generating and assessing evidence for nursing practice* (9th ed.). Philadelphia: Wolters Kluwer Health/Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

Progression

Successful completion of the comprehensive exam advances the student to doctoral candidacy. The examination is to be passed before the student enrolls in NU899, Dissertation Research. Papers required for the written component of the exam should guide and inform the substantive content and methodology used in preparation of the dissertation proposal.

PhD Candidacy and Degree Credentials

Degree credentials (e.g., AD, BS, BSN, MS, MSN, PhD, EdD, DNP, DNSc) are commonly used and indicate completion of a particular educational program.

The highest degree attained is usually placed immediately after the last name, followed by certifications, licenses, and fellowships. All or some degrees can be used. Terms used to indicate partial completion of a degree or student status such as “PhDc” (PhD candidate or “ABD” (all but dissertation) are fabricated terms and are not to be used.

PhD or DNP candidates, should use the following convention:

Joanne Doe, MSN, RN (Doctoral Candidate OR PhD/DNP Candidate).

See APA <http://www.apa.org/monitor/2016/09/misuse-phd.aspx> for rationale.

Dissertation

The PhD dissertation is an original body of work in which the candidate demonstrates an in-depth understanding of a population health or health care policy research question that is relevant to individuals, groups, or communities. The dissertation should demonstrate the candidate’s ability to effectively meet the goals and objectives of the program.

Although dissertation planning may begin early in the program, the dissertation process normally begins after the student has passed the comprehensive examination and has been admitted to candidacy.

There are five (5) dissertation process forms that need to be completed across the dissertation stages (for forms see [Microsoft Teams Bulletin Board for PhD Nursing Students](#)).

Student successfully completes comprehensive exams	(FT/PT 39 credits in MS-PhD Programs OR FT 60 credits in BS-PhD Programs).
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NU899

- Taken after successfully completing comprehensive exams
- See advisor for advising on how many credits students should register for NU899 (3 credits or 6 credits).

NU899 Dissertation Research

Dissertation credits represent the work being done in developing and defending a proposal and completing the work of the dissertation. This time varies to completion of the dissertation among students.

Program Fee (CAS 600)

After all NU 899 credits are completed, student should register for the program fee until the dissertation is defended.

Dissertation Stages

Stage or action	What it means	What is required	Signature required
Stage One:	Student successfully completes all	No action needed from student.	Graduate program

Notification of Candidacy	required courses and comprehensive exams.	The Program Assistant submits the form to the Office of Graduate Studies.	director (GPD); Office of Graduate Studies
Stage Two: Notification of Proposed Dissertation Committee	With the guidance and advice of the selected chairperson, the chair identifies suggested committee members to the student. This is done prior to the committee's approval of a student's dissertation proposal.	Student provides stage 2 form completed to GPD and Program Assistant. The Program Assistant submits the form to the Office of Graduate Studies.	GPD; Office of Graduate Studies
Stage Three: Notification of Proposal Acceptance	When chairperson determines, a dissertation proposal is sent to committee members (allow 4 weeks to read 28 days). If hearing is successful – student proceeds to conduct dissertation study. IRB application is completed and approval is obtained as needed.	Once date and time are agreed upon, committee and student notifies GPD and Program Assistant. Student provides stage 4 form completed. If needed Program Assistant will provide support in facilitating room request After committee members sign the form, the chairperson returns the form to the Program Assistant. The Program Assistant submits the form to the Office of Graduate Studies.	Dissertation committee members; GPD; Office of Graduate Studies

Stage Four: Notification of Intent to Defend Dissertation	When chairperson determines, final draft of dissertation is sent to committee members (allow 4 weeks to read). When chairperson determines, after polling committee members, schedule defense 2-4 weeks in advance. It is expected that the chair and the committee members be physically present at the defense; extenuating circumstances can be considered in collaboration with the PhD program director.	Student notifies GPD and Program Assistant once date and time are agreed upon for Dissertation Defense. Student provides stage 4 form completed. Program Assistant will provide support in facilitating room request. The Program Assistant submits the form to the Office of Graduate Studies.	Dissertation committee members; GPD; Office of Graduate Studies
Stage			

Five:	Report on the results of the dissertation defense.	Notice of dissertation defense must be posted at the College 2-4 weeks in advance.	Dissertation committee members; GPD; Graduate Studies
Approval of Dissertation Defense	The candidate must pay particular attention to deadlines and the timing of the dissertation defense to allow enough time for a completed manuscript to be filed prior to June or December degree dates. (See below for dates.) Any recording of the dissertation defense needs to be approved by the student defending as a matter of intellectual property and privacy.	Student provides stage 5 form completed to GPD and Program Assistant. Program Assistant will provide form to the chair. After committee members sign the form, the chair returns the form to the Program Assistant. The Program Assistant submits the form to the Office of Graduate Studies. Y grade for NU899 converted to letter grade by chair of committee.	

Stages of Dissertation Progression

The form for each stage can be found at <https://www.umb.edu/admissions/graduate-students/faculty-resources/forms/>

Dissertation Application and Process

Students should inform the program director/assistant when they officially have completed the requirements for the degree BEFORE SUBMITTING THE DEGREE APPLICATION.

There is a difference between finishing the degree requirements and “graduating/graduation”. Students will be formerly invited to commencement/graduation by the university.

It is the responsibility of the students to work with their dissertation chair to complete the signature page for the dissertation. This action needs to be completed well in advance of commencement/graduation. It is mandatory that signatures be completed on the day of the dissertation defense or at the time when all editing and changes have been agreed upon by the chair and committee.

Mid-March	All dissertation work must be completed by mid-March of the year in which the candidate plans to graduate, and a defense scheduled no later than the end of March to comply with April 20 th deadline to submit a revised dissertation copy to OGS.
Mid-November	For December degree date, these dates are respectively early to comply with December 1st degree date.
<u>July 20th</u> for August degree date <u>April 20th</u> for June degree date <u>December 1st</u> for December degree date	The deadline for candidates to submit a copy of their defended and revised dissertation, approved in full for content by the program, to the OGS via the UMass Boston ProQuest/UMI ETD website.

The Dissertation Committee

The candidate selects a chair and consults with the chair on which individuals may be the best candidates to participate as members on the dissertation committee. ***The committee must have a minimum of three members and no more than five (5) members. At least two (2) members, including the chair, should come from the Department of Nursing at the Donna M. and Robert J. Manning College of Nursing and Health Sciences Manning College of Nursing and Health Sciences.*** The dissertation committee shall include a member who is external to the candidate's program. The external member(s) may come either from within the University or outside the University. The graduate program director will be responsible for any additional nominations of committee members where indicated. At least one member should be a nurse with a PhD degree and is explicitly asked to ensure the student work is advancing nursing science and the discipline. If the chair is a non-nurse, then they should actively seek advice and input from the nurse committee member on the salience of the student work to the discipline of nursing.

The candidate, in collaboration with the chair, should provide in writing 1) a one-page explanation of the unique contributions or expertise that will be offered by the external member and 2) a CV to the program director. The candidate must submit the names of the committee members and chair to the program director (Stage 2 of the dissertation tracking form). The program director reviews the submission and, if approved, forwards the form to the Office of Graduate Studies for review and approval. CVs for every external member of the committee must accompany the form. See appendix A. for best practices for dissertation.

Qualifications and Responsibilities of Chairs and Members of Dissertation Committees

Qualifications of faculty to chair dissertation committees:

1. To qualify to chair a dissertation committee, a department of nursing faculty member must:
 - a. Hold a PhD degree in nursing or a related discipline.
 - b. Have a record of distinguished scholarly publications and/or professional achievement within a period of five years prior to the formation of any dissertation committee that the faculty member chairs.

Qualifications of faculty and/or outside professionals serving as members of dissertation committees:

To qualify to be a member of the dissertation committee, a faculty member must have

1. An appropriate terminal degree (typically a PhD or EdD but in some instances a degree such as a JD, MD DBS, DNP, or MBA may be appropriate).
2. A record of excellence in scholarly publications and/or professional achievement within a period of five years prior to the formation of the dissertation committee.

Responsibilities of Chairs and Members of Dissertation Committees

The dissertation committee chair holds primary responsibility for advising the student in their dissertation work. Their responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Work with the student to identify the dissertation topic and methods.
- Provide ongoing support to the student with proposal development and dissertation work.
- Monitor student progress and help keep the student on track.
- Review the draft of the proposal and dissertation (by section and the whole work) and make sure the accuracy, quality, and clarity of the work, and the appropriateness of the formatting.
- Assess if the proposal and dissertation draft is ready for the committee to review.
- Work with the student to address concerns and suggestions raised by the committee members.
- Work with the student to schedule the proposal hearing and dissertation defense.
- Facilitate the meeting during the proposal hearing and dissertation defense.
- Work with the student to address any further questions and concerns raised during the proposal hearing and dissertation defense.
- Make sure the revisions are made to adequately address the suggestions, questions, and concerns.

The responsibilities of the dissertation committee include, but are not limited to:

- Provide conceptual and/or methodological guidance to the student during proposal development and dissertation phase.
- Review the proposal and dissertation closely and provide in depth feedback in a timely manner.
- Make sure the dissertation explicitly speaks to how the dissertation works related to the discipline of nursing.
- Determine the quality and acceptability of the proposal and dissertation. If the committee member has major concerns about the proposal or the dissertation, they should let the chair know at least one week prior to the defense date.
- Attend the proposal hearing and dissertation defense and provide critical inquiries about the work.

The Dissertation

The candidate is required to use the [Standards for the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations](#) to format their dissertation from the moment they begin their dissertation. Failure to format dissertations before deadlines may result in delays to degree completion. Policies for dissertations are available at the [UMass Graduate Students & Assistantships webpage](#).

HELPFUL HINTS TO FORMAT YOUR DOCUMENT

These hints are designed to help you avoid common mistakes that will take you the most time to correct. In particular, any mistakes that affect pagination can be time-consuming to fix because then you will have to redo your Table of Contents as well. So, make sure you follow the margin instructions exactly. Please use the following tips to help you format your document.

PLEASE NOTE: These are not all the guidelines, and you must still read and incorporate all the guidelines in this [Standards for the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations booklet](#).

1. Make sure you use Times New Roman 12 point font. If you use the wrong font, your page numbers will change when you correct this, and your Table of Contents will have to be redone.

2. Check your margins. They should be LEFT 1 1/4", RIGHT 1", TOP: 1", BOTTOM: 1". The left margin must be 1.25" because your document will be bound in an 8" x 11" volume. A too tight left margin will cause you to lose important data. This is a common mistake. If you need to correct margins after submission, all the page numbers will change, and you will need to create a new Table of Contents.

3. Page numbers should be positioned at least 1.25" from the bottom of the page (measured from the bottom of the page number to the bottom of the page).

4. The title of each chapter must be 2" from the top of the page, and you should hit return a few times to create some space between the title and the beginning of the text. Use the same spacing between the chapter title and the text in every chapter.

5. Use the orphan/widow control found in most versions of Word. No page can begin or end with a single line of text or a single subheading.

6. Page numbering - Page numbering begins with roman numerals on the Abstract page, which should be page iv. There should be no page numbers on the title page, copyright page, or signature page. Continue roman numerals until the first page of your thesis or dissertation, which should be Arabic numeral 1.

7. Placement of Tables, Illustrations, and Charts can be tricky. If the table, illustration, or chart fills more than half the page, then it can remain alone on the page. If you have sequential small tables, illustrations, and charts that can fit two to a page, then do so.

No landscape pages are allowed. They will not fit when the document is bound into an 8.5 x 11 volume. You may place a table or figure on its side on a portrait-oriented page to make it fit. You may also shrink it to make it fit. But the title must be at the top of the portrait-oriented page, and the page number must be at the bottom of the portrait-oriented page.

Feel free to contact the format editor with questions or samples of tables/illustrations/charts placement while you are working and before you submit your document.

8. Lists of Figures and Tables - for titles in the Lists, use only the text up to the first period of the title as the title, even if the title on the table/figure is longer than that. Make sure the text you use for your title in the List is identical, word for word, including the words you choose to capitalize, in the text and in the list.

9. All subheadings in the Table of Contents must be identical, word for word, including the words you choose to capitalize, to the subheadings in the text.

10. References - do not split references. Do not start a citation on one page and finish it on the next. Keep the entire citation on the same page.

11. Subheadings - this is a common area of difficulty for students and can be time-consuming to correct.

This is how it should work.
The first time the reader sees a subheading in chapter 1, that is the first level subheading. However, you format that first level subheading in chapter 1 is how you must format every first level subheading in the entire document. So, for example, if the first level subheading in chapter 1 is bold, centered, the first level subheadings in all chapters must be bold, centered. Also, in the Table of Contents, the first level subheading is indented once.
For second level subheadings, these must be formatted differently from the first level subheadings, and every second level subheading must be formatted the same way in every chapter. So, for example, if the second level subheading in chapter 1 is flush left, italics, then the second level subheading in every chapter must be flush left, italics. The second level subheadings are indented twice in the Table of Contents.
For subsequent levels, format each level (3rd, 4th, etc.) in a unique way and use that format in every chapter as you did for the first and second level subheadings above. Then indent the subheading one more time per level in the Table of Contents. So, the third level subheading is indented three times, the fourth level subheading is indented four times, and so forth.
This can be confusing, but it has to be done this way. One way to keep track is by listing Ch 1, first level subheading, second level, etc., and the format of each one on a separate piece of paper. Then when you do chapter 2 and all other chapters, refer to that list to keep them straight. That is the method the editor will use to keep track of them

The candidate will work closely with the chair and other committee members throughout data collection, data analysis, and final writing phases of the dissertation. The candidate should expect some repeated iterations of the dissertation to accommodate the committee chairs' and members' input and guidance designed to enhance the overall conceptual and methodological quality of the dissertation.

Students register for dissertation credits (NU 899) for 2-3 consecutive semesters (9 credits total), after they have completed all other coursework. No grade is assigned for the dissertation while it is in process. The students receive a "Y" grade which stands for "year-long course" each semester they are registered for dissertation credits. Once students have defended successfully, the chair of the dissertation committee is required to submit a letter grade using the Change of Grade Form for all dissertation credits to the Registrar's Office. Candidates cannot be awarded degrees if dissertation grades have not been changed to final grade(s).

There are two options for the dissertation—the 3-manuscript dissertation or the traditional dissertation.

The Three (3) Manuscript Dissertation

This dissertation option should be planned with the academic advisor as part of the Individual Development Plan from very early in enrollment in the PhD nursing program so that there is sufficient time for writing publishable papers, (see below in blue highlight for what we have to consider for the guidelines). Consider many aspects of course work and other doctoral work, including the comprehensive examination papers, as beginning sources /content for the chapters.

Doctoral candidates may choose to complete the three-manuscript dissertation instead of the traditional dissertation format. The three-manuscript dissertation consists of three related manuscripts that are determined by the dissertation committee to be publishable. (Note that any or all of the manuscripts could be submitted for

publication, in press, or published.)

The three manuscripts (Chapters 2, 3, 4) are book-ended by an introductory chapter (Chapter 1) and a concluding discussion chapter (Chapter 5). The content of the manuscripts and the publication source selection (e.g., academic peer-reviewed journals; book chapters; a book) selection must be approved by the dissertation committee. *At least two of the three manuscripts are to be data-based (i.e., not methodological or conceptual).*

The dissertation proposal is typically written in the *future tense*

The final dissertation is typically written in the *past tense*

Format: Times New Roman Font 12, 1-inch margins all around

All dissertation work follows the format of the most current version of the American Psychological Association Manual for Publication, and any relevant UMass Boston Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) guidelines.

- Use a citation management system from the beginning. Best practices suggest beginning a draft document / dissertation from semester one.
- Use the Word program spelling and grammar checker for the dissertation proposal and the final documents
- Consider running the dissertation through a plagiarism checker at multiple points in the process. This is quality control.

The 3-Manuscript Dissertation

The dissertation research proposal may be submitted at any time after the committee has been approved by the Graduate Program Director and Associate Vice Provost, Graduate Education. See Stage 2 Dissertation form: <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgiclfndmkaj/https://www.umb.edu/media/umassboston/content-assets/academics/pdf/Stage-2-Form.pdf>

The dissertation proposal is approved after an oral hearing and is signed by the dissertation committee, the GPD and the Associate Vice Provost, Graduate Education See Stage 3 form: <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgiclfndmkaj/https://www.umb.edu/media/umassboston/content-assets/academics/pdf/Stage-3-Form.pdf>

Notification of the oral defense is indicated in the Stage 4 form, which is signed by the dissertation committee, the dissertation committee chair, the GPD and the Associate Vice Provost, Graduate Education. See <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgiclfndmkaj/https://www.umb.edu/media/umassboston/content-assets/academics/pdf/Stage-4-Form.pdf>

The final dissertation is approved after an oral defense and is signed by the dissertation committee, the GPD and the Associate Vice Provost Graduate Education

The final dissertation is submitted to the UMass Boston Scholar Works after final approval by the dissertation committee and signed off by Dissertation Committee Chair, the Graduate Program Direction and the Associate Vice Provost, Graduate Education (see Stage 5 Dissertation form-- <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgiclfndmkaj/https://www.umb.edu/media/umassboston/content-assets/academics/pdf/Stage-5-Form.pdf>).

Although the length of the proposal and the final dissertation will vary with the candidate and the topic, the proposal and the final dissertation must include the following elements:

300-400/word abstract -- Examples may be available on Scholar Works.

Chapter 1. Introduction

A clear statement of the problem as the topic of a health policy for population health, establishes its social significance of the magnitude of the topic and its effects; the theoretical significance of how the need for the

proposed research advances nursing knowledge, including health policy; and the *overall* research purpose/aims/questions/hypotheses to be examined. In addition, historical, sociological, political, and economic aspects of the health policy topic should be addressed.

A clear statement of the nursing conceptual model and the narrative and a diagram of conceptual-theoretical-empirical structure that will guide the research

A summary of each of the three manuscripts to be included

Work plan that identifies needed resources, indicates how they will be obtained, and presents a realistic timeline for data collection and analysis.

References.

Chapters 2, 3, and 4

Each chapter is one of the three manuscripts

All three manuscripts must address the same *overall* research purpose/aims/questions identified in Chapter 1

Two of the three manuscripts must be data-based, with data from original data collection or from an existing database (see above: Do we want to continue with two manuscripts data based or only one data-based or one or two depending on negotiation between dissertation committee and the doctoral candidate?) Note; if an existing database is to be used, the research question for each data-based paper must differ.

One of the three manuscripts may be a concept analysis, a conceptual framework, or a research protocol

Our options are: (1) all three manuscripts publishable as determined by the dissertation committee; (2) two of the three manuscripts publishable as determined by the dissertation committee;) (3) two of the three manuscripts in press or published; (4) one of the three manuscripts in press or published; or (5) all three manuscripts in press or published

The format and content of each paper must follow the relevant journal author guidelines

Chapter 5 Discussion

Summary and synthesis of the content and findings of the three manuscripts

Utility of the conceptual model that guided the study and any revisions in the CTE structure based on study results (with citations)

Limitations of the study

Recommendations for future research (with citations)

Further development or revision of the health policy

The Traditional Dissertation

The Dissertation Proposal

The dissertation research proposal may be submitted any time after the committee has been approved by the Office of Graduate Studies (OGS). All dissertation work follows the format of the most current version of the American Psychological Association Manual for Publication, and any relevant OGS guidelines.

Although the length of the proposal will vary with the candidate and the topic, the proposal must include the following elements:

- Format: Times New Roman Font 12, 1-inch margins all around.
- The dissertation proposal is typically written in the future tense

- Use the Word program spelling and grammar checker for the dissertation proposal
- Proposal content: 300-400/word abstract (Write the abstract after all other aspects of the dissertation proposal have been written)
- Introduction that clearly states the problem as the topic of a health policy for population health, establishes its significance and how the need for the proposed research advances nursing knowledge, including health policy, and states the research purpose/aims/questions/hypotheses.
- Summary of historical, sociological, political, and economic aspects of the health policy topic.
- Clear statement of the nursing conceptual model and the conceptual-theoretical-empirical structure that will guide the research
- Methodology, including research design, population and sample, data collection instruments and procedures or database to be used, data analysis techniques, and procedures for protection of human subjects if relevant
- Work plan that identifies needed resources, indicates how they will be obtained, and presents a realistic timeline for data collection and analysis.
- References.

The Dissertation

- The final dissertation is typically written in the past tense
- The traditional dissertation consists of a 300-400/word abstract and five (5) chapters.
- Examples available on Scholar Works. See https://scholarworks.umb.edu/diss_theses/
- Consider many aspects of course work and other doctoral work, including the comprehensive examination papers, as beginning sources /content for the chapters.
- Use a citation management system from the beginning. Best practices suggest beginning a draft document / dissertation from semester one.
- Use the Word program spelling and grammar checker for the dissertation
- Consider running your dissertation through a plagiarism checker at multiple points in the process. This is quality control.

Chapter 1 The Problem (can be based on the comprehensive examination conceptual paper)

- A brief introduction to the dissertation topic and the health policy of interest
- Social significance of the topic-This content may be a summary of the literature presented in Chapter 2
- Theoretical significance of the topic- This content may be a summary of the literature presented in Chapter 2
- Purpose of the study-may be stated as the purpose, aims, or research questions, or hypotheses
- Conceptual framework
- Overview of the nursing conceptual model selected to guide the study
- Conceptual-theoretical-empirical (CTE) structure for the study – narrative and diagram

Chapter 2 Review of the Literature (can be based on the comprehensive examination conceptual paper and literature reviews done for course assignments)

- Historical, sociological, political, and economic aspects of the health policy topic – This content may be in Chapter 1 instead of Chapter 2

- Review of the relevant literature about the health policy topic to include previous and well as any contemporary research – if the dissertation is to include hypothesis testing, the literature must explicitly support these hypotheses
- Should include the literature review procedures
- Databases searched, search terms. PRISMA diagram and narrative

Chapter 3 Methods (can be based on the comprehensive examination methods paper and assignments from required and elective courses focusing on research methods)

- Study design
- Study population
- Target population
- Accessible population
- Power analysis for number of participants if relevant
- Inclusion criteria
- Exclusion criteria – not the opposite of inclusion criteria
- Instruments used to collect data
- Name and source of each instrument
- Number of items, rating scale, scoring procedure for each instrument
- Reliability and validity data for each instrument from the literature and for the study sample
- (study sample data must be in the Chapter 4 results)
- Data collection procedures – when and how and by whom data are to be collected
- Data analysis plan
- Included in dissertation proposal
- Typically also incorporated into Chapter 4 as study findings are presented
- Protection of participants
- Consent procedures – when, by whom, oral or written
- Institutional review board (IRB) approval(s)- UMass Boston plus any other IRBs needed
- For the dissertation proposal, indicate only approval(s) from which IRB(s) to be sought

Chapter 4 Results

- Characteristics of participants
- Findings for each study purpose or aim or research question or hypothesis
- Include how the data were analyzed and the results

- May include additional findings not included in the purpose or aims or research questions or hypotheses
- Note: Chapter 4 / Results are results only, no exposition or discussion.

Chapter 5 Discussion

- Utility of the conceptual model that guided the study
- and any revisions in the CTE structure based on study results (with citations)
- Comparison or interpretation of each finding with previous research (with citations)
- Summarize but do not repeat the findings in detail
- Limitations of the study
- Recommendations for future research (with citations)
- Further development or revision of the health

Dissertation Proposal Hearing

The candidate should work closely with the chair of the committee. Together they will decide when to forward the draft proposal to the entire committee for review. The candidate and the chair will review the committee members' recommendations and make necessary adjustments to the proposal. The chair will schedule a proposal hearing. Two weeks prior to the scheduled hearing, the final draft of the proposal will be delivered to all committee members. All members of the committee are expected to attend the proposal hearing in person or via teleconference.

Following the hearing, the committee meets in an executive session and makes one of three determinations regarding the proposal: 1) A= approve; 2) AR= approve with revisions; 3) N= do not approve. Each member must initial their vote on the Dissertation Tracking Form (Stage 3). In the case of approval, the candidate may proceed with the dissertation, after IRB approval. In the case of approval with revisions, the candidate need only resubmit the revised proposal to the chair and any other specified committee members. Once revised, the chair forwards two (2) copies of the approved proposal to the program director with a letter stating that all revisions have been satisfactorily completed. The program director forwards one copy to the Office of Graduate Studies and Research, along with the dissertation tracking form.

The Dissertation Defense

A dissertation defense will be scheduled only after the committee members agree that the dissertation is sufficiently completed to undergo defense. Two weeks prior to the scheduled defense, the final draft of the dissertation must be delivered to all committee members.

Final copies of the revised dissertation and completed signature page must be provided to the program director and the OGS before the candidate can be certified for the PhD degree. The final dissertation manuscript must conform to Guidelines for the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations at the University of Massachusetts Boston.

For most updated version of the guidelines as well as an update on deadlines, see section [Policies and Forms for Theses and Dissertations](#)

The program has designated the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (7th Edition) as the appropriate format for organization, tables, illustrations, and references.

For the *initial* submission, students should turn in an electronic copy of their thesis/dissertation via the UMass Boston-ScholarWorks website <https://scholarworks.umb.edu/>

The ETD submission process streamlines the review and approval process and enhances communication with the T&D (Thesis and Dissertation) Format Editor, Carol Cullen (carol.cullen@umb.edu). All graduates are required to use the UMass Boston- ScholarWorks submission site. For more information visit the UMass Boston-UMass Boston- ScholarWorks site <http://www.etdadmin.com/umb>.