2016-2017

Ph.D. in Nursing Program Student Handbook

VCU

VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

School of Nursing

Creating collaboration. Advancing science. Impacting lives.

Sadie Heath Cabaniss Hall
1100 East Leigh Street
www.nursing.vcu.edu

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About this Handbook

This handbook is designed to be a ready resource for currently enrolled Ph.D. students at Virginia Commonwealth University's School of Nursing (SON) as well as faculty of the Ph.D. Program in Nursing, and for prospective applicants to the program. This handbook supplements the VCU Graduate School Bulletin located at: http://bulletin.vcu.edu/. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with the policies and information contained in each of these resources.

Welcome from the Dean

It is my pleasure and privilege to welcome you to the VCU School of Nursing. You have made a great investment in your future by selecting a school that is ranked among the top schools of nursing in the nation. We offer a supportive, collaborative environment to ensure your success as you progress through our program.

This handbook is a very important resource designed to provide you with information on life as a student at the VCU School of Nursing. Our highly trained faculty and staff will support you every step of the way and help you get the most out of your experience here. Graduates of our school represent the future of nursing and are well-prepared to improve the care of the patients we serve.

On behalf of the faculty and staff, I extend our best wishes for a dynamic and rewarding educational experience. Thank you for being a part of our tradition of nursing excellence.

Jean Giddens, Ph.D., RN, FAAN
Dean, School of Nursing

Welcome from the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs

Congratulations on beginning or continuing your nursing education at the VCU School of Nursing. As the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs ("chief academic officer"), I and the team of expert educators and professional staff are committed to assuring that you have a world class educational experience at VCU. In light of an ever changing and complex health care environment, we are constantly employing principals of continuous quality improvement, evolving pedagogical principal and best practices to assure that your academic program is cutting edge. We have much to learn from each other. Please let me know if I can ever be of service to you. A career in nursing is the gift that keeps on giving.

Debra J. Barksdale, PhD, RN, FNP-BC, ANP-BC, CNE, FAANP, FAAN
Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, School of Nursing

Welcome from the Program Director

On behalf of the faculty and staff of the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Nursing, it is with great pleasure that I welcome you to our Ph.D. program. We are excited that you have chosen to pursue a doctoral degree with us and know you will find a supportive and collegial community.

Our program embraces an interdisciplinary model of teaching and mentoring. You will be challenged to think in new ways as you become a nurse scholar and scientist and we will be there to guide you from coursework through dissertation and beyond.

Pursuing and obtaining a doctorate of philosophy in nursing will provide the knowledge and skills needed for you to further shape the discipline of nursing and improve health outcomes. We look forward to working with you.

Jo Lynne Robins, Ph.D., RN, ANP-BC, AHN-C, FAANP
Associate Professor
Ph.D. Program Director

Program Roles & Faculty Information

1. <u>Associate Dean of Academic Affairs</u>: The Associated Dean for Academic Affairs (ADAA) provides organizational oversight to both the Ph.D. Curriculum Committee and the Ph.D. Program Director (PD).
2. <u>Ph.D. Curriculum Committee:</u> The Ph.D. Curriculum Committee (PCC) manages the Ph.D. program curriculum, which in turn is voted on by all nursing faculty.
3. <u>Ph.D. Program Director:</u> The Ph.D. Program Director (Ph.D. PD) serves as a liaison between the Ph.D. program faculty, the Ph.D. Curriculum Committee and the ADAA.
4. <u>Ph.D. Program Faculty</u>: Doctorally prepared faculty that possess advanced knowledge, skills and abilities associated with those critical elements recognized in the AACN Indicators of Quality in Research-focused Doctoral Programs in Nursing.
5. <u>Ph.D. Student Advisor</u>: Doctorally prepared faculty assigned to Ph.D. students; responsible for fostering the best possible learning environment to achieve Ph.D. student learning outcomes.
6. <u>Dissertation Committee</u>: A group of 4 or more professionals chosen by the Ph.D. student and dissertation chair, whose goal is to provide oversight and guidance for the individual student's dissertation project.
7. <u>Ph.D. Program Coordinator:</u> Assists the ADAA in meeting the objectives of the Office of Academic Programs, supports the Ph.D. Program Director and Ph.D. students.
8. <u>Office of Academic Programs:</u> The Office of Academic Programs (OAP) provides support for all academic programs and school curriculum committees, including curriculum development and implementation, and faculty governance.

Mission and Goals of the School of Nursing

The mission of the School of Nursing is to improve health and the human condition through leadership in nursing research, education and service. Therefore we will:

- Sustain our tradition of leadership in educational excellence by preparing future scholars and leaders for nursing and health care.
- Be a nationally influential center in the development, translation and dissemination of science in biobehavioral clinical research.
- Be a national model for collaboration and partnerships between nursing education and nursing service in academic medical centers.
- Be a national model for clinical scholarship (development and dissemination) in the use of simulation, technology and innovation for best practices in education and practice.
- Provide services that benefit the profession and promote the health and wellbeing of diverse individuals, families, and communities.

Core Values of the School of Nursing

The VCU School of Nursing subscribes to the core values and vision as expressed in the **VCU Quest for Distinction** as well as the **VCU Code of Ethics**.

Program Overview

The VCU School of Nursing doctor of philosophy program in nursing prepares scholars to develop knowledge in the discipline of nursing to become teacher-scholars or pioneering researchers committed to the highest ideals of nursing excellence. The program examines knowledge development in nursing through an understanding of the impact of a wide range of historical influences on the discipline and through analysis of how emerging societal issues influence knowledge development. Knowledge in the humanities and social sciences and an understanding of knowledge development in other disciplines is viewed as foundational to a full understanding of knowledge development in nursing. Methodologic competency (i.e., knowledge of research designs, methodologies and tools) is also essential to a full understanding of the scope, range and path of knowledge development and the relevance to nursing practice.

The online Ph.D. program includes a combination of online courses and on campus immersions each semester to offer students a dynamic, interactive learning experience that will prepare them to become nurse scholars and scientists. This format is designed to expand the Ph.D. program's reach to a wider range of highly motivated, independent students who aspire to become scholars, make a significant difference in the field of nursing and study with nationally recognized nurse scientists. During the first year of the BS to Ph.D. program, there are some required face-to-face courses.

A. Outcomes of Graduates

Graduates will be able to:

1. Apply, transmit and generate knowledge in the discipline of nursing.
2. Construct, test and modify theories for nursing in the context of social, ethical, scientific, cultural and economic influences.
3. Analyze and synthesize knowledge from related disciplines for use in nursing.
4. Exhibit scientific integrity in the design and conduct of scholarly inquiry.
5. Engage in interdisciplinary collaboration in knowledge development and dissemination.

B. Admission Requirements

Nursing, Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)			
Degree: Ph.D.	**Semester(s) of entry:** Fall, odd years (part-time and B.S-Ph.D. students) Fall, even years (full- and part-time students)	**Deadline dates:** Feb 1 Note: Applications may be accepted after the deadline on a space-available basis.	**Test requirements:** GRE
Special requirements: A personal interview is required			

1. Ph.D.

In addition to the general admission requirements of the VCU Graduate School, applicants must have:

- a baccalaureate and a master's degree, one of which must be in nursing. The degree in nursing must be from an ACEN-, CCNE- or CNEA-accredited school. Graduates of international nursing schools and applicants who have studied outside of the U.S. are

required to provide a course-by-course external credential evaluation from a VCU-recognized professional evaluator. The professional evaluation may not be older than two years at the time of application.

- Graduate Record Exam score
- Passed a three-credit statistics course with a grade of B or better.
- A current, unrestricted RN license or an authorization to practice as an RN in Virginia, the District of Columbia or a U.S. possession or territory. Graduates of international nursing schools who are not licensed in a state, the District of Columbia or a United States possession or territory are required to obtain a VisaScreen Certificate issued by the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools.
- Our international and non-native English-speaking students bring different perspectives and new thinking to our nursing programs. To ensure that all incoming students are prepared for VCU School of Nursing's academic rigor, all international applicants and non-native English speaking applicants without a degree from a US high school, college, or university, must provide additional information with their applications according to the English language proficiency guidelines in the VCU bulletin. http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/admission-graduate-study/international-students/

2. B.S. to Ph.D.

In addition to the general admission requirements of the VCU Graduate School, applicants must have:

- a baccalaureate degree in nursing. The degree must be from an ACEN-, CCNE-, or CNEA-accredited school. Graduates of international nursing schools and applicants who have studied outside of the U.S. are required to provide a course-by-course external credential evaluation from a VCU-recognized professional evaluator. The professional evaluation may not be older than two years at the time of application. Applicants are not required to have completed a graduate degree.
- a competitive GPA for undergraduate-level studies.
- Graduate Record Exam score
- passed a three-credit statistics course with a grade of B or better.
- A current, unrestricted RN license or an authorization to practice as an RN in Virginia, the District of Columbia or a U.S. possession or territory. Graduates of international nursing schools who are not licensed in a state, the District of Columbia or a United States possession or territory are required to obtain a VisaScreen Certificate issued by the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools.
- Our international and non-native English-speaking students bring different perspectives and new thinking to our nursing programs. To ensure that all incoming students are prepared for VCU School of Nursing's academic rigor, all international applicants and non-native English speaking applicants without a degree from a US high school, college, or university, must provide additional information with their applications according to the English language proficiency guidelines in the VCU bulletin. http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/admission-graduate-study/international-students/

School of Nursing B.S. graduates who earn university honors through the VCU Honors College are eligible for guaranteed admission to the B.S. to Ph.D. program if their research interest aligns with the program. Requirements for GRE scores and references are waived. All other required application materials must be submitted.

All applicants to the Ph.D. program must complete and submit the following materials:

1. A completed VCU application for graduate studies. Application forms and instructions for applying to all graduate programs are available on the Graduate School website at www.graduate.vcu.edu/admission/prospective/domestic.
2. Official transcripts from all previous universities and colleges attended for all graduate and undergraduate work.
3. A typed personal statement from the applicant, thoughtfully and scholarly answering the following questions:
    1. What are your career goals and how do you see this Ph.D. program contributing to meeting them?
    2. Within your particular area of interest, identify some problems you see as offering promise for research.
    3. What particular strengths do you believe you bring to this program that would enrich the learning environment of your peers?
    4. What do you perceive as major contemporary issues in nursing and what are your views on at least one of them?
    5. Identify one or two potential advisers from the School of Nursing Ph.D. faculty who may be a good match for your research interests and provide a rationale for your choice.
4. A resume that includes applicant's name and address, past educational degrees, past work experiences, professional affiliations, certifications, honors and awards, presentations, and publications.
5. References from three persons who can knowledgeably comment upon applicant's ability to succeed in an academic program (i.e., former faculty) or who can evaluate applicant's ability to be successful in nursing research. Avoid getting references from ministers or others who are not familiar with professional and academic abilities; from friends, either professional or personal; or from personal health care providers.

A personal interview is required.

C. Technical Standards

The VCU School of Nursing is responsible for providing education without regard to disability while assuring that academic and technical standards are met. This document defines the non-academic criteria for advancement through graduation from the Nursing Ph.D. program at the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Nursing.

The following technical standards describe the essential functions that a student is expected to demonstrate in order to fulfill the requirement of the nursing education program, and thus, are required for advancement through and graduation from the program. The technical standards for each category identified below are consistent with the expectations of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, including the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. The technical skill areas include motor, sensory/observation, communication, cognitive and behavioral.

Students must read and sign this document before matriculation into the VCU School of Nursing. It is incumbent upon the student to review these technical standards on a regular basis to ensure continued compliance. If a student finds that they are unable to be in compliance with technical standards for an acute or chronic condition, they should speak with their academic advisor and pertinent course faculty immediately.

Motor Skills
- A student must be able to coordinate gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium and the functional use of the senses of touch and vision reasonably to operate a computer keyboard and to read a computer screen or have appropriate accommodation.
- A student must be able to maneuver in the research setting

Sensory/Observation
- A student must be able to hear with or without devices of assistance to elicit information from patients, faculty and professionals.
- A student must be able to listen and send clear messages

Communications
- A student must possess written and verbal fluency in the English language to elicit information from and provide information to patients, faculty and health care professionals.
- A student must be able to comprehend written communications such as the ability to read, understand and follow directions in the English language to fulfill the required tasks and duties of a Ph.D. student.
- A student must be able to network with other professionals and demonstrate the ability to engage with appropriate non-verbal and verbal communication.

Cognitive
- A student must be able to measure, calculate, reason, analyze and synthesize complex information to solve problems.
- A student must be able to integrate didactic and experiential learning to solve problems with critical judgment and analysis.

Behavioral
- A student must possess the mental health required for full use of his/her intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment and the prompt completion of all responsibilities.
- A student must be able to develop and sustain mature, sensitive and effective relationships with a web of faculty, colleagues and other health care professionals
- A student must be able to tolerate and function effectively under stress
- A student must be able to concentrate in the presence of distracting conditions
- A student must be able to concentrate for prolonged periods of time
- A student must be able to relate in a professional manner to patients, families, faculty and other health care professionals
- A student must be able to accept constructive feedback and demonstrate a willingness to respond appropriately
- A student must be able to read and regulate emotions as well as to recognize their impact on work performance and relationships, especially in the face of angry or emotionally-charged people
- A student must be able to adapt to and be flexible with changing environments, uncertainty and ambiguity
- A student must be able to display compassion, empathy, honesty, integrity, interpersonal skills and motivation consistently
- A student must be able to acquire transportation for on and off-campus classes or meetings outside Virginia Commonwealth University

Pre-Enrollment

A. Student Verification Form

Prior to beginning their programs, students will read and sign the Student Verification Form that will remain in each student's file in the Office of Enrollment and Student Services. A copy of this form can be found in **Appendix A.**

B. Health and Certification Requirements

Students enrolled in online programs will comply with the immunization requirements outlined in the **VCU Certificate of Immunization.** Students may be required to present documentation of additional immunizations for practicum and research experiences.

Students may be required to present documentation of additional immunizations for practicum and research experiences.

See University Student Health Services/Immunizations for additional information (http://www.students.vcu.edu/health/immunizations/). All requirements apply to full- and part-time students and must be submitted to the University prior to enrollment.

C. Criminal Background Check and Drug Screening

The VCU School of Nursing requires criminal background and drug screenings for all students following conditional acceptance and prior to enrollment. Background checks and drug screening are conducted in order to ensure that nursing students are competent, safe, and trustworthy to engage in clinical rotations and other critical aspects of the programs, the activities of which can pose particular risks to other students, health workers and the public. VCU School of Nursing also conducts the screenings to:

- Respond to regulatory mandates and the requirements of the School of Nursing's affiliated clinical facilities
- Bolster the continuing trust of the public in the nursing profession
- Ascertain the ability of accepted applicants and enrolled nursing students to eventually become licensed as nurses and/or advanced practice nurses

An offer of acceptance to the VCU School of Nursing is conditioned upon the successful completion of a criminal background check (CBC) and drug screening. Students are also required to complete this process upon program re-entry subsequent to a leave of absence, program withdrawal or program separation greater than thirty consecutive days.

The criminal background and drug screenings are a mandatory component of the pre-matriculation process. The final decision regarding matriculation of an applicant will be based on the information in the CBC/drug screening reports.

Factors involved in the final decision may include, but are not limited to:

1. The nature, circumstances, and frequency of any reported offense(s).
2. The length of time since the offense(s).
3. Available information that addresses efforts at rehabilitation.
4. The accuracy of the information provided by the applicant.

Individuals who do not give permission to the conduct of the criminal background check/drug screening or who fail to provide the reports as required will not be allowed to matriculate in the School of Nursing.

An independent vendor (CastleBranch) has been identified by the VCU School of Nursing to provide the criminal background and drug screenings, and individuals will be responsible for requesting the report and submitting payment for the report. The vendor sends the reports electronically to the Office of Enrollment and Student Services in any decision that may adversely affect the individual.

The information obtained through a criminal background and drug screenings will not become part of a student's academic file and will remain confidential unless the findings result in an institutional action by the School of Nursing. The background check/drug screening document will be destroyed upon the student's graduation/separation from the institution. The criminal background report shall span the prior seven year period, and shall include all convictions at a felony or misdemeanor level.

Validated background reports found to be in conflict with responses in the application may be grounds for withdrawal of an offer of enrollment based upon submission of false or misleading information on the application.

All students must also report any felony or misdemeanor charges and convictions, which occur during their enrollment within 10 business days of occurrence to the Assistant Dean of Enrollment & Student Services.[1]

With the exception of disqualifying criminal offenses (see below), the existence of a conviction or a positive drug screen will not necessarily result in a denial of enrollment to the School of Nursing. Instead each case will be reviewed by a committee other than the admissions committee and evaluated on its facts.

This review committee shall include but is not limited to the: Assistant Dean for Enrollment and Student Services, the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs (or other administrative dean), two faculty members, and, the university attorney as needed to clarify legal processes. The review committee is responsible for making determinations regarding denial of enrollment and communicating the determination to the student.

Any determination to deny enrollment will be communicated to the student in writing, giving the reason for the denial and allowing the student five business days from the date the communication was sent to respond to the determination before it becomes final. The student's response should be sent to the Assistant Dean of Enrollment and Student Services and should include any relevant information concerning the drug screen/criminal background that should be considered by the committee, including any challenge to the accuracy of the report. The committee shall consider the response, and should issue a final determination within 72 hours of receiving the student's response.

VCU School of Nursing Disqualifying Criminal Offenses

Felonies
1. A crime of violence.
2. Any felony offense involving unlawful sexual behavior.

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[1] The review committee described below will consider convictions in the same manner as admissions determinations. For criminal charges, the committee will consider the nature of the underlying conduct resulting in the charge and make a determination on whether to suspend the student pending resolution of the criminal proceeding. Criminal charges, by themselves, will not warrant denial of continued enrollment.

3. Any felony, the underlying basis of which has been found by the court on the record to include an act of domestic violence.
4. Any felony of child abuse.
5. Any felony offense in another state, the elements which are substantially similar to the elements of any of the above offenses.

Misdemeanors
C. Third degree assault.
D. Any misdemeanor, the underlying factual basis of which has been found by the court on the record to include an act of domestic violence.
E. A misdemeanor offense of child abuse.
F. Any misdemeanor offense of sexual assault on a client by a psychotherapist.
G. Any misdemeanor offense in another state, the elements of which are substantially similar to the elements of any of the misdemeanor offenses listed above.

Criminal Histories
1. Convictions/deferred adjudications involving crimes against persons (physical or sexual abuse, neglect, assault, murder, etc.).
2. Convictions related to moral turpitude (prostitution, public lewdness/exposure, etc.).
3. Convictions/deferred adjudications related to the sale, possession, distribution, or transfer of narcotics or controlled substances.
4. Registered sex offenders.

D. School of Nursing Scholarships
1. Application Process
Students applying for School of Nursing scholarships must complete a School Scholarship Application. Students must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to be eligible for need based scholarship funds.

2. Enrollment Credit Hours for Scholarship Eligibility
For school-based scholarship purposes, full-time students must be enrolled for a minimum of nine credit hours plus meet any additional requirements specific to the scholarship for which they are applying.

Enrollment
A. Academic Advising
Upon admission, an academic advisor is assigned by the Ph.D. Curriculum Committee. A student may request a change in advisor at any time. The student must obtain approval from both the current advisor and the new advisor using the Ph.D. Student Advisor Change Form (Appendix G). This form will need the signature of the current advisor acknowledging change of status and signature of the new advisor signifying agreement to mentor the student. The form will need to be submitted to the Ph.D. Program Coordinator.

1. Responsibility of the Advisor
Students are assigned an advisor upon acceptance into the Ph.D. program. It is the advisor's responsibility to:

1. Guide students through their program of study and help them navigate the system. Advisors are expected to monitor students' progress and performance.
2. Facilitate students' participation in professional meetings and organizations and assist with dissemination of the student's work, including preparation, presentation and publication.
3. Mentor students into the role of nurse scholars and scientists.
4. Assist students in developing goals for the program and future career planning.

2. Responsibility of the Student

Students are responsible for scheduling meetings (in person, via phone or through email) with their advisor at least once per semester to plan coursework for the following semester and progression through the program. Students have an opportunity to meet with their advisor in person during on campus [immersion] sessions at the beginning of each semester. Once a student has successfully passed the comprehensive examination, the student's advisor becomes the Dissertation Chair or will assist the student in identifying a Dissertation Chair.

In addition, it is the student's responsibility to:
1. Take primary responsibility for learning about policies of the School of Nursing and the VCU Graduate School as well as information pertaining to these policies. Students should seek clarification from advisors, the Ph.D. Program Director, or Ph.D. Program Coordinator when the precise meaning or application of a policy is unclear.
2. Recognize the importance of seeking an early and informal resolution of any potential problems related to the student's coursework, research or advisor-advisee relationship.
3. Take the initiative to meet and communicate regularly with advisors without their prompting.
4. Take the responsibility of promptly reading and answering all email and phone communications from the Ph.D. Program Director, administrator, advisors, and/or committee members within a 24 – 72 hour period.

Failure of students to comply with any of the expected responsibilities in the Ph.D. program may be grounds for dismissal from the program.

B. Degree Requirements

A minimum of 61 graduate credit hours are required for the M.S. to Ph.D. in Nursing program and 91 graduate credit hours are required for the B.S. to Ph.D. in Nursing.

In addition to general VCU Graduate School graduation requirements, a candidate for the Ph.D. in nursing must be recommended by the faculty and must:

1. Meet academic requirements of the Graduate School;
2. Complete all requirements for the prescribed curriculum within eight years of the first registration for coursework to be credited toward the degree;
3. Earn a minimum grade of B or pass grade in all nursing courses;
4. Earn a minimum cumulative grade-point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale in all work presented for graduation;
5. Conform to School of Nursing policies in respect to pass/fail grading for coursework.

The degree will be granted only after all requirements have been fulfilled and all fees to the university have been paid. Degrees are not granted in absentia unless written request is made to the dean and permission is granted.

See **Appendix B** for plans of study for students admitted in Fall 2016.

C. Course Registration

Students should be aware of registration dates set by the university. Students in coursework must be registered for courses prior to the first day of on campus sessions. Full-time students in coursework must be registered for at least nine credit hours each fall and spring semesters and at least three credit hours in the summer semester. More information regarding course registration and minimum/maximum credit hours for graduate students can be found at: http://www.pubapps.vcu.edu/bulletins/graduate/?uid=10045&iid=30076.

Students will receive an Advising and Registration checklist (Appendix C) each semester that includes deadline dates for course registration.

Students that are preparing to take the comprehensive exam or are in dissertation phase, must be registered for courses prior to the University's course registration deadline (dates are located on the Academic Calendar: http://academiccalendars.vcu.edu/). Students preparing to take the comprehensive exam (oral and/or written) following completion of all required coursework, should enroll in NURS 796: Directed Research Experience. Once a student has successfully completed and passed the comprehensive examination (written and oral) and is approved to begin dissertation research, registration for dissertation credits (NURS 898) apply.

NURS 796 is a variable credit course. At least 1 credit of NURS 796 must be taken while completing the comprehensive exam. Additional credits of NURS 796 are decided upon by student and advisor depending on additional work that can be accomplished in the semester following successful completion of the comprehensive exam.

D. Non Degree Seeking Students

Students who have not been admitted to the School of Nursing may enroll in nursing courses. Permission to enroll in courses is granted by the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. Only six credits earned as a non-degree seeking student can be used for the Ph.D. in Nursing.

Decisions for enrollment are based on permission of the instructor, space availability and designation of the course as open to non-degree seeking students

E. The Nursing Education Xchange (NEXus)

The VCU School of Nursing is a member of NEXus (The Nursing Education Xchange), **http://winnexus.org/**. NEXus is a collaboration between participating doctoral programs in nursing that allows doctoral students enrolled at member colleges and universities to take courses that may not be offered at his/her home institution for a common price.
Guidelines:
- A Ph.D. student can take a maximum of 12 credits of Ph.D. level courses through NEXus to satisfy SON Ph.D. curriculum requirements.

- Any combination of the following Ph.D. level courses can be taken, not to exceed 12 credits.
  - Maximum of 9 credits of electives
  - Maximum of 6 credits, not to exceed 2 core courses (excluding biobehavioral core courses). The student and advisor, in collaboration with the core course instructor, must complete the NEXus Core Course Substitution Approval form that includes justification for replacing a course. If consensus is not reached, the request will be referred to the Ph.D. Curriculum Committee. The NEXus Core Course Substitution Approval form must be submitted to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs for approval.

- Biobehavioral Quality and Safety core courses (720, 721, 725, 731, and 732) need to be taken at VCU, they cannot be replaced with a NEXus course.

Visit the NEXus website for additional course information, registration deadlines and dates.

Academic Policies

A. Paper Format

Unless otherwise stated by instructor, the most recent *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA)* is to be used for all papers written in the School of Nursing.

B. Grading Scale

A ten-point grading scale will be used in all graduate courses. Ph.D. courses will be graded as follows:

Courses that receive grades of Satisfactory (S), Unsatisfactory (U), Pass (P), or Fail (F):

NURS 792 – P/F
NURS 796 – P/F
NURS 797 – P/F
NURS 898 – S/U/F

All other courses in the Ph.D. program receive letter grades of A, B, C, D, or F. Refer to the Graduate School Bulletin for the Grading system: http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/general-academic-regulations-graduate-students/grades/.

C. Course Grades of "C"

A student who receives a first grade of "C" or below in any graduate course required for graduation must repeat the course. The course must be repeated before taking any courses for which the course in question is a prerequisite. A student who receives a second course grade of "C" in any graduate course is terminated from the graduate program.

Students should be aware that following any failure to meet progression standards, placement in clinical courses is not guaranteed and is made on a space-available basis.

Students will receive official communication from the school related to course grades of "C" or below. The Ph.D. Program Coordinator will request a meeting with students who earn a grade of "C" or below to help them make plans for continuing in the program.

D. Unsatisfactory Dissertation Progression

A student who receives a grade of "U" in NURS 898, Dissertation, will receive a warning letter from the Ph.D. Program Coordinator, copied to the dissertation advisor. The student must expeditiously meet with the dissertation advisor to develop and document a written plan for dissertation progress and improvement. A student who earns a second "U" in NURS 898 will be terminated from the program.

E. Grade Appeals

The School of Nursing follows the university guidelines with the exception of spring grades. For grades awarded in the Spring semester, the written appeal must be submitted no later than 14 days after the beginning of the Summer semester. Refer to the VCU Grade Review Procedure for additional information.

F. Separation from the School of Nursing

Before separating from the School of Nursing, the student must drop/withdraw all nursing courses. The student should contact the University registrar for any additional guidance and requirements for separation from the school.

G. Readmission after Dismissal from the Graduate Program

Following dismissal from the Ph.D. program, students are not eligible for readmission.

H. Timeline from Admission to Graduation

The time limit for completion of the Ph.D. program is eight years.

I. Withdrawal from courses

Please refer to university policy (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/). Students should consult with course faculty and the program coordinator prior to withdrawing from a course.

J. Leave of Absence

Once enrolled in the Ph.D. in Nursing program, students are required to follow their plan of study. In the event that a student needs a period of time away from the program, the student must submit a written request for a leave of absence by completing the Leave of Absence Form (Appendix H). The form should be submitted to the Ph.D. Program Coordinator. LOAs will be considered on an individual basis.

Students are expected to complete their degree within 8 years from the time they begin the program, as this is the official policy of the University. A LOA does not extend the 8 year requirement for program completion (http://www.pubapps.vcu.edu/bulletins/graduate/?uid=10045&iid=31071). Students must consider that if an extended leave is taken, program changes may occur that influence progression. Students must also be aware that a leave of absence will necessitate the completion of a revised curriculum plan based on how the LOA impacts the curriculum plan of study at the time of the request because the student will no longer be able to follow the exact curriculum plan that was in place prior to the leave. Per School of Nursing policy, students are required to complete a criminal background check and drug screen upon program re-entry subsequent to a leave of absence, program withdrawal or program separation greater than thirty consecutive days.

Additional Information for Those Requesting a Leave of Absence for Health-related Reasons: If a student needs to request a leave of absence for health reasons, the student must provide a physician's note to the Ph.D. Program Coordinator prior to the start of the LOA. The student will also need to provide a physician's note upon their return to the program, stating that the student is fit to return to school.

K. Communicating Issues and Concerns

The School of Nursing strives to create an atmosphere that facilitates communication between students and faculty and maximizes student learning and achievement. If students have issues/concerns regarding their courses, clinical experiences or any aspect of their academic program, they are expected to demonstrate professionalism in addressing their issues/concerns to the appropriate person(s). The academic advisor (for undergraduate students) or appropriate Program Director can assist students in navigating the appropriate steps.

The following steps will aide in effectively communicating issues and concerns.

1. The student should first meet with and discuss the issue/concern with the faculty member directly related to the issue/concern. (If the student feels uncomfortable addressing the issue/concern directly with that individual, the student may proceed to step 2. However, faculty have a right to be informed of student issues/concerns that involve them.)
2. If the issue/concern remains unresolved after step 1, the student should meet with the Program Director to discuss the issue/concern. The Program Director will review the issue/concern and a) facilitate a resolution with course faculty for course-related issues/concerns and/or b) refer the issue/concern to the appropriate Department Chair.
3. If the issue/concern remains unresolved after step 2, the student should meet with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs to discuss the issue/concern.
4. If additional actions are indicated, the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs will direct the student to the Dean and other university-level processes, if appropriate.

L. Unprofessional Conduct

In addition to those standards of conduct described in the Rules and Procedures of Virginia Commonwealth University and the VCU Medical Center Code of Conduct, a student may be suspended or dismissed from the school for failure to meet academic requirements or failure to exhibit the attitudes and skills deemed necessary to function as a professional nurse. The School of Nursing recognizes its responsibility to the nursing profession and to the health care consumer. Therefore, any action by a nursing student considered to be unprofessional conduct shall be deemed cause for disciplinary action.

Unprofessional conduct may be defined as, but is not limited to:
- Fraud or deceit in filing application for admission to school such as false representation on the application.
- An act that violates the accepted social norms regarding conduct of one person towards another.
- Social norms refer to the laws, written or unwritten, that protects the individual and/or his/her property from unwanted acts of another such as stealing, lying, cheating and slander.
- Conviction of a felony.

M. Portfolio Expectations

Students are strongly encouraged to keep a portfolio of course and clinical materials from each course throughout their program of study. Information from such a portfolio may be valuable in seeking certification, licensure, and employment after graduation. Some states require detailed information about course and clinical work including course outlines for licensure. Information that may be useful to keep includes course syllabi, evaluations from instructors and preceptors, logs, major papers, and case studies.

Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination

The purpose of the Comprehensive Examination is to test synthesis of foundational knowledge in preparation for launching a program of scholarship as a beginning scientist. Three knowledge domains are critical: a) theory and philosophy, b) qualitative, and c) quantitative methodological approaches. The student's area of study is incorporated into these three domains. The comprehensive exam consists of two components: a written and an oral component, both of which must be passed. The oral exam will be conducted with the student either in person or via video conference. This is a written examination that must be passed in order to move to oral clarification of results. Questions are not available to the students prior to the examination.

The procedure is as follows:
1. The student will request to take the comprehensive examination through the completion of the Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination Request form and submit the completed form to the Ph.D. Program Coordinator. The student is required to obtain a signature on the form from his or her advisor who verifies that the student is near completion or has completed all required courses before submitting the form to the Ph.D. Program Coordinator.
2. Students who are enrolled in courses at the time the form is submitted must complete those courses. Grades will need to be submitted and verified on the transcript in order for the student to take the exam.
   - During the last semester of course work, students are permitted to apply to take the comprehensive exam, but all work in that semester must be completed and grades entered by the close of grading in the semester. Students are not permitted to take the comprehensive exam until the semester following their last semester of course work. The exam is given on the first available testing date following completion of all doctoral course work for the Ph.D. program. The testing date is usually scheduled during the second week of the semester (fall, spring or summer). Late submitted grades and incomplete grades will result in the student not being permitted to sit for the comprehensive exam.
   - Students are required to be registered for a course during the semester they are preparing for and taking the comprehensive exam.
   - All transfer coursework must be posted on the VCU transcript.

The format will be:
- Students have two weeks to write a maximum 20 page paper, double spaced using 12-point font and 1" margins, in clear scientific style using APA guidance for citations and references.
- Write a comprehensive response without becoming redundant in your answer. Only 20 pages plus references will be given to the graders. Your name, V-number and the page number should appear at the top right corner of each page.
- This original paper must be written independently and must demonstrate a coherent response and the synthesis of ideas. Duplication of preliminary, previous papers and dissertation proposals is prohibited.
- The completed examination paper must be submitted in pdf format and returned by email attachment to Fonda Neal, Ph.D. Program Coordinator, no later than 5:00 pm EST on the date specified.

- Specific instructions for submission, as well as deadline date and time are provided with the release of the comprehensive examination question.

The process for evaluation of the examination is as follows:

1. Both the written and oral examination will be evaluated as pass or fail. The student must receive a pass on the written examination in order to advance to the oral examination. The student must receive a pass on both the written and the oral examination in order to advance to candidacy status. Upon successful completion, the student must download and complete the **Admission to master's or doctoral degree candidacy form** (http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/student/candidacy.html) and return the signed form to Fonda Neal, Ph.D. Program Coordinator, for review and approval of the Associate Dean and the Dean. The form will be forwarded to the Graduate School on the student's behalf.
2. The student is notified in writing of the results of the examination by the Ph.D. Program Coordinator within one month (30 days) of completion of the exam.
3. The examination will not be returned to the student but a brief statement of its evaluation will be given to students.
4. Students will be retested with the same comprehensive examination question. Students will be allowed one retake on the written component and one retake on the oral component.
5. Following an unsuccessful attempt, the student must schedule an appointment with his/her advisor for academic counseling and to formulate a remediation plan. The retake of the written comprehensive exam will occur during the next scheduled exam administration. The retake of the oral component of the exam will be scheduled in consultation with the advisor and the Ph.D. Curriculum Committee.

Progression from Comprehensive Examination and Oral Defense of Dissertation to Dissertation Work

Satisfactory completion of the comprehensive examination will allow the student to advance to doctoral degree candidacy status and to schedule the defense of the dissertation proposal. A satisfactory oral defense of the dissertation proposal is required prior to commencement of actual work outlined in the proposal. Once approved, the dissertation proposal is similar to a formal contract between the student and dissertation committee about the nature of the dissertation. The dissertation advisor is the principal investigator for the purposes of human subject review.

Ph.D. Dissertation

A.   General Information on the Dissertation Process

- All required courses must be completed before taking the comprehensive examination.
- The dissertation proposal defense cannot be scheduled until successful completion of the comprehensive examination.
- A Ph.D. student who has completed course requirements for a degree must register for a **minimum of one credit** at VCU each semester until the degree is awarded. Credit hours will be negotiated with the dissertation advisor. Refer to the VCU policies on continuous enrollment. Students must be enrolled during their graduation semester.
- A Ph.D. student may submit a letter of request for dissertation support funds to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs after successfully defending the proposal. A complete budget should be included with the request.

- All dissertation credits taken as part of the final project (thesis/dissertation/project) for awarding a graduate degree are to be graded each semester as "S," "U" or "F." Refer to the official School of Nursing policy on unsatisfactory dissertation progression.
- The final date for completion of a graduate thesis/dissertation is the last day of classes of the semester for which the student has applied to graduate.
- Ph.D. candidates may add the title Ph.D., and chose to be referred to as doctor, as soon as he or she has successfully defended the dissertation and submitted the final version through the university.
- Please refer to the VCU Graduate School's Thesis and dissertation guidelines to review the University's information.

B.   Dissertation Preparation Phase

Using input from advisor and faculty members, the student will:
- Formulate an increasingly clear idea for the direction of the dissertation throughout coursework and NRSA or other proposals.
- Seek input from a variety of faculty members concerning the significance of ideas considered and bodies of literature to review. The faculty members will include those in the SON and possibly content or method specialists in other schools.
- Add coursework as needed to strengthen content or method knowledge.

C.   Dissertation Committee

The dissertation committee must consist of a minimum of four members. A member of the graduate faculty of the School of Nursing who has an established program of research and prior experience on dissertation committees must chair a student's dissertation committee. Other committee members must include one faculty member from outside the School of Nursing. The dissertation committee is approved by the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs (ADAA) in the School of Nursing. Ph.D. student candidates must submit the Dissertation Committee Approval Form before enrolling for more than one credit of dissertation credits. Ph.D. student candidates are to schedule a meeting not less than once a semester with committee members, preferably a committee meeting (three times a year). Guidelines for the dissertation chair and committee members is located in Appendix E.

More information on establishing the dissertation committee (not policy):

- Before the student enrolls in more than one credit of dissertation credits, with the advice of the chair, the Ph.D. student must select the dissertation committee, which is composed of faculty members who can support and guide the student through a major research project. It is important for the Ph.D. student to select a dissertation chair, and the members of the dissertation committee, from graduate faculty who have experience in the student's field of interest.
- The student must complete the **Dissertation Committee Approval Form** and obtain signatures of committee members. The student must return the signed form to the Ph.D. Program Coordinator for review and approval of the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.
- If the Associate Dean disapproves of the composition of the Ph.D. student's committee, an appointment will be made with the student to discuss the reasons, and to help the student identify alternative dissertation committee members.
- It is the student's responsibility to schedule a committee meeting not less often than once a semester after the committee has been appointed.

- As the work evolves, a student may change the membership of their committee, assuming the committee is still composed acceptably, up until a proposal is defended. This must be done with the consultation of their chair. If a student wishes to change the chair of the committee, they must schedule a meeting with the ADAA to discuss. Requests to change either the chair or a member of the dissertation committee must be submitted on the **Dissertation Committee Member Change Form**. This form should be completed and returned to Fonda Neal, Ph.D. Program Coordinator, who will obtain the associate dean's signature on the student's behalf.

D.   Dissertation Requirements

The student must conduct a substantial independent investigation and prepare a dissertation reporting the results of this research and analyzing its significance in relation to existing scientific knowledge. An oral defense is conducted by the student's dissertation committee. The student is responsible for preparing the dissertation in accord with the most current version of the School of Graduate Studies' guidelines.

E.   Dissertation Proposal and Proposal Defense

Students will use the **Dissertation Proposal Checklist** as a tool to ensure they are completing all required steps the established deadlines.

Ph.D. students work with the dissertation committee to develop a strong dissertation proposal, which will serve as the foundation for the research project.

Development of a dissertation proposal can start at any time in the Ph.D. program; however, the dissertation proposal defense occurs at the time the dissertation committee has assessed that the proposal is strong enough to support the implementation of the research project.

The proposal defense date must be compatible with the schedules of the dissertation committee members. Students may not schedule the final defense unless all committee members can attend.

Once the dissertation proposal defense date is established, a room must be secured with Fonda Neal, Ph.D. program Coordinator, at least 2 weeks before your proposal defense date.

At least two weeks before the dissertation proposal defense date, all committee members should be provided with a copy (electronic, paper or as preferred by the members) of the dissertation proposal.

Research Phase

Students must prepare for IRB approval during the proposal phase. They should seek advice and clarification. The IRB should be submitted as soon as the proposal is approved. All research data must be maintained as required by IRB.

The chair should be informed of progress not less often than 5 times a semester and discuss any issues that arise. Committee members should be informed of the same not less often than the once-a- semester committee meeting.

When data analysis is nearly complete, a committee meeting should be held or the student should meet with members individually to examine the data and its interpretation. Students should seek

input from committee members but should not give committee members drafts of chapters that have not been approved by the chair, unless instructed to do so by the chair.

F.   Dissertation Options
Students have two options for dissertation: traditional style and publication style.

i.   <u>Traditional Style Dissertation</u>:
    Chapter 1: Introduction
    Chapter 2: Problem (Literature Review and Theoretical Framework)
    Chapter 3: Methods
    Chapter 4: Results
    Chapter 5: Discussion

ii.   <u>Publication Style Dissertation</u>:

In consultation with and approval of the dissertation committee, students may elect the publication style dissertation option. This option will minimally include a detailed IRB application completed prior to the dissertation proposal defense plus two manuscripts that are ready for journal submission (one a state-of-the science manuscript that must be approved by the dissertation committee at the proposal defense and one manuscript reporting the study findings that must be approved by the dissertation committee at the final dissertation defense).

Oral defense of the study is required in accord with existing policies and procedures. Criteria for the acceptability of the manuscripts include the following:
- The manuscripts are products of the dissertation work or its pilot studies and consistent in scope with the elements of the dissertation they replace.
- The intended journals are approved by the dissertation committee.
- The preparation of the manuscript(s) is consistent with the guidelines of the intended journal.
- The student must be the first author on all of the manuscripts. Additional authorship will be consistent with national standards and accepted by the committee in advance of manuscript completion.
- At least one of the two manuscripts must be data-based and reflect the analysis of data addressing the purposes and major hypotheses, if appropriate, of the research.

Students should review the VCU Graduate School Thesis and Dissertation Manual for general formatting requirements. The text (chapters) of the dissertation will consist of the following format:

    Ch 1—Introduction (Project, the manuscripts, findings)
    Ch 2—State of the science manuscript
    Ch 3—IRB Proposal
    Ch 4—Study findings manuscript
    Ch 5—Summary (Optional)
    Appendices: Instruments, IRB Approval Letter and approved Consent Form, Vita and general format as per Graduate School Guidelines.

G.   Final Dissertation Defense
Ph.D. candidates are encouraged to use the Final Dissertation Defense Checklist (Appendix F) as a tool to ensure they are completing all required forms by their deadline.

The dissertation defense is a public event open to the School of Nursing community, and the Ph.D. candidate's invited guests. The defense has four components:

a. a brief presentation of the research and findings by the candidate

b. a series of questions posed to the candidate by dissertation committee members (the dissertation chair normally provides an opportunity for guests to ask questions, in addition)

c. The dissertation committee evaluates the dissertation defense and determines if the candidate has satisfactorily met all dissertation requirements (the candidates and guests are not present for this portion of the defense). The committee will determine that both the dissertation product (potentially with revisions) and the oral defense of the dissertation are satisfactory (pass/fail).

d. The candidate is then invited back into the room to receive the results (if there are revisions required in the dissertation draft, the student is informed of them at this time).

The following steps are necessary to initiate and finalize the defense process:
The dissertation must be prepared within the format of the School of Graduate Studies Thesis and Dissertation Manual (http:www.graduate.vcu.edu/community/thesis.html). This web site also has information about Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) submission. Ph.D. candidates should refer to this manual. If a student and the committee elect the publication style option, they should refer to SON policy Publication Style Dissertation. Under no circumstances may the candidate go to the final defense with less than a completed copy of the dissertation.

It is wise to defend at least two weeks before the "final date for sign-off on completion of graduate dissertation for semester's completion of degree" date, which is published on the VCU Academic Calendar for each semester. After that date the student must register for the following semester and update the application to graduate. The Dean of the School of Graduate Studies must sign the candidate's **ETD approval form/Approval form for thesis/dissertation and final oral examination** (http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/community/thesis.html) by this date if the candidate wishes to graduate during that semester. The date is usually the same as the last day of classes, before final exams. If revisions are needed, based on the committee's recommendation at the time of the defense, they must be completed by the time of graduation.

A defense date must be established that is compatible with the schedules of committee members. The Ph.D. candidate may not schedule the final defense unless all committee members can attend.

Once the final defense date has been established, the candidate must reserve a room with Fonda Neal, Ph.D. Program Coordinator, at least **4 weeks** before the final defense date.

At least **2 weeks** before the final dissertation defense date, the candidate must provide all committee members with a copy (electronic or paper) of the final dissertation defense materials.

The candidate must complete the VCU Graduate School **ETD approval form/Approval form for thesis/dissertation and final oral examination** (http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/community/thesis.html) and take it to the dissertation defense to obtain required signatures. Once the approval form has been completed and signed by the committee, it should be returned to Fonda Neal, Ph.D. Program Coordinator, for review and

approval of the School Dean. The form will be forwarded to the Graduate School on the student's behalf.

The candidate must ensure that the online application to graduate has been completed by the university's deadline (http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/community/graduation.html).

The candidate must contact the Academic Programs Manager (mitchelldixs@vcu.edu) to schedule an exit interview.

Student Travel

The VCU School of Nursing provides travel assistance to current doctoral students to attend a national conference or regional research meeting; priority is given when they are presenting a paper or poster.   If students have other workshop requests that are directly related to their dissertation study, the request must be approved by their advisor. The Associate Dean of Academic Programs determines any restrictions on who receives the support.   The SON will pay up to $500 of conference expenses which includes the conference registration fee and/or airfare or rail. Limitations on this amount are set by the Associate Dean of Academic Programs, and are based on available funds and the number of students requesting funds.

Procedure: Once the student has identified the conference, he or she must obtain approval from their advisor to attend. Once the approval has been granted, the student is required to complete the SON Travel Request form and attach a copy of the email from their advisor approving the travel. The student sends the Travel Request form and the email approval to the Ph.D. program coordinator. In the Name field on the Travel Request form, the student should include their V# next to their name and in the Title field, indicate "Ph.D. Student". The Budget Code/Index and Budget Manager fields can be left blank. The student must complete the Travel Information section of the form according to their preferred method of travel and provide a copy of their air or rail travel itinerary.

After returning from the conference or meeting, students are responsible for submitting receipts to the SON travel administrator for expenses that are being reimbursed, with the exceptions of meals. The SON travel administrator will then process the on-line Expense Report to complete the reimbursement process.

Graduation and Commencement

At the start of your final semester of the program, you will receive details via email on how to initiate the graduation check out process along with specifics for the ceremonies. The University and the School of Nursing hold ceremonies in May and December. There is no August ceremony, but August graduates are invited to participate in December's ceremonies. School of Nursing Recognition Ceremonies typically take place on the Friday evening before the university's graduation ceremony. You are also encouraged to attend the university-wide ceremony on the following Saturday morning, where the nursing graduates will be recognized as a whole.

More information regarding graduation and commencement can be found on the university's website: http://www.commencement.vcu.edu/Graduation-Info/

Tuition Support and Scholarship

The VCU School of Nursing provides tuition support for coursework to all Ph.D. nursing students who are enrolled in a full-time plan of study (9 credits in fall and spring and 3 credits in summer). All university and program fees are the responsibility of the student. Students in the M.S. to Ph.D. program are eligible for 2 years of support; B.S. to Ph.D. students are eligible for 3 years of support. Students must maintain satisfactory academic progress (GPA of at least 3.0) to receive this support.

Students applying for School of Nursing scholarships must complete the School of Nursing Scholarship Application. To be eligible for any scholarship support, the student must meet requirements specific to the scholarship for which they are applying. The deadline for receipt of applications will be published annually by the Office of Enrollment and Student Services and the Office of Academic Programs.

The School of Nursing has scholarships for incoming and returning full-time students in coursework: the **A.D. Williams Scholarship** and the **Waverly Cole Scholarship.** The direct link to the application for these scholarships can be found on the SON Scholarships and Financial Aid webpage: **http://nursing.vcu.edu/forms/scholarship4.html.**

AD Williams Scholarship
This scholarship was established by a privately supported research foundation in support of Ph.D. student scholarship and health related research. This is a two-year award that provides tuition support (no fees) and a stipend of $20,000 per year. Only new, incoming full-time students are eligible for this scholarship.

Waverly Cole Scholarship
Dr. Waverly Cole was a friend, staunch advocate and faithful supporter of the VCU's School of Nursing for nearly a decade. Dr. Cole was a close friend of the school's former dean, the late Doris B. Yingling. Cole made a gift in honor of Dr. Yingling and the former dean, Dr. Nancy Langston. The school has established two scholarships named for Dr. Cole. These awards provide tuition (no fees) and a $13,500 stipend for one year. Incoming and returning full-time students in coursework are eligible for these scholarships.

Two awards are available for students who are in their <u>dissertation phase</u> or who will be in dissertation phase (have successfully defended their dissertation proposal) in or after the start of the academic year: the **Downs Ph.D. Scholarship** and the **Stokes Ph.D. Fellowship**. The direct link to the application for these fellowships can be found on the SON Scholarships and Financial Aid webpage: http://www.nursing.vcu.edu/programs/phd/funding/. Applications for dissertation awards must include a letter of support from the students' advisor.

The following are descriptions of each fellowship:
Downs Ph.D. Scholarship
Shirley T. Downs devoted her life to the VCU School of Nursing. She loved students and they loved her. Without her help, many may not have graduated. This award is for one year and provides tuition support (no fees) and a $12,000 stipend. Returning full-time students in the dissertation phase are eligible for this award.

Stokes Ph.D. Fellowship
The Stokes Fellowship was established by Margaret B. Stokes, a 1944 graduate of the VCU School

of Nursing. The award's purpose is to support and encourage Ph.D. nursing students in the development of programs of scholarship that will lead to the dissemination of knowledge relevant to the research emphasis of the Ph.D. program. The award is for one year and provides tuition support (no fees) and a $12,000 stipend. Returning full-time students in the dissertation phase are eligible for this award.

Student Awards

Martha M. Borlick Research Award
Initiated in 1980, the Dr. Martha M. Borlick Research Award is presented at the School of Nursing Recognition Ceremony to Ph.D. student(s) in nursing who demonstrate(s) excellence in nursing research as evidenced in the research culminating products.

VCU Honor System

The VCU Honor System policy describes the responsibilities of students, faculty and administration in upholding academic integrity, while at the same time respecting the rights of individuals to the due process offered by administrative hearings and appeals. According to this policy, "Members of the academic community are required to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity." In addition, "All members of the VCU community are presumed to have an understanding of the VCU Honor System and are required to:

- Agree to be bound by the Honor System policy and its procedures;
- Report suspicion or knowledge of possible violations of the Honor System;
- Support an environment that reflects a commitment to academic integrity;
- Answer truthfully when called upon to do so regarding Honor System cases;
- Maintain confidentiality regarding specific information in Honor System cases."

More information can be found at in the VCU policy library. The Honor System in its entirety can be reviewed on the Web at
http://www.assurance.vcu.edu/Policy%20Library/VCU%20Honor%20System.pdf.
More information can also be found on the Division of Student Affairs website at
http://www.students.vcu.edu/studentconduct/students/student_honor_system.html.

Use of Social Media

Patient confidentiality is fundamental to professional nursing practice.
Please remember the following:

- Patient information learned by the nursing student during the course of treatment must be safeguarded by the nursing student.
- You may not take, send, or receive oral recordings, pictures, or videos of patients, family members, or colleagues in the clinical setting.
- You cannot discuss (orally or in writing) your patients, family members, health care providers, healthcare personnel, or your clinical experiences on any social media site.
- You must promptly report any breach of confidentiality or privacy to your course or clinical faculty

School of Nursing Organizations

A.   Sigma Theta Tau Honor Society of Nursing

The Gamma Omega Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing was established at Virginia Commonwealth University in 1978.
Chapter membership is open to current nursing students as well as nurse clinicians and nurse researchers. Review the membership guidelines and view networking opportunities at their webpage: http://nursing.vcu.edu/about-us/sigma-theta-tau/

B.   Student Leadership Council

The Student Leadership Council seeks to establish a strong sense of community within the School of Nursing through student, faculty, and staff interactions.

The members of the Student Leadership Council provide advice and the student perspective to School of Nursing leadership on a variety of topics and they serve as ambassadors of the School of Nursing among their peers and in their communities

Student membership consists of class directors from each program and leaders of School of Nursing student organizations.

The council meets three times per semester during the regular academic year.

Non-Academic Policies and Information

A.   Emergency Preparedness Procedures

For the university: Current operating conditions for the university are posted at the VCU Alert Website http://alert.vcu.edu. The website provides resources for emergency contacts and what to do in the event of an emergency. This website is where students, faculty and staff can sign up for text alerts. VCU's text message alert system is used to provide immediate information about campus emergencies, weather delays and cancellations. **When the university is closed, clinicals are closed.

Specific to the School of Nursing: In the event that there is an emergency that is specific to the School of Nursing, an email will go out to faculty, staff and students, information will be posted on the School of Nursing main webpage, and information will be posted on the SON Blackboard portal for School of Nursing students, faculty and staff. Faculty, staff and students can contact the SON emergency phone number at 804-828-1307. This message will be updated in the event that there is a situation that closes the School of Nursing building when the university remains open.

Fire: Follow the VCU "RACE" procedure.
- **R**emove anyone in danger.
- **A**ctivate the alarm.
- **C**lose the doors to contain the smoke as the building is being evacuated.
- **E**xtinguish the fire, if trained.

Earthquake
- Do not set off the fire alarm.
- Do not exit the building.
- Do shelter in place.

Tornado
- Move to the lowest level and interior space or along a corridor wall away from windows and glass in shelter.
- Close all doors, including main corridors.
- If outside, quickly move to nearest sturdy building.

Hazardous Materials
- Call 804-828-1234
- Evacuate and designate someone to talk with the Fire Department.
- Notify emergency personnel if exposed, or have details on the spill.

Assembly Areas: There are two designated assembly areas for the School of Nursing. One area is the loading zone located directly adjacent to the building. The second area is the sidewalk near the Martin Luther King Bridge.

Floor Wardens: The School of Nursing Floor Wardens are responsible for coordinating the evacuation of the floors during a fire or other evacuation emergency. Additionally, floor wardens are responsible for assisting any evacuees located in the "Areas of Rescue Assistance" or notifying emergency responders of their location.

B. Food and Beverages Policy
Food and beverages (with the exception of bottled water) can be consumed only in designated areas of the building. It is the responsibility of all members of the School of Nursing community to assist with enforcement of this policy. Designated areas in which food and beverages are allowed are the 1st floor student lounge, quiet study area and Ph.D. student area, third floor faculty/administrative professional lounge, Dean's conference room, conference rooms 3038, 3001f and 4001c and private offices. Permission for use of classrooms 1013 and 2001d for functions that include consumption of food and beverages may be requested. Requests for permission for these special functions must be made to the Office of the Dean and scheduled through the room scheduling office of the School of Nursing. Scheduled classes will have priority for use of these specially designated classrooms.

When a room is used for a function that involves food and beverages, it carries with it the responsibility of the users to clean the room entirely of any food or containers and dispose of in appropriate receptacles. If it is necessary for the School of Nursing to contract professional cleaning for any debris, spills or stains that resulted from the special event, costs will be charged to the sponsor of the event.

C.   Building Access
The School of Nursing building is open Monday – Friday from 7:00 am – 5:00 pm. Students must use their ID badge to access the building after hours, including weekends.

D. Student Identification Cards/Badges
All faculty and staff at the university and medical center are required to carry an identification card. ID cards are required to access the School of Nursing after business hours and are needed to obtain a discount (10%) at the campus bookstores, hospital cafeteria and various other dining locations on campus (see Places to Eat). The first ID card is provided at no charge. Replacement cards (lost or stolen) are provided for a fee which is due at the time the new card is obtained. For more information, consult the Card Office website (http://vcucard.vcu.edu/).

E.   Student Lounge
The Student Lounge on the first floor is open to all students. If food and/or drinks are being consumed, students are responsible for cleaning up after themselves as necessary. The kitchen that is located off of the student lounge is equipped with microwaves and a refrigerator. The refrigerator is purged every Friday afternoon and all remaining items are discarded.

F.   Quiet Study Room
The Quiet Study Room is open during building operating hours and can be accessed through the Student Lounge. No food or drink are allowed in the Quiet Study Room.

G.   Photocopying
There is a photocopier for student use available at the top of the stairs on the second floor.

H.   Technology
There are both Windows and Apple computers available for student use on the first floor in the quiet study lounge, located adjacent to the student lounge.

There are two pay for print stations located near the vending machines on the first floor and at the top of the stairs on the second floor. Students can go to: http://go.vcu.edu/p4p to download the drivers on their personal laptops so that they can print to the pay for print stations from their laptops. Sending a job to pay for print allows access to the print job from any pay for print printer on campus.

Pay for print requires RamBucks which can be used for goods and services at VCU. To find out how to obtain and use RamBucks, please go to: http://vcucard.vcu.edu/myrambucks.html

I.   Parking
http://www.parking.vcu.edu

J.   Name and Address Changes
Students must ensure that their name and addresses (local, mailing, permanent and remit to) are up-to-date in eServices at all times. For name changes, students must submit to the Office of Records & Registration, a copy of their new Social Security card (or applicable documentation) and an updated Personal Update Form. Additional procedural information can be found in the student's eServices account, under the "Personal Information" tab.

K.   Recycling and Trash Receptacles
The VCU campus is an environment of sustainability. As such, there are specially-marked containers in the School of Nursing building and around campus for specific salvageable materials. There are separate trash containers for "organic items" such as food and liquid and for all other items such paper, plastic, metal, and glass.

L.   Library Services
The VCU Library has many resources to assist you in meeting your academic goals. The library has a School of Nursing liaison who can assist students with educational and research needs. The following is the link to the VCU Library: www.library.vcu.edu.

Nationally, Tompkins-McCaw Library for the Health Sciences is a top-tier health sciences library. It holds one of the largest and most extensive collections of health sciences literature in North America. The library primarily serves the MCV Campus, which houses one of the oldest medical schools in the South, founded in 1838. The library, in one form or location or another, has been a part of the medical campus since 1897. Located on 12th Street—two blocks north of the Gateway Building at the VCU Medical Center and within easy walks to the schools of Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Nursing and Allied Health Professions —the library is physically central to today's health sciences campus. It provides access to affiliated students, faculty, clinicians and practicing health care professionals on and off campus.

M. Division for Academic Success (DAS)

The Division for Academic Success provides academic support for students who need assistance with test-taking skills, study strategies and preparation for board/licensing exams. DAS also provide disability support services to students on the MCV Campus who have a documented disability. The following is a link to the DAS website: http://das.vcu.edu

N. VCU Writing Center

The Writing Center provides an additional set of eyes or additional perspective on student papers, before the paper is submitted for a grade. The consultants at the Center are readers and listeners. For more information, the Writing Center's website is: http://uc.vcu.edu/learning-support/writing-center/.

Appendix A- Student Verification Form

VCU School of Nursing
PhD Student Verification Form

By initialing each statement I accept and acknowledge that:

_____ I am responsible for knowing the requirements and the policies of the University and the School of Nursing (SON) as published in the policies on the school's web page, the University Bulletin and my program-specific SON Student Handbook.

_____ My VCU email account is the official mode of communication for the University and I am responsible for correcting problems and reviewing messages while enrolled in the nursing program and during university winter, summer and holiday breaks.

_____ I have or will submit the *VCU Certificate of Immunizations* to the Student Health Center prior to the first day of class. I acknowledge that University Student Health Services will review my record for compliance with university requirements and will place a hold on my account if I am not in compliance.

_____ I must register for all classes by the required date. I am responsible for reviewing the VCU academic calendar and course schedule.

_____ I may be photographed during school activities and I consent to the use of my photograph for VCU SON purposes. Additional consent will be sought if the School wishes to use the picture for a purpose that is not directly related to VCU.

_____ I am responsible to work with my advisor to ensure I am following my plan of study.

_____ I certify that my license to practice as a Registered Nurse is current and unrestricted and that failure to renew my RN license will result in removal from nursing classes.

_____ I acknowledge that a Ph.D. student who has completed course requirements for a degree must register for a minimum of one credit at VCU each semester until the degree is awarded.

_____ I am responsible for knowing and complying with Background/Drug Screening Policy and related items:

- All students must report any felony or misdemeanor charges and convictions which occur during their enrollment within 10 business days of occurrence to the Assistant Dean of Enrollment & Student Services.

- Students are also required to complete the Background/Drug Screening process upon program re-entry subsequent to a leave of absence, program withdrawal or program separation greater than 30 consecutive days.

_____ I acknowledge that VCUHS policy 5206 generally prohibits posting photographs or any information about a patient or staff through any electronic or non-electronic means including, but not limited to, social networking sites, blogs, and tweeting.

_____ I acknowledge that a Ph.D. student who is in the process of taking the comprehensive exam or is in the dissertation phase, is not required to attend the on-campus sessions, but is welcomed and encouraged to attend.

_____ I acknowledge that if I want to do any required curricular activities (e.g. data collection) in a state other than Virginia, I will consult with appropriate faculty and administration about the implications of doing so with respect to the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (NC-SARA), a national reciprocity agreement among states.

_____ I am responsible for completing the SON End of Program survey and the Exit Interview, following completion of the final dissertation defense, as well as completing the SON Ph.D. Alumni Survey at 1 and 3 years post-graduation.

My signature indicates that I am in compliance with all of the conditions stated above.

Print Name: _____Date: _____

Signature: _____Date: _____

Appendix B- Plans of Study

Virginia Commonwealth University - School of Nursing
PhD Program Full Time Plan of Study - Biobehavioral

Name: _____   Student ID: _____
Advisor: _____   Entry Semester: _____   Expected Graduation: _____

Course #	Course Title	Credits	Term	Term Completed	Prerequisites
NURS 703	Philosophy of Human Science	3	Fall		
NURS 776	Research Program Development Seminar I	2	Fall		
NURS 796* or NURS 792	Directed Research Experience or Directed Research Inquiry	2	(may be taken at any time)		
NURS 701	Statistical Methods for Nursing Research	3	Fall		
	*A minimum of 2 credits of NURS 796 is required by the completion of coursework.	**10**			
NURS 704	Analysis and Construction of Nursing Models and Theories	3	Spring		NURS 703
NURS 702	Advanced Statistical Concepts for Nursing Research	3	Spring		NURS 701
NURS 720	Foundations of Biobehavioral Clinical Research	3	Spring		Pre-/Co: NURS 704
NURS 777	Research Program Development Seminar II	2	Spring		
		11			
NURS 700	Scientific Integrity: Responsible Conduct of Clinical and Translational Research	1	Must be taken in 1st year of study		
	Focus of Inquiry 1 (Cognate or NURS 792)	3	Summer		
		4			
NURS 770	Quantitative Research Design	3	Fall		NURS 701, 702
NURS 772	Qualitative Research Design & Analysis	4	Fall		
	Focus of Inquiry 2 (Cognate or Advanced Methods)	3	Fall		
		10			
NURS 773	Perspectives on Research Design	3	Spring		NURS 704
NURS 721	Biobehavioral Measures in Clinical Research	3	Spring		NURS 704 or Permission
NURS 778	Research Program Development Seminar III	2	Spring		
NURS 797	Directed Research Practicum	3	May be taken at any time		
		11			
NURS 725	Emerging Trends and Areas of Scientific Inquiry	3	Summer		NURS 704 or Permission
		3			

NURS 898	Dissertation	Minimum of 12		Admission to Candidacy
	TOTAL	**Minimum of 61**		

Courses that were transferred/substituted for a VCU course:

VCU course #	Transferred/Substituted Course Name	Credits	Term Completed	OAP approver initials and date

Student: My signature acknowledges that:
1. I accept this curriculum plan as my plan of study for the duration of my program;
2. I understand any change in this plan requires my advisor's approval.

Advisor: My signature acknowledges that:
3. I accept this curriculum plan as the student's plan of study for the duration of his/her program;
4. I understand any change in this plan requires my approval.

Student Signature	Advisor Signature	Date

Virginia Commonwealth University - School of Nursing
PhD Program Full Time Plan of Study – Quality and Safety

Name: _____   Student ID: _____

Advisor: _____   Entry Semester: _____   Expected Graduation: _____

Course #	Course Title	Credits	Term	Term Completed	Prerequisites
NURS 703	Philosophy of Human Science	3	Fall		
NURS 776	Research Program Development Seminar I	2	Fall		
NURS 701	Statistical Methods for Nursing Research	3	Fall		
NURS 610	Health Information & Data Management	3	Fall		
		11			
NURS 704	Analysis and Construction of Nursing Models and Theories	3	Spring		NURS 703
NURS 702	Advanced Statistical Concepts for Nursing Research	3	Spring		NURS 701
NURS 731	Foundations in Quality and Safety Health Services Research	3	Spring		Pre-/Co: NURS 704
NURS 777	Research Program Development Seminar II	2	Spring		
		11			
NURS 700	Scientific Integrity: Responsible Conduct of Clinical and Translational Research	1	Must be taken in 1st year of study		
NURS 796* or NURS 792	Directed Research Experience or Directed Research Inquiry	2	NURS 796* or NURS 792		
	*A minimum of 2 credits of NURS 796 is required by the completion of coursework	**3**			
NURS 770	Quantitative Research Design	3	Fall		NURS 701, 702
NURS 772	Qualitative Research Design & Analysis	4	Fall		
NURS 638	Health Policy Leadership	3	Fall		
		10			
NURS 732	Quality and Safety Measures in Health Services Research	3	Spring		NURS 731
NURS 778	Research Program Development Seminar III	2	Spring		
NURS 773	Perspectives on Research Design	3	Spring		NURS 704
NURS 797	Directed Research Practicum	3	May be taken at any time		
	.	**11**			
NURS 725	Emerging Trends and Areas of Scientific Inquiry	3	Summer		NURS 704 or Permission
		3			
NURS 898	Dissertation	Minimum of 12			Admission to Candidacy
	TOTAL	**Minimum of 61**			

Courses that were transferred/substituted for a VCU course:

VCU course #	Transferred/Substituted Course Name	Credits	Term Completed	OAP appro initials and

Student: My signature acknowledges that:
1. I accept this curriculum plan as my plan of study for the duration of my program;
2. I understand any change in this plan requires my advisor's approval.

Advisor: My signature acknowledges that:
3. I accept this curriculum plan as the student's plan of study for the duration of his/her program;
4. I understand any change in this plan requires my approval.

Student Signature	Advisor Signature	Date

Virginia Commonwealth University, School of Nursing
PhD Program Part Time Plan of Study—Biobehavioral

Name: _____   Student ID: _____

Advisor: _____   Entry Semester: _____   Expected Graduation: __

Course #	Course Title	Credits	Term	Term Completed	Prerequisites
NURS 703	Philosophy of Human Science	3	Fall		
NURS 776	Research Program Development Seminar I	2	Fall		
NURS 701	Statistical Methods for Nursing Research	3	Fall		
		8			
NURS 704	Analysis and Construction of Nursing Models and Theories	3	Spring		NURS 703
NURS 777	Research Program Development Seminar II	2	Spring		
NURS 702	Advanced Statistical Concepts for Nursing Research	3	Spring		NURS 701
		8			
NURS 700	Scientific Integrity: Responsible Conduct of Clinical and Translational Research	1	Must be taken in 1st year of study		
NURS 796* or NURS 792	Directed Research Experience or Directed Research Inquiry	2	May be taken at any time		
	*A minimum of 2 credits of NURS 796 is required by the completion of coursework.	**3**			
NURS 770	Quantitative Research Design	3	Fall		NURS 701, 702
	Focus of Inquiry 1 (Cognate or NURS 792)	3	May be taken at any time		
		6			
NURS 720	Foundations of Biobehavioral Clinical Research	3	Spring		Pre-/Co: NURS 704
NURS 773	Perspectives on Research Design	3	Spring		NURS 704
NURS 778	Research Program Development Seminar III	2	Spring		
		8			
	Focus of Inquiry 2 (Cognate or Advanced Methods)	**3**	May be taken at any time		
NURS 772	Qualitative Research Design & Analysis	**4**	Fall		
NURS 721	Biobehavioral Measures in Clinical Research	3	Spring		NURS 704 or Permission
NURS 797	Directed Research Practicum	3	May be taken at any time		
		6			

NURS 725	Emerging Trends and Areas of Scientific Inquiry	**3**	Summer		NURS 704 or Permission
NURS 898	Dissertation	Minimum of 12			Admission to Candidacy
	TOTAL	**Minimum of 61**			

Courses that were transferred/substituted for a VCU course:

VCU course #	**Transferred/Substituted Course Name**	**Credits**	**Term Completed**	**OAP approval sign and date**

Student: My signature acknowledges that:
1. I accept this curriculum plan as my plan of study for the duration of my program;
2. I understand any change in this plan requires my advisor's approval.

Advisor: My signature acknowledges that:
3. I accept this curriculum plan as the student's plan of study for the duration of his/her program;
4. I understand any change in this plan requires my approval.

Student Signature	**Advisor Signature**	**Date**

Virginia Commonwealth University, School of Nursing
PhD Program Part Time Plan of Study—Quality and Safety

Name: _____   Student ID: _____

Advisor: _____   Entry Semester: _____   Expected Graduation: _____

Course #	Course Title	Credits	Term	Term Completed	Prerequisites
NURS 703	Philosophy of Human Science	3	Fall		
NURS 776	Research Program Development Seminar I	2	Fall		
NURS 610	Health Information and Data Management	3	Fall		
		8			
NURS 704	Analysis and Construction of Nursing Models and Theories	3	Spring		NURS 703
NURS 777	Research Program Development Seminar II	2	Spring		
NURS 796* or NURS 792	Directed Research Experience or Directed Research Inquiry	2	May be taken at any time		
	*A minimum of 2 credits of NURS 796 is required by the completion of coursework	**7**			
NURS 700	Scientific Integrity: Responsible Conduct of Clinical and Translational Research	**1**	Must be taken in 1st year of study		
NURS 701	Statistical Methods for Nursing Research	3	Fall		
NURS 638	Health Policy Leadership	3	Fall		
		6			
NURS 702	Advanced Statistical Concepts for Nursing Research	3	Spring		NURS 701
NURS 731	Foundations in Quality and Safety Health Services Research	3	Spring		Pre-/Co: NURS 704
		6			
NURS 797	Directed Research Practicum	**3**	May be taken at any time		
NURS 770	Quantitative Research Design	3	Fall		NURS 701, 702
NURS 772	Qualitative Research Design & Analysis	4	Fall		
		7			
NURS 732	Quality and Safety Measures in Health Services Research	3	Spring		NURS 704 or Permission
NURS 778	Research Program Development Seminar III	2	Spring		
NURS 773	Perspectives on Research Design	3	Spring		
		8			

NURS 725	Emerging Trends and Areas of Scientific Inquiry	**3**	Summer		NURS 704 or Permission
NURS 898	Dissertation	Minimum of 12			Admission to Candidacy
	TOTAL	**Minimum of 61**			

Courses that were transferred/substituted for a VCU course:

VCU course #	Transferred/Substituted Course Name	Credits	Term Completed	OAP approval sign and date

Student: My signature acknowledges that:
1. I accept this curriculum plan as my plan of study for the duration of my program;
2. I understand any change in this plan requires my advisor's approval.

Advisor: My signature acknowledges that:
3. I accept this curriculum plan as the student's plan of study for the duration of his/her program;
4. I understand any change in this plan requires my approval.

Student Signature	Advisor Signature	Date

Virginia Commonwealth University, School of Nursing
BS-PhD Entry Option, Full Time Program of Study, Biobehavioral

Name: _____   Student ID: _____

Advisor: _____   Entry Semester/Yr.: _____   Expected Graduation: _____

Course #	Course Title	Credits	Term	Term Completed	Prerequisites
NURS 512	Evidence Based Advanced Nursing Practice (required of all students)	3	Fall		
	*Additional 500-600 level course	3	Fall		
NURS 504	Advanced Nursing Practice: The Biological Basis of Health & Illness Across the Lifespan	3	Fall		
		9			
NURS 508	Policy, Processes and Systems for Advanced Nursing Practice	3	Spring		
	*Additional 500-600 level courses (6 credits)	6	Spring		
NURS 592	Directed Study in Nursing	3	Spring		
		12			
NURS 503	Ethics, Advanced Nursing Practice and the Healthcare Environment	3	Summer		
	*Additional 500-600 level course (3 credits)	3	Summer		
NURS 691	Nursing Research Practicum	3	Summer		
		9			
NURS 703	Philosophy of Human Science	3	Fall		
NURS 776	Research Program Development Seminar I	2	Fall		
NURS 796* or NURS 792	Directed Research Experience or Directed Research Inquiry	2	(may be taken at any time)		
NURS 701	Statistical Methods for Nursing Research	3	Fall		
	*A minimum of 2 credits of NURS 796 are required by the completion of coursework.	**10**			
NURS 704	Analysis and Construction of Nursing Models and Theories	3	Spring		NURS 703
NURS 702	Advanced Statistical Concepts for Nursing Research	3	Spring		NURS 701
NURS 720	Foundations of Biobehavioral Clinical Research	3	Spring		Pre/Co: NURS 704
NURS 777	Research Program Development Seminar II	2	Spring		
		11			
NURS 700	Scientific Integrity: Responsible Conduct of Clinical and Translational Research	1	Must be taken in 1st year of PhD study		
	Focus of Inquiry 1 (Cognate or NURS 792)	3	Summer		
		4			
NURS 770	Quantitative Research Design	3	Fall		NURS 701, 702

Course #	Course Title	Credits	Term	Term Completed	Prerequisites
NURS 772	Qualitative Research Design & Analysis	4	Fall		
	Focus of Inquiry Course 2 (Cognate or NURS 792)	3	Fall		
		10			

Course #	Course Title	Credits	Term	Term Completed	Prerequisites
NURS 721	Biobehavioral Measures in Clinical Research	3	Spring		NURS 704 or Permission
NURS 773	Perspectives on Research Design	3	Spring		NURS 704
NURS 778	Research Program Development Seminar III	2	Spring		
NURS 797	Directed Research Practicum	3	May be taken at any time		
		11			
NURS 725	Emerging Trends and Areas of Scientific Inquiry	**3**	Summer		NURS 704 or Permission
NURS 898	Dissertation	Minimum of 12			Admission to candidacy
	TOTAL	**Minimum of 91**			

Courses that were transferred/substituted for a VCU course

VCU course #	Transferred/Substituted Course Name	Credits	Term taken	Term Completed	OAP approver initials and date

* Students must complete 30 credits of 500 and 600 level courses, preferably in the student's specialty area. Plans will vary by specialty and advisor recommendations. In NURS 592, students begin to work with their advisor in the student's area of inquiry. In NURS 691, students begin research experience with their advisor in the advisor's area of inquiry. Each plan will be individually based on specialty area, student's background, and area of inquiry.

Student: My signature acknowledges that:
1. I accept this curriculum plan as my plan of study for the duration of my program;
2. I understand any change in this plan requires my advisor's approval.

Advisor: My signature acknowledges that:
3. I accept this curriculum plan as the student's plan of study for the duration of his/her program;
4. I understand any change in this plan requires my approval.

Student Signature	Advisor Signature	Date

Virginia Commonwealth University, School of Nursing
BS-PhD Entry Option, Full Time Program of Study, Quality and Safety

Name: _____   Student ID: _____

Advisor: _____   Entry Semester/Yr.: _____   Expected Graduation: ____

Course #	Course Title	Credits	Term	Term Completed	Prerequisites
NURS 512	Evidence Based Advanced Nursing Practice (required of all students)	3	Fall		
	*Additional 500-600 level course	3	Fall		
NURS 504	Advanced Nursing Practice: The Biological Basis of Health & Illness Across the Lifespan	3	Fall		
		9			
NURS 508	Policy, Processes and Systems for Advanced Nursing Practice	3	Spring		
	*Additional 500-600 level courses (6 credits)	6	Spring		
NURS 592	Directed Study in Nursing	3	Spring		
		12			
NURS 503	Ethics, Advanced Nursing Practice and the Healthcare Environment	3	Summer		
	*Additional 500-600 level course (3 credits)	3	Summer		
NURS 691	Nursing Research Practicum	3	Summer		
		9			
NURS 703	Philosophy of Human Science	3	Fall		
NURS 776	Research Program Development Seminar I	2	Fall		
NURS 701	Statistical Methods for Nursing Research	3	Fall		
NURS 610	Health Information & Data Management	3	Fall		
		11			
NURS 704	Analysis and Construction of Nursing Models and Theories	3	Spring		NURS 703
NURS 702	Advanced Statistical Concepts for Nursing Research	3	Spring		NURS 701
NURS 731	Foundations in Quality and Safety Health Services Research	3	Spring		Pre/Co: NURS 704
NURS 777	Research Program Development Seminar II	2	Spring		
		11			
NURS 700	Scientific Integrity: Responsible Conduct of Clinical and Translational Research	1	Must be taken in 1st year of PhD study		
NURS 796* or NURS 792	Directed Research Experience or Directed Research Inquiry	2	Summer		
	*A minimum of 2 credits of NURS 796 are required by the completion of coursework.	**3**			

Course #	Course Title	Credits	Term Offered (Year)	Term Completed	Prerequisites
NURS 770	Quantitative Research Design	3	Fall		NURS 701, 702
NURS 772	Qualitative Research Design & Analysis	4	Fall		
NURS 638	Health Policy Leadership	3	Fall		
		10			

Course #	Course Title	Credits	Term Offered (Year)	Term Completed	Prerequisites
NURS 732	Quality and Safety Measures in Health Services Research	3	Spring		NURS 731
NURS 778	Research Program Development Seminar III	2	Spring		NURS 704 or Permission
NURS 773	Perspectives on Research Design	3	Spring		NURS 704
NURS 797	Directed Research Practicum	3	May be taken at any time		
		11			
NURS 725	Emerging Trends and Areas of Scientific Inquiry	**3**	Summer		NURS 704 or Permission
NURS 898	Dissertation	Minimum of 12			Admission to candidacy
	TOTAL	**Minimum of 91**			

Courses that were transferred/substituted for a VCU course

VCU course #	Transferred/Substituted Course Name	Credits	Term taken	Term Completed	OAP approver initials and date

* Students must complete 30 credits of 500 and 600 level courses, preferably in the student's specialty area. Plans will vary by specialty and advisor recommendations. In NURS 592, students begin to work with their advisor in the student's area of inquiry. In NURS 691, students begin research experience with their advisor in the advisor's area of inquiry. Each plan will be individually based on specialty area, student's background, and area of inquiry.

Student: My signature acknowledges that:
1. I accept this curriculum plan as my plan of study for the duration of my program;
2. I understand any change in this plan requires my advisor's approval.

Advisor: My signature acknowledges that:
3. I accept this curriculum plan as the student's plan of study for the duration of his/her program;
4. I understand any change in this plan requires my approval.

Student Signature	Advisor Signature	Date

Appendix C- Advising and Registration checklist

1. Students must meet or talk with their advisor as soon as possible to update their curriculum plan of study but **no later than the start of start of on campus sessions. Students should be registered for courses NLT Monday, May 16 for the summer semester Friday, August 19 for the fall semester, and Tuesday, January 10. This gives OAP time to make accurate course projections. Students are responsible for checking their account to ensure there are no 'holds' that will prevent registration. If a hold exists, students must resolve it asap to be able to register on time.**

2. Complete items listed in the checklist below.

3. Return copies of materials as requested below to Fonda Neal asap. **(NEXus paperwork should be submitted immediately after obtaining approval).**

<div align="center">

Student Checklist:

</div>

☐ Curriculum plan of study has been updated to reflect courses completed as well as those that are planned for current and future semesters; student and advisor must sign and date the plan.

☐ Projected graduation date has been updated/added to the curriculum plan.

<div align="center">

COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IF TAKING A NEXUS COURSE:

</div>

☐ Student has obtained the NEXus checklist from Blackboard.

☐ NEXus course is approved by advisor _____ (advisor's signature)
<div align="center">APROVAL SIGNATURE IS REQUIRED.</div>

☐ Complete the NEXus Student Tracking Form (located in Blackboard).

☐ Complete the NEXus Core Course Substitution Request Form (if applicable).

☐ Student gives VCU School of Nursing permission to obtain a copy of the final transcript from the teaching institution on behalf of the student.

☐ **Immediately following the advising session**, a copy of the signed checklist, updated curriculum plan of study, course request form and NEXus forms, if applicable, must be submitted to Ms. Neal.

☐ Student will register for all classes using eServices.

Advisor: _____ **Date:** _____
<div align="center">Print   Sign</div>

    ☐ **Discussed with student by phone**

Student: _____ **Date:** _____
<div align="center">Print   Sign</div>

    ☐ **Discussed with advisor by phone**

Appendix D- On-Campus Agreement

Dear PhD Nursing Students:

Re: Mandatory PhD On-Campus Sessions

It is the VCU School of Nursing's (SON) policy as stated on the SON's website that all PhD students in coursework are required to attend the on-campus experience which occurs at the beginning of each semester. These dates are posted on the SON's website at least one year in advance to allow you to plan your schedule accordingly. This experience is a critical part of your Ph.D. program and extremely valuable for your success in the program. In addition, you will attend the first day of courses and seminars on various research topics. These sessions are a great opportunity for you to meet faculty, staff, and other Ph.D. students in the program.

The initial on-campus session allows you to obtain your VCU ID card, receive an orientation to library resources at VCU, and take a tour of the VCU School of Nursing building. Staff members from the Information Technology department are onsite at each session to provide technical support and to answer questions about online learning, such as managing blackboard.

Please sign and date below to acknowledge that you understand that your attendance is a required expectation of the program. Please bring this letter with you to the first day of the on-campus experience. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Ms. Fonda Neal, Ph.D. Ph.D. Program Coordinator, at fneal@vcu.edu or (804) 828-0836.

Sincerely,

Jo Lynne W. Robins, PhD, RN, ANP-BC, CHTP, AHN-C
Associate Professor
Department of Family and Community Health Nursing
Director, PhD Program

_____   _____ _____
Printed Name   Signature   Date

Appendix E- Guidelines for Dissertation & Committee Membership

Dissertation Committee
Guidelines for Dissertation Chair & Committee Members

1. In collaboration with the student, the dissertation committee is formed. It must consist of at least 4 members, one of which must be external to the Son. All members must be designated graduate faculty. Committee members outside the School of Nursing must have Graduate Faculty status. This includes VCU faculty and faculty from other universities that may be invited to participate as committee members. Graduate faculty status is confirmed or obtained by the Office of Academic Programs.

2. The Chair negotiates specific roles for committee members, i.e. content expert, clinical expert, methodologist, statistician, etc.

3. Discuss the specific format the student has selected for the dissertation --traditional 5 chapter dissertation or publication style dissertation. Engagement in the process by *all* committee members is critical.

4. The Chair clarifies expectations of the student and committee members at the first committee meeting.

5. The Chair and committee members review drafts of the student's work and provide written feedback within the designated/requested timeframes.

6. The Chair, committee members and student participates in required meetings, proposal defense and dissertation defense. The chair and committee members meet with the student at least once per semester. This meeting can be via telephone conference, Google hangout, Vidyo, etc. The student will distribute an agenda prior to each meeting.

7. The Chair reminds committee members of upcoming requirements (deadlines, etc.) during meetings and by emails.

8. When the student sends out work, the Chair follows up with an email to remind members when feedback is due.

9. The Chair and committee members guide and mentor the student to improve the student's work and to build interdisciplinary teams including the potential for ongoing collaborations in future work.

10. The Dissertation Committee Chair is the PI of the study (for IRB purposes).

11. Upon successful completion of the defense, the student must format and upload the document into Scholar's Compass and ProQuest.

12. The Chair monitors IRB status and study closure in collaboration with the student.

Appendix F- Final Dissertation Defense Checklist

Final Dissertation Defense Process

In preparation for your final dissertation defense, please follow these guidelines and assure that all forms are correctly completed.

☐ Successfully defended dissertation proposal

☐ Review transcript for any missing grades or grades of "I". Incomplete grades need to be converted to the appropriate letter grade. If not converted, grades of "I" convert to an "F" after graduation.

☐ Make sure the online application to graduate has been submitted.

☐ Provide committee members with an electronic copy of the final dissertation at least two weeks before the final dissertation defense date.

☐ Secure a room for the final dissertation defense date via email to Fonda Neal (fneal@vcu.edu)
at least 4 weeks in advance of the final dissertation defense date.

☐ Download and complete the VCU Graduate School **ETD approval form/Approval form for thesis/dissertation and final oral examination** (http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/community/thesis.html) and take to the dissertation defense. Please make sure that names of the Graduate Advisor Committee are typed on the form, leaving room for signatures. <u>Do not</u> type the names of the Graduate Program Director or Dean as these lines are for their signatures only. Once the approval form has been completed and signed by the School of Nursing personnel, return the form to Fonda Neal in the Office of Academic Programs (Room 4009c) who will submit the form to the Graduate School.

☐ Read the **VCU Graduate School Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Manual** on the graduate school's website (http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/student/thesis.html) and adhere to the requirements regarding submission of thesis/dissertation to **Scholars Compass** and to **ProQuest** and completing the **Survey of Earned Doctorates**. Be sure to print the Certificate of Completion as it may be necessary to provide a copy to the graduate school at a later date.

☐ Inform Fonda when the dissertation has been uploaded to the Compass and to ProQuest and that the Survey has been completed, so that she can submit the final graduation application to the Graduation Office.

☐ Schedule an exit interview with the Office of Academic Programs.

☐ Complete the online End of Program survey.

Appendix G- Ph.D. Student Advisor Change Form

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:10px;">

SCHOOL OF NURSING
Doctoral Student Advisor Change Form

This form must be completed and submitted to Fonda Neal before the change will take effect.

_____
Student Name   (sign)   **Date**

Current Advisor(s):

_____
(Print name)   (sign)   Date
Current Advisor

_____
(Print name)   (sign)   Date
Current Co-Advisor (if applicable)

Change in Advisor(s):

_____
(Print name)   (sign)   Date
New Advisor

_____
(Print name)   (sign)   Date
New Co-Advisor (if applicable)

The current advisor's and co-advisor's (if applicable) signature above is acknowledgement that he/she will no longer mentor this student if there is a change in one or both advisors.

</div>

Appendix H- Leave of Absence Form

School of Nursing
Virginia Commonwealth University

LEAVE OF ABSENCE FORM
(Please complete and submit to the Office of Academic Programs)

Name: _____ _____

In addition to completing this form, you need to ensure that you are withdrawn from any current course work. You can withdraw or drop classes using eServices.

You must also attach a revised curriculum plan form that is signed by your advisor.

Dates of requested LOA: From beginning of _____ semester/year through the end of _____ semester/year.

*Student will return to the program at the start of the _____ semester of _____ (year).

Reason for requested leave of absence:

Advisor's comments on the leave of absence:

*Students are expected to notify the PhD Program Administrator of their intention to return to the program by _____ date. Otherwise, the student will be withdrawn from the program.

_____   _____
Student's Signature and Date   Advisor's Signature and Date

_____
PhD Program Coordinator's Signature and Date

PLEASE NOTE, IF YOUR HOME ADDRESS CHANGES AT ANYTIME, PLEASE UPDATE IT IN ESERVICES AND INFORM THE OFFICE OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS. IF YOU ARE RECEIVING FINANCIAL AID, PLEASE CONTACT FINANCIAL AID AND/OR STUDENT ACCOUNTING ABOUT THE STATUS OF YOUR AWARD OR LOAN.