



PHD STUDENT HANDBOOK

2024-2025

University of Florida College of Nursing

In this handbook, PhD students will find information related to the curriculum, academic progression, and graduation from the University of Florida College of Nursing doctoral program.

PhD Student Handbook

University of Florida College of Nursing

Welcome to your doctoral studies at the University of Florida's College of Nursing! Our goal is to provide you with a rich educational experience that prepares you with the foundational knowledge and skills required to be a nurse scientist who will lead an innovative program of research to improve health outcomes across diverse populations by addressing the social and structural determinants of health, and transform nursing practice, systems of care, and health policies. As a community of scholars, our program welcomes and promotes diversity and inclusion at all levels, including but not limited to diversity of thought, skills, background, representation, abilities, and beliefs. We sincerely hope that your time as a graduate student is rewarding!

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Care. Lead. Inspire

Preface

The PhD in Nursing Science degree is conferred by the University of Florida Graduate School, and is subject to all policies described in the [Graduate Catalog](#) and [Graduate Student Handbook](#). This handbook is designed as a resource guide providing information specific to the College of Nursing PhD program. The Graduate Catalog is the official University of Florida (UF) publication for graduate policies and procedures, and will take precedence if there are any discrepancies between the two publications.

UFCON PhD Program Curriculum

Core Courses:

Professionalism and Career Development

NGR 7709 Nurse Scientist and Scholar I (1 credit)
NGR 7835 Nurse Scientist and Scholar II (1 credit)
NGR 6937 Research Synthesis (3 credits)

Scientific Inquiry: Logic & Reasoning, Literature Reviews, Research Designs, Nursing Theory & Ethics

NGR 7115 Philosophy of Nursing Science (3 credits)
NGR 7816 Quantitative Research Design and Measurement in Nursing (3 credits)
NGR 7123 Theory Development in Nursing (3 credits)
NGR 7661 Nursing Science in Health Disparities and Vulnerable Populations (3 credits)
GMS 7877 Responsible Conduct of Research

Quantitative and Qualitative Methods

NGR 6840 Applied Statistical Analysis I (3 credits)
NGR 6845 Applied Statistical Analysis II (3 credits)
NGR 6815 Foundations of Qualitative Health Research (3 credits)

Mentored Research

NGR 7979 Advanced Research (9-30 credits depending on BSN or MSN track)

Courses to Augment Research Focus:

Area of Concentration courses (9 credits)

*Elective courses (3-12 credits depending on BSN or MSN track)

QUALIFYING EXAM & DISSERTATION PROPOSAL DEFENSE

NGR 7980 Dissertation Research (11-21 credits depending on BSN or MSN track)

*Electives can be taken after qualifying exam

DISSERTATION DEFENSE

BSN entry = minimum 90 credit

MSN entry = minimum 68 credit

PhD Program in Nursing Science

Purpose and Objectives

The University of Florida College of Nursing (UFCON) PhD program prepares you to be a nurse scientist by developing a focused program of research that will positively impact human health and reduce health disparities, influence nursing practice, healthcare services, and health policy. The PhD program curriculum is designed to develop nurse scientists who apply advanced knowledge in nursing theory, rigorous methods, and analytic strategies in the conduct of research, and effectively collaborate with interdisciplinary teams to improve human health, systems of care and social conditions. In addition to the course work, the PhD Program in Nursing Science requires you to successfully pass a qualifying examination, dissertation proposal, and dissertation defense. It is expected that you will disseminate your work through scholarly venues, including publications and professional conferences.

The core courses of the PhD in Nursing Science program are centered around the following Student Learning Objectives that will facilitate the achievement of the program outcomes, along with the area of concentration and elective courses, and professional activities.

Student Learning Objectives

1. Appraise and summarize the state of the science (in oral and written form) in a focused area relevant to the priorities of the discipline of nursing.
2. Develop and defend a research strategy and its theoretical basis for scientific inquiry to advance nursing science.
3. Apply ethical principles, rigorous and reproducible methods for the conduct of research, and methods for data analysis.
4. Implement a plan to disseminate and sustain a collaborative program of nursing research and lead the advancement of nursing science and human health.

Program Outcomes

After the PhD program, UFCON PhD students will be prepared to:

1. Lead collaborative research team in using rigorous and reproducible methods to generate new knowledge for advancing nursing science and improving human health.
2. Conduct culturally responsive research for improving health equity and the health outcomes and healthcare experiences of populations.
3. Disseminate research findings to professional audiences, communities, and other stakeholders for the furtherance of health.
4. Obtain resources to advance a program of research.

Supervisory Chair and Committee for PhD Students

Upon admission, a Supervisory Chair will be appointed to each student to serve as a primary mentor throughout the course of PhD study. By the end of the second semester or completion of 12 or more credits, a Supervisory Committee will be formed. The Supervisory Chair and Committee will provide focused mentorship on strategies for developing scholars in nursing and facilitating the successful completion of the program.

The student is responsible for arranging a meeting with the Supervisory Chair to refine the focus of the student's plan for research and review the [UFCON Graduate Student and Supervisory Chair Compact](#) (see Appendix A) regarding each party's responsibilities. In addition, the student and Supervisory Chair will complete the Individual Curriculum Plan ([BSN-PhD](#) or [MSN-PhD](#)), develop the [Individual Development Plan \(IDP\)](#), and discuss the formation of the Supervisory Committee based on procedures stated in Policy S-4.07.

1. Formation of the Mentoring Team:

- a. Upon admission, a student will be assigned a Supervisory Chair by the PhD Program Director (PPD) in consultation with the relevant Department Chair.
- b. After the student arranges a meeting with the Supervisory Chair, the student submits the approved and signed curriculum plan to the Office of Student Services (Mailing Pauzauskie at mpauzauskie@ufl.edu) to be placed in the student's record. Any changes to the curriculum plan require submission of a revised curriculum plan form to the Office of Student Services.
- c. The student can work with the Supervisory Chair, PhD Program Director, and Department Chair to establish a Supervisory Committee during the first two semesters if warranted.
- d. The Supervisory Chair will work with the student to establish a Supervisory Committee when they have completed the second semester or at least 12 credits (whichever comes first). At that time a Supervisory Committee is established.
- e. The Supervisory Committee must contain at least four members. At least two must be from the College of Nursing (including the Supervisory Chair) and at least one member from outside the College. Criteria for the Supervisory Committee Chair include: (1) conducting research in the content area of the student's research focus; (2) hold Graduate Faculty status; (3) have a record of achievement to support the development of NRSA applications; and (4) have an established program of

research. Criteria for faculty members selected for Supervisory Committee members include: (1) have expertise in research methodology or content; (2) representation from area of concentration; and (3) hold Graduate Faculty status. [Special appointment](#) can be made for qualified UF or non-UF faculty who do not hold Graduate Faculty status to serve as guest experts on a student's supervisory committee but do not count toward the required minimum for a valid supervisory committee. The student submits the completed [Supervisory Committee Appointment Form](#) to the Office of Student Services (OSS).

- f. If circumstances arise in which either the Supervisory Chair and/or PhD student believe that it is in their best interest to change the Supervisory Chair, they should initially consult with the PPD. The PPD will coordinate a meeting with the Supervisory Chair and PhD student, if amenable, to negotiate a resolution. If the resolution is to reappoint the student, the PPD and relevant department chair(s) will meet to discuss the assignment of a new chair. Once a new supervisory chair is identified, the change will be communicated with the PhD student and OSS.
2. Development of the Individual Development Plan (IDP)
 - a. During the first semester, the student will prepare an IDP. Following Supervisory Chair approval, the student will submit the IDP to the Office of Student Services to be placed in the [UF Graduate School's Student Information System](#) (GIMS). The IDP will be updated at least yearly during the spring semester. Students and their Supervisory Chair will meet to discuss the IDP and the Individual Curriculum Plan at least once per academic year for annual evaluation and once per semester to review IDP progress.
 - b. At the end of the spring semester, the student will update their IDP and submit it to the Supervisory Chair for review. Following the Supervisory Chair's approval, the student will submit the updated IDP to the OSS to be filed in the student's academic records. ([Refer to policy S 4.02: Progression and Annual Evaluation](#)).
 3. During the summer semester the Supervisory Chair will complete the annual evaluation and meet with the student after providing them with a copy of the evaluation form. After the Supervisory Chair and student sign the form, the student will submit the form to the OSS for inclusion in the student's records. Failure to make adequate progress toward achieving goals will result in an unsatisfactory annual evaluation. If this occurs, the student, in collaboration with the Supervisory Committee, will be required to formulate a plan for remediation. Progress will be re-evaluated within 6 months. Faculty evaluations of the student and student self-evaluations will be filed with the student's academic records.

For additional information, refer to the University of Florida [Graduate Catalog on Doctor of Philosophy requirements](#).

PhD Program Milestones (Based on a Full-time Plan of Study)

First (Fall) Semester

1. By the second week of the semester, the student will send the following documents to the Supervisory Chair and request a meeting to review and finalize the:
 - a. [UFCON Graduate Student and Supervisory Chair Compact](#)
 - b. Individual Curriculum Plan ([BSN-PhD](#) or [MSN-PhD](#)) This curriculum plan should meet the credit criteria set by the Graduate School, include all College of Nursing core courses and have a minimum of three courses in the student's identified area of concentration. It should be noted that course credit hours for NGR 7979 and NGR 7980 may vary depending on the student's research and other planned coursework. Most important is the total number of credit hours (MSN/PhD = 69, BSN/PhD =90).
 - c. Preliminary Individual Development Plan (IDP)
2. Following the initial meeting with the Supervisory Chair, the student will make revisions, if necessary, complete all signature pages, and submit an electronic copy of the UFCON Graduate Student and Supervisory Chair Compact, Individual Curriculum Plan, and Individual Development Plan (IDP) documents to the PhD Program Advisor in the Office of Student Services (OSS), Mailing Pauzauskie at mpauzauskie@ufl.edu.
3. The student and Supervisory Chair will meet at least one time per semester to review progress towards IDP goals.

Second (Spring) Semester

1. The Supervisory Chair will work with the student to establish a Supervisory Committee when they have completed the second semester or at least 12 credits (whichever comes first). The student submits the completed [Supervisory Committee Appointment Form](#) to the OSS.
2. At the end of the spring semester, the student will update their IDP goals and submit them to their Supervisory Chair at least one week before meeting with the Supervisory Chair. The student and Supervisory Chair will review the updated IDP, and discuss progression in the PhD program. ([Refer to policy S.4.02: Progression and Annual Evaluation](#)).
3. The student will coordinate a meeting of the Supervisory Committee to review and approve the curriculum plan, updated IDP, and progression plan.

Third (Summer) Semester

The student will complete the initial portion of the [Progression in Doctoral Studies Evaluation Form](#), which will be routed to their Supervisory Chair. The Supervisory Chair and the student will meet after the student is provided with the evaluation. After the Supervisory Chair and student sign the form, the form will be routed to the OSS for inclusion in the student's records.

Fourth (Fall) Semester

The student will coordinate a meeting of the Supervisory Committee to discuss the CON curriculum plan and IDP at least once per academic year for annual evaluation and once per semester to review IDP progress.

Fifth (Spring) Semester

The student will coordinate a meeting with the Supervisory Committee to: (a). update the IDP and once approved, will submit the updated IDP to the OSS; (b). decide on the format of, and prepare for the Qualifying Exam and discuss the format of the dissertation.

Sixth (Summer) Semester

1. The student will complete the initial portion of the [Progression in Doctoral Studies Evaluation Form](#), which will be routed to their Supervisory Chair. The Supervisory Chair and the student will meet after the student is provided with the evaluation. After the Supervisory Chair and student sign the form, the form will be routed to the OSS for inclusion in the student's records.
2. In the semester before the qualifying examination, the Supervisory Committee reviews student progress, reviews the proposal documents, and approves progression to the qualifying exam. Successful completion of a written product to demonstrate breadth and depth of knowledge on the proposed topic must be approved by the Supervisory Committee to proceed to the qualifying exam. The type of written document required depends on the qualifying exam and dissertation options chosen. This must be negotiated with the Supervisory Committee (see Pages 22-25 for details).

Seventh (Fall) Semester

1. After approval from the Supervisory Committee, the student will schedule the Qualifying Exam by completing the [Request to be Examined: Written Question Option](#) or [Request to be Examined: Grant Application Option](#) to their committee members for signature, which then routes to the OSS.
2. The student will confirm with the OSS that all required reservations have been scheduled and will communicate the information to the Supervisory Committee.
3. On the day that the Qualifying Exam oral portion is complete, the student will complete the initial portion of the [Qualifying Exam Evaluation Form](#), which routes for signatures and then to OSS.
4. When the dissertation proposal defense is complete, the student will complete the initial portion of the [Dissertation Proposal Evaluation Form](#), which routes for signatures and then to OSS.

Eighth (Spring) Semester and Subsequent Semesters

1. The student will coordinate a meeting of the Supervisory Committee to discuss the CON curriculum plan and IDP at least once per academic year for annual evaluation and once per semester to review IDP progress.
2. Prepare for dissertation defense by:
 - (a). Coordinate the schedule of the written portion and date and time of the oral portion of the dissertation defense with the Supervisory Committee and submit to the OSS.
 - (b). The student will confirm with OSS that all required reservations have been scheduled and will communicate the information to the Supervisory Committee.
 - (c). On the day that the oral portion of the dissertation defense is complete, the student will complete the initial portion of the [Dissertation Defense Evaluation Form](#), which routes for signatures and then to OSS.
3. Complete the [UF Graduate School's Degree Application Form](#) and the Degree Candidate Status Verification Form by the published deadlines.

Progression and Annual Evaluation of PhD Students

A. Progression Requirements

1. Students must maintain at least a 3.00 truncated GPA and have passing grades in all coursework (passing grades for graduate students are A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, and S).
2. Students who receive an incomplete (I), which has zero grade points, for any course must be assigned a grade before completion of the next semester. Otherwise, the student will not meet the criteria for progression in the program.
3. Students with less than a 3.00 truncated GPA or receiving a U in NUR 7979 or NUR 7980 may not hold an assistantship or fellowship per UF Graduate School Policy.
4. Students must have on file in the Office of Student Services evidence of compliance with the Student Health Policy (S-1.01) and Security Requirements Policy (S-1.17) and current CPR certification (if required).

B. Annual Evaluation of Progress

1. An annual evaluation will be conducted by the Supervisory Committee Chair during the summer semester of each year. The student and Supervisory Chair will meet for an evaluation of program progression annually or additionally if necessary (see numbers 4 and 5 below).
2. The student will be given a copy of the written evaluation.
3. A copy of the written evaluation will be sent to OSS to be placed on file as part of the student's academic record.
4. When an evaluation results in a Satisfactory evaluation but with revisions to the program of study, copies of the evaluation form and revised program of study will be sent to the PhD Program Director and Assistant Dean of Student Services. A follow-up evaluation should be conducted as deemed appropriate by the supervisory chair.
5. When an evaluation results in an unsatisfactory progress rating, the Supervisory Chair will complete the additional form and notify the PhD Program Director immediately.
6. The Comments or Requirements section must be completed and a

rationale must be offered. If the evaluation is unsatisfactory, then administrators must decide whether or not to recommend student removal from the program.

7. The Assistant Dean for Student Services will meet with the PhD Program Director to make a final decision if the recommended course of action noted on the evaluation form is for student removal from the program.
8. The PhD Program Director will notify the student of the outcome of the meeting.
9. If the student disagrees with an evaluation, the student may request in writing that the evaluation be reviewed by the Assistant Dean for Student Services and PhD Program Director. The review will be recorded.

PhD Qualifying Examination and Admission to Candidacy

1. *Eligibility Criteria.*

To be eligible for the qualifying examination, the student must have:

- a) Completed all of the required nursing core coursework as well as area of concentration requirements without any existing incomplete grades
- b) Received a satisfactory rating on the most recent annual evaluation
- c) Received the approval of the supervisory chair and committee to proceed to the qualifying exam
- d) Registered for a minimum of three credit hours or as required by the terms of a scholarship or fellowship during the term the examination is administered.

2. *Time Schedule*

The examination is typically taken after the second year of full-time study or equivalent part-time study. There must be a minimum of two semesters between the date of the qualifying examination and the date of the degree. All work for the PhD degree must be completed within five calendar years after admission to candidacy or the examination must be repeated.

3. *PhD Qualifying Examination*

For those examinations requiring that students meet with their supervisory committees (e.g., oral portions of qualifying examinations, final defense of the dissertation), the student and members may attend in person or remotely, provided that all participants are present synchronously and that members' questions are asked and answered in "real-time". With the support from other members, the Supervisory Chair of the student's advisory committee is responsible for ensuring the academic integrity of the evaluation; in particular, the Supervisory Chair is responsible for ensuring that the student does not receive unauthorized assistance during the evaluation. Consistent with Graduate School guidelines, the external member is charged with assisting in this effort, ensuring that the evaluation is valid and fair, and that Graduate School policies are met.

Students request the examination by initiating and obtaining signatures on the Request to be Examined Form ([Written Question](#) or [Grant Application option](#)) and submitting it to the Office of Student Services. The Office of Student Services will notify the PhD Program Director and provide the Supervisory Chair with the Candidacy form at least one week before the oral exam.

In consultation with the supervisory chair, the student schedules a meeting of the supervisory committee to review the focus of the dissertation, determine completion of all other eligibility criteria, and discuss the written exam options and projected oral exam dates. The written Exam Options include (a) [Written Question Option](#) and (b) [Grant Application Option](#).

For both options, the student must work independently on the written and oral exam although clarifying questions may be asked of the supervisory chair and committee up until 2 weeks before the exam date. The completed examination is to be delivered electronically by the student to each member of the Committee.

- Committee members will acknowledge receipt.
- Students will adhere to the UF honor code (4.9).
- No decision on pass/fail will be made until after the oral portion of the examination.

The Supervisory Committee evaluates the qualifying exam document, oral portion, and responses to committee questions using the following criteria:

- 1) Reflect in-depth knowledge and synthesis of relevant theory and research.
- 2) Reflect a comprehensive review of literature in the student's area of research.
- 3) Reflect knowledge of the type of research the student proposes (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods).
- 4) Reflect an understanding of the student's area of concentration/supporting courses and their relevance and/or application to the student's dissertation proposal.
- 5) Give evidence of scholarly thinking.

Within two (2) weeks after submission of the written portion, an oral examination will be held.

- The student is responsible for arranging the time, date, and location (if scheduled in person) of the exam which must be agreed upon by all Supervisory committee members and communicated to them.
- Members of the Supervisory Committee must participate in the oral examination.
- The student may not change membership of the Supervisory committee between the time of written and oral portions of the qualifying examination.
- The oral examination may be conducted using video and/or telecommunication.
- The oral examination provides an opportunity for the student to amplify, clarify, and verify written responses. The focus is on the student's ability to communicate orally and substantiate the integration of knowledge gained throughout the program.
- The oral examination normally requires approximately two hours.

A. Written Question Option

By the predetermined date, the student will submit to the Supervisory chair four (4) questions accompanied by a comprehensive reading list (in APA format). The questions should reflect the synthesis and integration of the student's individual program of study and cover:

- a) Theoretical issues and research findings that pertain to the student's area of research, including analysis of ethical, social, political, economic, and/or cultural issues
- b) Methodological issues that pertain to the student's area of research, including analysis of how a variety of research approaches have been used or could be, used to expand the scientific knowledge base in the area of the dissertation proposal.

The Supervisory chair and committee will discuss the questions prepared by the student and may select or modify these questions or add alternative questions. The final two (2) questions will be provided to the student two (2) weeks after the committee receives the student's proposed questions.

Once the student has received the questions, the student will proceed independently to prepare responses.

- All answers are to be typewritten, double-spaced, APA format in 12 pt. or equivalent font.
- Each answer may be no more than 10 pages in length, excluding references, tables, and figures.
- The student will have two weeks from the time of receiving the questions to send their response via email attachment to the committee. The due date for the response should be agreed upon by the student and committee.

B. Grant Application Option

The student will independently write a grant application (maximum of 10 pages) in the form of the Specific Aims and Research Strategy sections of an [NIH grant application](#) (e.g., R03, R21) and as detailed here:

- I. Specific Aims
- II. Research Strategy
 - A. Significance
 1. Theoretical/practical/methodological significance of your topic
 2. Possible contribution to the field and to your future program of research
 3. Conceptual/theoretical framework (or justification for not using a framework)
 - a. Scientific premise for the research (general strengths and weaknesses of the prior research with consideration of rigor of prior research)
 - b. Describe what is known about the key concepts, any hypothesized relationships among them, with your critical analysis of the strengths/weaknesses in prior research
 - B. Innovation
 1. Gaps in this area of research and how your study will contribute to filling at least one of these gaps
 2. Novel aspect of your study compared to previous studies in this area
 - C. Approach
 1. Preliminary studies you conducted or participated in (if applicable)
 2. Design
 - a. Research approach and specific design
 - b. Brief discussion of reasons for choosing this design rather than alternative approaches

3. Setting and Sample
 - a. Inclusion and exclusion criteria
 - b. Determination of the appropriate sample size
 - c. Plan for recruitment of participants (or access to data as relevant) and any anticipated difficulties.
 - d. Strengths and limitations of the proposed sample for answering your research question
4. Measures
 - a. For a quantitative study:
 - i. Operationalization of the variables
 - ii. Validity, reliability, and responsiveness of the instruments
 - iii. Rationale for choice of the instruments
 - b. For a qualitative study: interview guide to capture the concepts of interest
5. Procedures
 - a. Description of study data collection process or data preparation and processing
 - b. Procedures to maximize the integrity and rigor of the study (e.g., random assignment and blinding for experiments, ensuring participant comfort to maximize disclosure)
6. Analysis
 - a. Data analysis methods planned to achieve the study
 - b. Explain how relevant biological variables, such as sex, are factored into research design and analysis.
7. Timeline
8. Potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success
9. Summary of strengths and fit with the student's philosophical perspective(s).

Questions regarding procedural issues related to either option are to be addressed to the PhD Program Director. Violation of rules will constitute failure of the examination.

4. *PhD Qualifying Examination Outcome*

After the oral examination, the Supervisory Committee shall assign a grade of pass or fail. The student will complete the initial portion of the [Qualifying Exam Evaluation Form](#) (which is routed to the Supervisory Committee members for signature and then to the Office of Student Services). The Supervisory Chair will indicate pass or fail including necessary changes in the student's program or special conditions. The Admission to Candidacy Form is routed to the Office of Student Services who will then submit the form electronically to the Graduate School.

If the Qualifying Examination is passed, the student may proceed to the dissertation proposal preparation or refinement, and approval process with the supervisory chair and committee's input. The Supervisory Chair and Committee will review the final dissertation proposal and grant approval for the student to proceed. Once authorization from the Chair and Committee is obtained, the student may apply for Institutional Review Board approval and begin to conduct the dissertation study.

The Supervisory Committee evaluates the dissertation proposal defense document, oral presentation, and responses to committee questions using the following criteria:

- 1) Addresses the significance of the topic.
- 2) Effectively articulates how the proposed research is innovative and will advance knowledge related to the topic.
- 3) Justify the research methods the student proposes (e.g., qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods).
- 4) Accurately describes the approach, measures, and analysis of the proposed research to address the study aims.
- 5) Effectively addresses the ethical dimensions of carrying out the proposed research.
- 6) Declares the dissertation format and content of the 2-3 manuscripts (if applicable)

If the Qualifying Examination is not passed, a failing grade is recorded and submitted on the Admission to Candidacy Form. A failing grade on the examination results in one of the following recommendations:

- Dismissal from the PhD program in nursing, or
- Petition of re-examination, with a change in program of

studies and additional coursework, or request to further develop a dissertation proposal. (See [Qualifying Examination; Preparation for Re-Examination](#)).

- a. If re-examination is recommended, it must be requested in writing by the Supervisory Chair and Committee through the College Assistant Dean for Student Services and approved by the UF Graduate School. At least one semester of additional coursework must be completed before re-examination (per UF Graduate Catalog). The required date of re-examination is reset by the supervisory chair and committee.
- b. If permission for re-examination is granted, the student must re-initiate the examination process as in the "PhD Qualifying Examination and Admission to Candidacy" section above.
- c. If a failure occurs at the time of a second examination, the student will be dismissed from the PhD program in nursing. The Supervisory Committee records the outcome, and the Supervisory Chair submits the forms: Graduate School Admission to Candidacy and the College of Nursing, Qualifying Examination: Dismissal or preparation for Re-Examination, to the Office of Student Services.

Candidacy & Final Defense Checklist - Instructions for PhD Students

1. Review [UF Graduate School](#) Deadlines
2. Confirm that the College's Office of Student Services has your Supervisory Committee information.
3. Complete the Request to be Examined Form from Policy S-4.04 and submit it to the Office of Student Services so that staff know the date of your oral exam. Be sure to indicate on the Form the planned mode for accomplishing the oral portion of the qualifying exam or final defense of the doctoral dissertation (in-person, virtually, or both).
4. The student will communicate the date and time of the qualifying exam and final defense with the Supervisory Chair and Committee as well as confirm that all forms have been filed with the Graduate School and all required reservations are prepared with the Office of Student Services.
5. After the qualifying exam is completed, the student must initiate the [Qualifying Exam Evaluation Form](#) by completing initial information, which then routes to the Supervisory Committee for signatures and then routes to the OSS.
 - a. There must be at least two semesters between the oral part of the qualifying exam and the date of the degree. The term in which the qualifying examination is passed is counted, if the exam occurs before the mid-point of the semester.
6. After the dissertation proposal defense is complete, the student must initiate the [Dissertation Proposal Evaluation Form](#) by completing their initial information, which then routes to the Supervisory Committee for signatures and then routes to the OSS.
7. After the dissertation defense oral portion is complete, the student must initiate the [Dissertation Defense Evaluation Form](#) by completing their initial information, which then routes to the Supervisory Committee for signatures and then routes to the OSS.

Dissertation Options and Requirements

Dissertation Format Selection

The PhD student will consult with the Supervisory Committee and either a traditional or manuscript option for the dissertation format will be identified. The research comprising the dissertation is similar for each option and the format differs only in organization. The student may refer to the [UF Graduate School Handbook](#) for information about the dissertation, which will follow UF Graduate School guidelines for format and content.

The Supervisory Committee evaluates the written dissertation document, oral dissertation presentation, and responses to committee questions using the following criteria:

Criteria

- 1) Effectively present the significance of a focused problem with logically specific aims.
- 2) Articulate sufficient command of the body of research on the topic.
- 3) Address the innovation of the study within the context of what is known about the problem and the proposed research strategy.
- 4) Provide sufficient justification for the selection of the research strategy undertaken to address the specific aims, including components of rigor and reproducibility.
- 5) Effectively defend the interpretation of research findings and implications for the field, nursing science, and practice.
- 6) Reflect the application of ethical principles in the conduct, interpretation, and dissemination plan of the research.
- 7) Describe the next step that will be taken to advance the area of research and a potential plan for early career development toward an independent program of research.

A. *Traditional Dissertation*

The traditional dissertation is an integrated, scholarly report. The student consults the Supervisory Chair on the appropriate format for the dissertation based on the research study type, e.g., quantitative or qualitative.

B. *Non-Traditional Dissertation*

The non-traditional dissertation is often referred to as the “manuscript option.” This option allows for submitted, accepted, or published manuscripts to become

part of the doctoral dissertation. The student negotiates with the supervisory committee regarding the focus and content of 2-3 manuscripts and the peer-reviewed journals to which the manuscripts will be submitted, accepted, or published and Committee approval is obtained before or at the Proposal defense. One manuscript must be databased and report the results of the student's dissertation research. Publications authored by the student before passing the qualifying exam may be included with the committee's approval.

- In order to receive a 'Satisfactory' grade for NGR 7980 credits taken during the term in which the defense takes place, **all** of the negotiated manuscripts must have been submitted for publication in peer-reviewed journals.
- The PhD student must be the lead author on each manuscript. Dissertation committee members who made contributions to the manuscripts should be included as co-authors.
- The manuscripts are directly related to the student's dissertation research. The dissertation committee approves each manuscript before submission. One manuscript must be databased and report the results of the student's dissertation research. The second or third manuscripts may be databased or focused on a related scholarly topic such as an integrative literature review, conceptual analysis, or theoretical development process; methodological issue; instrument development process; or clinical application of the research findings to practice.
- At the time of publication, the student assigns copyrights to the publishing journal. The student must obtain written permission from the copyright holder to include the material in the dissertation. Failure to do so would be an infringement of United States copyright laws. Students who publish in Open Access journals retain copyrights to the manuscript.

Required Minimum Dissertation Credits and Timing

- All doctoral candidates who are doing dissertation work must register for NGR 7980 at a minimum of three credits per semester.
- There must be at least two semesters between the oral part of the qualifying exam and the date of the degree. The term in which the qualifying examination is passed is counted, if the exam occurs before the mid-point of the semester.

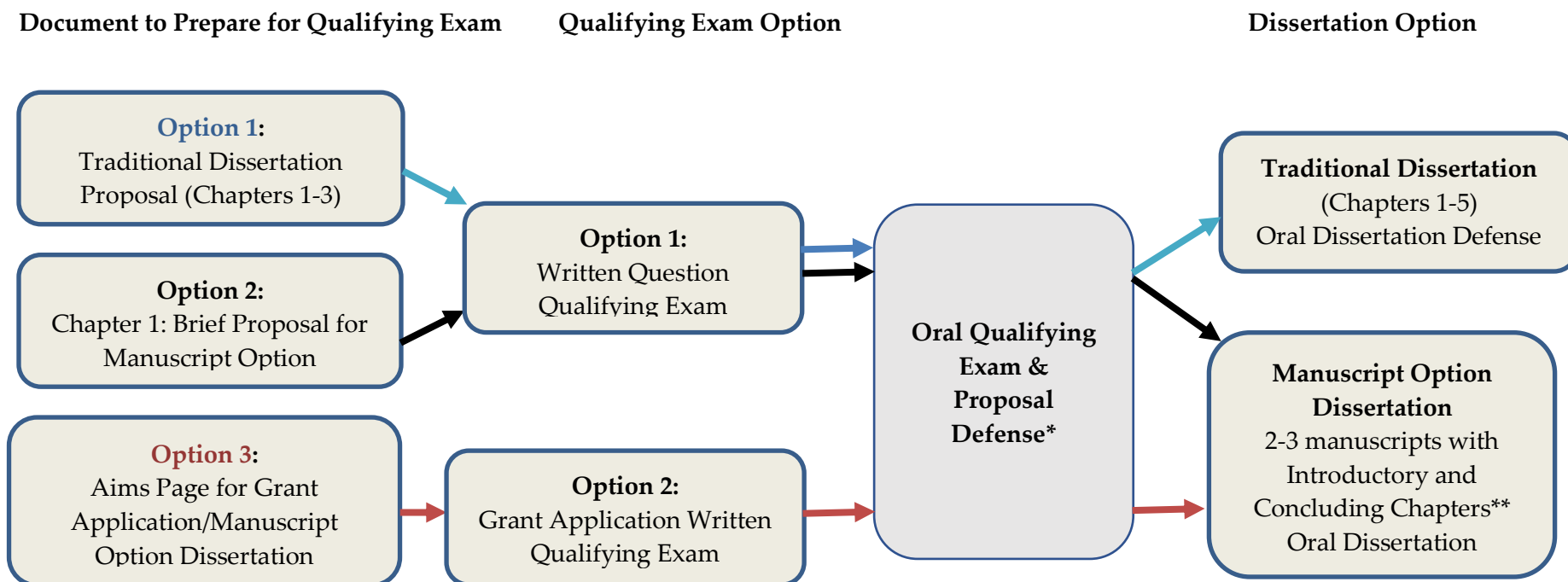
Summary of CON PhD Program Qualifying Exam and Dissertation Options

<p>See PhD Student Handbook for details on Supervisory Chair and Committee for PhD Students: Students are expected to meet with Supervisory Chair and Committee at least annually to develop a plan of study and timeline for completing progression milestones. The plan of study should include area of concentration, manuscript plan, written qualifying exam option, and dissertation focus and format. The Supervisory Committee will approve the plan. If students plan to write a publishable literature review (e.g., systematic review, scoping review), this manuscript may be included as a dissertation manuscript with supervisory committee approval prior to the qualifying exam.</p>			
	Preparation for Qualifying Exam & Dissertation	Qualifying Examination Options	Dissertation Options
Requirements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successfully completed all required CON core courses & all area of concentration courses (GPA > 3.0) • Satisfactory rating from Supervisory Chair on the most recent annual evaluation completed each summer semester. • In the semester prior to the qualifying examination, the Supervisory Committee reviews student progress, reviews the proposal documents, and approves progression to the qualifying exam. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Request to be Examined form • Supervisory chair/committee approval • Registered for a minimum of three credit hours or as required by the terms of a scholarship or fellowship during the term the examination is administered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful passing of the Qualifying Exam • Supervisory committee approval to prepare/refine proposal with committee input • Supervisory committee approval of final dissertation proposal • IRB approval if applicable
Goal:	<p>Successful completion of a written product to demonstrate breadth and depth of knowledge on the proposed topic to proceed to qualifying exam. The type of written document required depends on the qualifying exam and dissertation options chosen. This must be negotiated with the Supervisory Committee.</p>	<p>After successful completion of the Written Qualifying Exam, Oral Examination, and approval of the dissertation topic, the student becomes a PhD Candidate.</p>	<p>After successful completion of the dissertation, the Oral Dissertation Defense, and the final NGR 7980 course, the student is eligible for graduation with the PhD Degree.</p>
Options:	<p>1. Traditional Dissertation Proposal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student writes the first 3 chapters of the dissertation to include: Ch 1. Background & Significance, Theoretical Framework, & Aims; Ch 2. Literature Review; and Ch 3. Methods 	<p>1. Written Question Option</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student negotiates the two-week qualifying exam period and due date with the Supervisory Committee. 	<p>1. Traditional Dissertation Option</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student writes an integrated scholarly dissertation by adding Chapter 4 Results and Chapter 5 to the first 3 chapters written for the dissertation proposal.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Supervisory Committee reviews and advises student on the dissertation proposal. • After a successful qualifying exam., the student presents the proposal to the Supervisory Committee for approval. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student writes responses to two questions (maximum 10 pages per question). • See PhD Handbook, PhD Qualifying Examination and Admission to Candidacy section for details and procedures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See the UF Graduate School website for formatting requirements and editorial deadlines.
	<p>2. Non-Traditional/Manuscript Option Dissertation with Written Question Qualifying Exam</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student writes a <u>brief proposal</u> (15-25 pages) that includes Background and Significance, Theoretical Framework, Research Aims, Proposed Methods, and Overview of the Proposed Manuscripts. • This proposal becomes Chapter 1 of the Dissertation. • The Supervisory Committee reviews and advises student on the dissertation proposal. • After a successful qualifying exam, the student presents the proposal and Overview of Proposed Manuscripts to the Supervisory Committee for approval. 		<p>2. Non-Traditional/Manuscript Option Dissertation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student negotiates with Supervisory Committee regarding the focus and content of 2-3 manuscripts and the peer-reviewed journals to which the manuscripts will be submitted, accepted, or published; Committee approval is obtained before or at the time of the Proposal Defense. • Student submits the manuscripts before completing the final NGR 7980 course (see UF Graduate School website for requirements for manuscript option dissertation). The Introductory and Concluding Chapters each must be at least 1 page.
	<p>3. Non-Traditional/Manuscript Option Dissertation with Grant Application Option Qualifying Exam</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student writes a one-page <u>Aims Page</u> for the proposed dissertation and Overview of the Proposed Manuscripts. • The Supervisory Committee reviews and advises student on the Aims Page. • After a successful qualifying exam, the student presents the grant as the dissertation proposal and the Overview of 	<p>2. Grant Application Option</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After Supervisory Committee approves Aims page, student independently writes a 7-10 page grant application in the form of the Specific Aims and Research Strategy sections of an NIH grant application (e.g., R03, R21) and Bibliography/References (not counted in page limit) by a due date that is negotiated with the committee. Refer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one manuscript must be data-based and report the results of the student's dissertation research. • PhD student must be the lead author on each manuscript. Supervisory Committee members who made contributions to the manuscripts should be included as co-authors. • See PhD Handbook for details and procedures.

	<p>Proposed Manuscripts to the Supervisory Committee for approval.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note: For a student who is writing a dissertation-related grant application with their committee members prior to the qualifying exam, the Written Question Qualifying Exam option may be the most appropriate assessment of independent work. 	<p>to NIH website and PhD Handbook for more details and format.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See PhD Handbook, PhD Qualifying Examination and Admission to Candidacy section for details and procedures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See the UF Graduate School website for formatting requirements and editorial deadlines.
Evaluation:	<p>The Supervisory Committee reviews and evaluates the document and approves progression to qualifying exam.</p>	<p>The Supervisory Committee evaluates the written qualifying exam document (written question or grant application option) using the criteria listed in the PhD Student Handbook.</p> <p>Two (2) weeks after submission of the written portion, an oral qualifying examination will be held that often begins with a brief presentation, followed by discussion of the written portion of the qualifying exam. Also, at the same meeting immediately after a satisfactory oral qualifying exam or during a different meeting, the student may present the dissertation proposal or grant (as the dissertation proposal) for committee discussion and approval.</p>	<p>The Supervisory Committee evaluates the written dissertation.</p> <p>At least two (2) weeks after submission of the complete dissertation document, an oral dissertation examination will be held.</p>

Preparation for Qualifying Exam & Dissertation Documentation Options Flowchart



* The proposal defense may occur immediately after the successful qualifying exam or at a later date. For the Manuscript Option Dissertation, the Overview of the Proposed Manuscripts is presented at the Proposal Defense for Committee approval on the focus and content of 2-3 manuscripts and the peer-reviewed journals to which the manuscripts will be submitted.

**Manuscripts shall be submitted, accepted, or published by the end of the semester in which the final NGR 7980 course is completed.

Funding Opportunities for CON PhD Students

Research Assistantships

Graduate Research Assistantships (GRA) are mentored research experiences. GRAs are appointed based on College research needs and available resources as determined by the Associate Dean for Research and PhD Program Director. GRA positions in the College conform to [UF Human Resources policies](#) and Office of Research Graduate Research Assistant reasonable compensation for work performed [regulations](#).

- A PhD student interested in an RA position should first confer with their Supervisory Chair and then inform the PhD Program Director of interest in the position.
- If the Associate Dean for Research or PhD Program Director is aware of a research need that matches the doctoral student interest, and funds are available, they will arrange the RA appointment in consultation with the relevant faculty member and Supervisory Chair, Department Chair, and PhD Student Advisor.
 - **NOTE: The Request for Letter of Appointment form for an RA must include the approval signature of the PhD Program Director.**
- RAs must complete the College of Nursing Privacy, Security, and Compliance Training within two weeks of beginning work and inform the CON IT staff when this is completed. The CON IT staff will send verification of the completion of training to the faculty supervisor who will forward verification to the Office of Student Services for filing in the student record.
- The RA will be supervised by the research faculty member. The student and the faculty member should meet regularly for mentoring sessions and if indicated, communicate regularly with the student's Supervisory Chair.
- Student progress and accomplishments in the RA role are recorded in the [Annual Progression Report](#) for the PhD student, in the student's IDP and in the required RA evaluation due after the semester concludes (RA evaluation sent by CON HR).

Additional Funding Opportunities

The Graduate School lists a number of opportunities to fund graduate study at the following URL: <http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/prospective-students/funding/>.

Other external scholarships to which students are encouraged to apply may be available through professional organizations and foundations, including the:

[Florida Nurses Association](#)

American Association of Colleges of Nursing

[Srubin Uniforms/AACN Scholarship](#)

[NurseThink – AACN Scholarship](#)

*must be a member of the Graduate Nursing Student Academy

[CastleBranch-GNSA Scholarship](#)

*must be a member of the Graduate Nursing Student Academy

[Johnson & Johnson](#)

Other sources of support for PhD education and/or dissertation work include various foundations and the National Institutes of Health (F31 Ruth L. Kirschstein Predoctoral Individual National Research Service Award). Students are encouraged to speak with their Supervisory Chair early in the program for eligibility to apply for an F-31 and to allow for adequate time to prepare the application.

Consider applying to the SNRS Dissertation Research Grant that is due in March each year. <https://snrs.org/research-grants-funding-program/research-funding/snrs-dissertation-research-grant/> **Discuss this with your supervisory chair prior to submission** as they are required to provide a letter of support! Other eligibility requirements include:

1. Current SNRS member (student or regular) when the application is received.
2. Currently enrolled in doctoral study at a School or College of Nursing in the southern region.
3. Evidence that the proposed study has met the requirements for the dissertation (proposal has been successfully defended) and that it can be supported at the institution/facility proposed.

If you decide to submit after discussion with your supervisory chair, you must follow these steps in accordance with the UF Division of Sponsored Programs:

1. Complete the intent to submit form <https://nursing.ufl.edu/research/intent-to-submit/> (select supervisor: department chair of your supervisory chair; FOA/RFA: SNRS Dissertation Grant; Consortium Agreement: No)
2. You will be notified by the Office of Research and Scholarship (ORS) who will provide assistance to the proposal in UFIRST.
3. All documents, including the budget, must be provided by the student in accordance with SNRS guidelines by 9am Feb 27 (no exceptions).
4. ORS obtains college approval, then routes to DSP
5. After DSP approval, you will be granted approval to submit the application - please note there is a \$25 associated fee required by SNRS.

Students in the U.S. on an F1, F2, J1 or J2 exchange visitor visa, or a G-series visa are not eligible to receive federal aid administered by UF Student Financial Aid and Scholarships (SFA). International students, however, may be eligible for private or college-awarded scholarships administered by the College of Nursing.

The <https://internationalcenter.ufl.edu> **UF International Center** (UFIC) may be able to provide information on other programs available to international students.

The International Center website has information about:

- <https://internationalcenter.ufl.edu/study-abroad/funding-your-program> **Financial Resources for International Students**
- <https://internationalcenter.ufl.edu/study-abroad/funding-your-program/scholarships> **Scholarship Listing for International Students**
- <https://internationalcenter.ufl.edu/latin-american-caribbean-lac-scholarship> **Latin American-Caribbean (LAC) Scholarship**
- <https://internationalcenter.ufl.edu/j-1-studentscholar/additional-information/financial-support-guideline> **International Students Financial Support Guidelines**

Information for undocumented students and students with DACA, including links to out-of-state waivers and Florida Residency Declaration forms, can be found on the [http://www.sfa.ufl.edu/process/additional-information/undocumented-students/SFA Undocumented Students](http://www.sfa.ufl.edu/process/additional-information/undocumented-students/SFA%20Undocumented%20Students) webpage.

UF Office of Graduate Professional Development

Offers weekly workshops and opportunities to learn the core competencies of graduate education:

<https://gradadvance.graduateschool.ufl.edu/programs/workshop-series/>

<https://gradadvance.graduateschool.ufl.edu/programs/upcoming-events/>

PhD Student Awards

Notifications about the PhD student awards and how to apply will be communicated in spring each year from the Office of Student Services

Outstanding Publication by a PhD Student

The Outstanding Publication Award recognizes a PhD student who has published an exceptional research publication as first author based on their program of research.

- Be a graduating PhD student
- Submit the following with your award application:
 - A narrative statement (250 words or less) describing how this work contributes to the literature.
 - Copy of the first author publication or approved version from the journal.

PhD awardees will be honored at the College of Nursing Research Summit.

Excellence in Research Award

The Excellence in Research Award is presented to a student who demonstrates excellence in original research and meets the below criteria:

- Be a graduating PhD student
- Submit the following with your award application:
 - One faculty recommendation letter by an active researcher
 - A description of research activities, including dates, and sponsoring agency or supervising faculty
 - A narrative statement (250 words or less) describing their research focus, research dissemination, research direction and goals

PhD awardees will be honored at the College of Nursing Research Summit.

Appendix A: UFCON Graduate Student and Supervisory Chair Compact

Commitments of Graduate Student

I acknowledge that I am primarily responsible for successfully completing my degree. I will be committed to my graduate education and demonstrate this through my efforts in the classroom, the research laboratory, and all other related academic and professional activities. I will maintain professionalism, self-motivation, initiative, engagement, scientific curiosity, and ethical standards, including complying with institutional and research group standards for contributing to an inclusive research environment. I pledge to do the following:

- Meet regularly with my research advisor to provide updates on the progress and results of my coursework, research, and professional and career development activities.
- Work with my research advisor to develop a thesis/dissertation project. Establishing a timeline for each phase of my work. Strive to keep engaged with the work, discuss experimental findings and any pitfalls, and meet the set goals and deadlines.
- Work with my research advisor to select a thesis/dissertation committee. Commit to meeting with this committee annually (or more frequently, according to program guidelines). Discuss my progress to date and be responsive to my committee's advice and constructive criticism.
- Be a good lab citizen. To take part in shared laboratory responsibilities and will use laboratory resources carefully and frugally. To maintain a safe and clean laboratory space. Respect, tolerate, and work collegially with all laboratory personnel. Be an active contributing member to all team efforts and collaborations and will respect individual contributions. Contribute to a safe, equitable, and harassment-free environment.
- Maintain detailed, organized, and accurate research records. Acknowledge that original notebooks, digital files, and tangible research materials belong to the institution and will remain in the lab when finished with the thesis/dissertation so that other individuals can reproduce and carry on related research per institutional policy. Only with explicit approval from the research mentor and per institutional policy may copies be made of notebooks and digital files and have access to tangible research materials generated during the graduate training program.
- Discuss work hours, medical leave, and vacation policies with my graduate program and research advisor. Please consult with the advisor in advance of

planned absences and apprise my advisor of any unexpected absences due to illness or other issues.

- Be knowledgeable of the policies and requirements of my graduate program, graduate school, and institution. Commit to meeting these requirements in the appropriate time frame and will abide by all institutional policies and procedures.
- Attend and actively participate in laboratory meetings, seminars, and journal clubs that are part of my educational program. In addition, to enhance research, leadership, and additional professional skills, seek out other enrichment opportunities, such as participation in professional organizations and meetings, student representation on institutional committees, and coordination of departmental events.
- Be knowledgeable of all institutional research policies. Comply with all institutional laboratory safety practices, animal use, and human-research policies. Participate in my institution's Good Clinical Practice Research Training Program and practice the guidelines while conducting research. Seek input on and comply with institutional policies regarding my research design and data analysis.
- Acknowledge the primary responsibility for developing my career. Explore career opportunities and paths that match and build individual skills, values, and interests to achieve desired career goals. Understand that tools, such as the Individual Development Plan (IDP), should be used to help define career goals and develop a training plan. Seek guidance throughout my graduate education from my research advisor, career counseling services, thesis/dissertation committee, other mentors, and other resources that can offer advice on career planning and the wide range of opportunities available in the biomedical workforce.
- Discuss policies on authorship and attendance at professional meetings with my research advisor. Work with my advisor to disseminate all relevant research results promptly before completing all degree requirements.

Commitments of Supervisory Chair

Throughout the graduate student's time in my laboratory, I will be supportive, equitable, accessible, encouraging, and respectful. I will foster the graduate student's professional confidence and encourage intellectual development, critical thinking, curiosity, and creativity. I will continue my interest and involvement as the student moves into a career. Serving as a graduate student's mentor, I pledge to do the following:

- Commit to meeting one-on-one with the student regularly. Regularly review the student's progress and provide timely feedback and goal-setting advice.
- Commit to the graduate student's research project and work with the student to help plan and guide the research project, set reasonable and attainable goals, and establish a timeline for the completion of the project.
- Assist the graduate student in selecting a thesis/dissertation committee. This committee meets annually (or more frequently, according to program guidelines) to review and discuss the graduate student's progress and future directions. I understand that the function of this committee is to help the student complete their doctoral research, and I will respect the ideas and suggestions of my colleagues on the committee.
- Provide an environment that is intellectually stimulating, emotionally supportive, safe, equitable, and free of harassment.
- Demonstrate respect for all graduate students as individuals without regard to gender, race, national origin, religion, disability, or sexual orientation. I will also cultivate a culture of tolerance among the entire laboratory.
- Commit to exploring opportunities for the graduate student to secure financial resources, as appropriate and according to my institution's guidelines, to conduct their thesis/dissertation research. However, I will not require the graduate student to perform tasks unrelated to the training program and professional development.
- Expect the graduate student to share typical laboratory responsibilities and use resources carefully and frugally. At the same time, meet regularly with the graduate student to review data management, storage, and record-keeping and discuss intellectual policy issues regarding disclosure, patent rights, and publishing research discoveries with the student.
- Discuss with the graduate student authorship policies regarding papers. Acknowledge the graduate student's scientific contributions to the work in my laboratory, and assist in getting the student's work published promptly.
- Be knowledgeable of and guide the graduate student through the requirements and deadlines of the graduate program and the institution, teaching requirements, if any, and human resources guidelines.
- Encourage the graduate student to attend and present their research at scientific/professional meetings and make an effort to secure and facilitate funding for such activities. In addition, provide opportunities for the student to discuss science and their research findings with colleagues and fellow scientists within the institution and broader scientific community—for example, at lab meetings, research days, and seminars.
- Promote the training of the graduate student in professional skills needed for a successful career. These skills include but are not limited to oral and written

communication, grant writing, management and leadership, collaborative research, responsible conduct of research, teaching, and mentoring. I will encourage the student to seek opportunities to develop skills in other areas, even if not explicitly required by the student's program. Encourage the graduate student to seek input from multiple mentors.

- Create an environment where the student can discuss and explore career opportunities and paths that match their skills, values, and interests and support their career choices. Being accessible to give advice and feedback on career goals while working with the student on an individual development plan to help define career goals and identify training milestones. Provide letters of recommendation for the student's next professional development phase.

Graduate Student Name Signature Date

Faculty Supervisory Chair Name Signature Date