



Graduate Program Handbook



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Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

The College of Nursing is a world leader in educating nurses in inter-professional health care, research, practice, innovation, capacity building and policy development.

Mission

As University nursing faculty in Saskatchewan, the College of Nursing strengthens nursing, health, and the health care system through the creation and integration of knowledge from research, education and practice.

We Value

Integrity - We believe in being open and honest, in keeping our commitments, in taking responsibility for our lives and learning, and in operating in a transparent manner.

Social Justice -We believe in the value of human life, the inherent worth of the individual, the right of each individual to the attainment of a high standard of health and will work with communities to achieve these rights.

Unconditional Positive Regard -We believe that each person has a right to be treated with respect regardless of his or her life circumstances or culture.

Achieving Potential - We believe that life-long learning, risk taking, and advancing our knowledge base leads the way for empowerment.

College of Nursing Philosophy Statement

Nursing is a respected and caring human endeavor; a distinct health profession; and an applied discipline based on nursing and related theories. Nursing is dedicated to the purposeful, collaborative relationship with individuals, families and communities that enables the acquisition, organization and use of nursing and other related resources that people need to optimize their health experiences within complex, diverse, and dynamic environments.

Embedded in a research-intensive Canadian university, the College of Nursing is situated on the territory of Treaties 4, 6, 10, and the homeland of the Métis. The College of Nursing, University of Saskatchewan, believes the discovery, advancement, and transmission of nursing knowledge is achieved through the integration of teaching, research/scholarship, evidence informed practice and service. Learning is the process of co-creating meaning that transforms experiences into shared knowledge. We value diversity, social justice and ethical practice. We foster collaboration through primary healthcare, practical innovations and technology mediated solutions, with specific consideration of the needs of rural, remote, and Indigenous communities.

The College of Nursing and our graduates are leaders in engaging individuals, families, communities, policy makers, other health professions and disciplines, and other stakeholders to provide safe, competent care that maximizes the potential of people and health systems. Through these combined efforts, we create, support, and share equitable and sustainable solutions that improve health experiences and measurable outcomes. Solutions have local, national, and international relevance.

Important Dates

Academic Calendar 2017-2018 <https://students.usask.ca/academic-calendar/2017-2018.php>

Graduate Program Leadership

Graduate Chair

The position of graduate chair is of critical importance in ensuring the success of individual graduate students within the College of Nursing graduate programs. Responsibilities of the graduate chair include recruitment, selection and admission of graduate students, administration of the graduate programs, scholarships and awards, and meeting with students to ensure they have ongoing supervision, regular committee meetings, and necessary resources and support in place to ensure student success.

The graduate chair works with the Graduate Studies Committee at the College of Nursing to develop graduate curriculum and policies. The graduate chair is the channel of communication between the College of Nursing and the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

Director of Nurse Practitioner Programs

The director of the nurse practitioner programs guides program curriculum and policy that adhere to the provincial and national standards for nurse practitioner education. The role of the director of the nurse practitioner programs is to provide leadership in the College of Nursing in the administration and coordination of the program. In conjunction with the nurse practitioner faculty and staff, the role of the director is integral to the success of the program and to each student admitted to the nurse practitioner programs. The nurse practitioner program director represents the college externally on matters related to nurse practitioner regulations, education and practice.

Graduate Program Administrative Support

NP Program Clinical Education Coordinator

The clinical education coordinator collaborates with the director of the nurse practitioner programs, faculty, students and clinical agencies in the organization of nurse practitioner student clinical placements, onsite residency weeks and other clinical related activities. Working closely with the director of the nurse practitioner programs, they also support student recruitment/retention, accreditation, program approval, and other special projects related to the nurse practitioner program. A key role of the clinical education coordinator is networking and maintaining relationships with program stakeholders including health organizations and preceptors.

Graduate Program Coordinator

The graduate program coordinator works in partnership with faculty and students to promote student success. The graduate program coordinator works closely with the graduate chair and director of the nurse practitioner programs to assist students in developing a plan for progression through a program of study. The role of the graduate program coordinator includes meeting with students annually to review a program plan towards program completion.

Graduate Program Assistant

The graduate program assistant supports the graduate chair, director of nurse practitioner programs, graduate faculty, staff and students. The role of the graduate program assistant includes support to arrange meetings related to the graduate program, student advisory committees and program requirements.

Graduate Programs

The College of Nursing currently offers five graduate programs:

- Master of Nursing Thesis
- Master of Nursing Course Based (Professional Practice)
- Master of Nursing Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioner
- Post Graduate Degree Special Certificate Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioner
- Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing - PhD

Graduates may ultimately assume leadership and advanced practice roles in health care, educator roles in health care services and in academic institutions, and health policy and research roles that include evidence-based knowledge generation and utilization.

The College of Nursing provides graduate level courses in a variety of distributive formats; synchronous web-conferenced classes (PhD and nurse practitioner only), and asynchronous online and blended approaches to learning. We provide opportunities for our students to learn while living in their own communities. There are some mandatory in-person learning experiences when students will be required to be on campus in Saskatoon, Regina or Prince Albert.

This handbook contains information students will need to be successful in their graduate program.

The most up-to-date information regarding all programs can be found on the College of Nursing website.

<http://www.usask.ca/nursing/>

Introduction and Program Requirements

Master of Nursing - Thesis Based

<http://www.usask.ca/nursing/master/program/thesisbased.php>

Master of Nursing - Course Based (Professional Practice)

<http://www.usask.ca/nursing/master/program/coursebased.php>

Master of Nursing – Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioner

<http://www.usask.ca/nursing/np/program/phcnp.php>

Post-Graduate Degree Special Certificate – Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioner

<http://www.usask.ca/nursing/np/program/postgradnp.php>

Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing

<http://www.usask.ca/nursing/phd/program/index.php>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

NURS 990 Seminar

All students must register in NURS 990. NURS 990 is a departmental graduate seminar and is a College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies requirement. Attendance is required for 2 academic terms. Information about the attendance requirement is available in the NURS 990 syllabus.

COLLEGE OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES COURSES

All students must register in [GSR 960: Introduction to Ethics and Integrity](#) in the fall term of the first year of study in a graduate program. [GSR 961: Ethics and Integrity in Human Research](#) is required if your research will involve human subjects and should be completed in the first term of studies. These GSR courses are online and there is no tuition cost.

NOTE: Students must complete GSR 960 prior to submission of your first course assignment.

SUPPORT FOR TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS

The Gwenna Moss Centre for Teaching Effectiveness (GMCTE) offers workshops, non-credit courses and resources for graduate students who are new to teaching or who already have some experience but want to learn more. Of particular interest to PhD students wanting to become academics is GSR 989: Philosophy and Practice of University Teaching, GSR 974: Graduate Professional Skills Certificate and many other workshops and resources. All Gwenna Moss Centre for Teaching Effectiveness offerings are open to all graduate students. (www.usask.ca/gmcte)

General Information

REGISTRATION POLICY

All graduate students at the University of Saskatchewan are required to register in each term of the calendar year (Term 1 September – December; Term 2 January – April; Term 3 May – August).

Students are also reminded that failure to register in three consecutive terms (without an approved absence) may result in being required to discontinue from the program. College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Policies Section 14 – Requirement to Discontinue (RTD). (<http://www.usask.ca/College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies/policy-and-procedure/requirement-to-discontinue.php>)

BLACKBOARD

Blackboard is the University of Saskatchewan course tool that supports online course delivery. (<https://bblearn.usask.ca/>)

GRADES REQUIRED TO PASS

The minimum passing grade in a Master's level courses is 60% and in PhD level courses is 70%. Both levels of students must maintain a cumulative average of 70% or better to graduate from the University of Saskatchewan. All clinical courses in the nurse practitioner programs have a passing grade of 70%.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS/COMPONENTS

All course components must be completed to receive credit for a course. If all course components are not completed, the student will receive a grade of INF (incomplete fail) that will be factored into average calculations. This affects the overall nursing average which must be maintained at 70%.

Unless prior arrangements have been made with the course professor, five percent will be deducted for each calendar day that course work is late. A grade of zero will be applied to all assignments not submitted 5 working days after the due date, without prior written permission of the course instructor. All assignments are to be emailed or submitted through Blackboard or as indicated in the course syllabus.

TRANSFER CREDITS

Students may take courses from other institutions. A total of six credit units of approved study can be transferred to the University of Saskatchewan for inclusion in Master's and PhD programs. Before registering to take courses from another institution either through the Saskatchewan University Graduate Agreement (for University of Regina classes only) or the Western Canadian Deans Agreement (all other universities in western Canada), please complete the appropriate form and submit to the graduate program coordinator for approval a **minimum** of one month prior to start of the course. Forms are available on the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies website. ([http://www.usask.ca/College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies/forms.php](http://www.usask.ca/College_of_Graduate_and_Postdoctoral_Studies/forms.php))

TRANSFER CREDIT PROCESS

1. The student requests transfer credit review by the supervisor/faculty advisor.
2. If the supervisor/faculty advisor approves, the student submits the request for transfer credit along with course syllabi to the graduate program coordinator.
3. The graduate program coordinator submits the request to the graduate chair who will request faculty consultation in review of the course for credit.
4. If the graduate chair agrees to grant credit, a proposal for transfer credit is submitted to College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for approval.
5. If the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies approval is granted, the graduate chair informs the student and supervisor/faculty advisor that the request for transfer credit has been approved.

Transfer credit is assessed and entered into your records upon receipt of an official transcript (sent directly to the graduate program coordinator) from the other institution. No grades from other institutions will be included on your University of Saskatchewan transcript as per a Canada wide university agreement. You will notice the university name; course number/name is indicated with transfer (TR) only. If you wish to show the grade to an institution or for employment purposes, you will be required to order a transcript from the crediting institution.

While a student cannot receive double credit for a course (for two degrees); you can transfer previously completed coursework into the graduate program. However, please be advised that your program begins at the time you took the first course included in your program requirements.

Example: Student takes advanced graduate statistics in 2015, and wanted to transfer that course into their PhD program which began in September 2016. The six-year time limit to complete the PhD degree would be considered as beginning in 2015, not 2016. The deadline to complete all program requirements would then become August 31, 2021 instead of August 31, 2022.

TIMELINES FOR COMPLETION

Master of Nursing Thesis, Course based, Nurse Practitioner & PGDSPC	5 calendar years from start of program
PhD	6 calendar years from start of program

LEAVES OF ABSENCE

Students may request a leave for compassionate, medical, maternity/parenting, education and co-op program/industry reasons. Students are granted leaves one term at a time except for maternity/parenting leaves which may be up to three terms.

Leaves are not granted for work purposes. Students who continue to work are not eligible for medical leave.

To request a leave, students are encouraged to meet with their supervisor or faculty advisor for a discussion. If they agree that you need to apply for a leave, please follow this process.

1. Send an email, addressed to the graduate chair to nursing.advising@usask.ca stating the type of leave requested, the date the leave would take effect, the date the leave would be finished and the reason the leave is being requested.
 - a. If the type of leave being requested is medical, a note from a medical professional stating the need for the leave is required.
2. The graduate program coordinator will forward the email to the graduate chair.
3. If the graduate chair approves the leave request, the request will be sent to the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.
4. The College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies will respond informing the student about the status of the request for a leave and if approval is granted.

WITHDRAWAL

Before withdrawing from a course, students should discuss their intentions with their course professor, faculty advisor or thesis/PhD supervisor. Through this discussion, the student will be presented with options for course completion and possible modifications of program progression. Students may optionally choose to meet with the graduate chair or director of the nurse practitioner program. Once a decision is made about withdrawing from a course, the student should email the graduate program coordinator to document a change in their program plan. Students may withdraw from a course at any time, however, withdrawal penalties may apply.

Please check the current university calendar (<https://www.usask.ca/programs/calendar.php>) for information about withdrawals. Withdrawals from courses after the add/drop deadline, but prior to or on the day of the withdraw deadline, are assigned a grade of withdrawal (W). Withdrawing from a class after the withdraw deadline will result in a failing grade. Requests to repeat a course must be made in writing to the graduate chair.

If you are withdrawing completely from the program, students are encouraged to have a discussion with the graduate chair or the director of the nurse practitioner program. Students will then be directed to contact the graduate program coordinator for information about procedures to follow to withdraw from a program at the University of Saskatchewan.

GRADUATION

To graduate, students must pass all required courses with a combined minimum weighted average of 70%. In calculating weighted averages, the grades in all courses will be used (excluding transfer credit courses from other universities).

In the last term of your program, students must complete an online application to graduate. Complete the application for spring convocation **before March 31**, and for fall convocation **before August 31**. Late applications to graduate are not accepted.

Thesis students must have defended their thesis, completed all the required forms and submitted their thesis to the University of Saskatchewan Electronic Thesis Dissertation (ETD) site by the application to graduate deadlines. Course based and nurse practitioner students need only complete the online application to graduate.

All information about the ceremony will be sent to students through their PAWS email account. Students are asked to order tickets through PAWS. Information about convocation ceremonies are available at:

<https://students.usask.ca/academics/graduation.php#BeforeyouGraduate>

Graduate Students' Supervisor/Faculty Advisor/Student Advisory Committees (SAC)

The College of Nursing sees the relationship between a student and their supervisor or faculty advisor as of utmost importance to the success of our graduate programs and students. The goal of this policy is to maximize the likelihood of excellent student experiences through applying best practices in supervision and faculty advising that support the student learning experience, the reputation of College of Nursing graduate programs, and the degrees conferred to graduate students.

All graduate supervision and faculty advising within the College of Nursing is carried out within the context of the policies, standards, and leadership of the University of Saskatchewan's College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. Graduate program policies provide guidance for nursing faculty and students, as well as program progress, satisfaction and timely completion. Please refer to the policies at frequent intervals:

<http://www.usask.ca/College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies/policy-and-procedure/programs-supervision.php>

<http://www.usask.ca/nursing/policies/index.php>

SELECTION OF A SUPERVISOR AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

All students admitted to College of Nursing graduate programs will require a supervisor(s) or faculty advisor(s). The role of a supervisor or faculty advisor is associated with the focus of the program of study. There are four graduate programs and one postgraduate degree specialization certificate program offered by the College of Nursing: Master of Nursing-Professional Practice, Master of Nursing -Primary Care Nurse Practitioner (NP), Master of Nursing - Thesis, PhD-Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing and the Postgraduate Degree Specialization Certificate: Nurse Practitioner. The roles of supervisor or faculty advisor for each program are outlined below.

Master of Nursing - Thesis and PhD-Dissertation supervisor(s) responsibilities include guidance, instruction, and encouragement of progress and productivity through all the stages of the program and research projects. Students and

supervisors should meet **frequently** depending on the stage of their program, as well as meet with the Student's Advisory Committee (SAC) a minimum of once each year and submit an **annual** electronic progress report (see College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Policy 10.7) to the graduate programs coordinator. Students and supervisors in Master of Nursing Thesis and PhD programs also need to complete an agreement as early as possible once the supervisor is chosen (see handbook). Master's and PhD supervisors should inform students of the chronological sequence of events and deadlines that occur at crucial stages throughout the program, with specific reference to the university academic calendars that list important graduate program deadlines. Supervisors are expected to ensure the student maintains a high academic standard, ethical approaches, and optimal use of research and scholarly technique.

HOW IS A SUPERVISOR/FACULTY ADVISOR DETERMINED FOR EACH STUDENT IN THE PROGRAM?

1. **Master of Nursing Nurse Practitioner and Post Graduate Degree Special Certificate Nurse Practitioner** students will be assigned a nurse practitioner faculty member as their faculty advisor. The role of this faculty advisor is to assist the student with program planning and consultation during their program. Students and advisors should meet to discuss goals in the first term of their program and annually thereafter to the completion of the degree/certificate.
2. **Master of Nursing Professional Practice** program students will meet with the graduate chair to discuss the selection of a supervisor and one committee member for NURS 824.6, the advanced integrative exercise course. The supervisor will meet with the student in the term prior to the student being registered in the advanced integrative exercise course to identify the focus of the integrative exercise, clarify roles and responsibilities, establish timelines for the project, consult on the proposal, and help to choose the committee member. During the term the student is enrolled in this course, the student and supervisor will meet regularly (at least weekly) to discuss progress and review drafts.
3. **Master of Nursing Thesis and Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing PhD** students will meet with the graduate chair to discuss the process of selecting their supervisor (or 2 co-supervisors), as early as possible, within the first term of the program. The student and supervisor(s), will discuss potential members to form the Student's Advisory Committee. The Student Advisory Committee should meet within the first year of course work and submit an annual electronic progress report (College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Policy 10.7) to the graduate program coordinator.

CONSIDERATIONS IN CHOOSING A SUPERVISOR

After an initial meeting with the graduate chair, Master of Nursing Thesis, Master of Nursing Professional Practice, and PhD students should speak with faculty who have expertise in their practice, content or methodological area of interest about their willingness to supervise. The student is encouraged to meet with faculty and discuss mutual interests in research and methods to make their decision. Once the student and supervisor have had discussions and have determined they would be interested in working together, they should send an email/memo to the graduate chair for approval. The following policies will be applied in the approval process:

1. **Each doctoral student** must have at least one supervisor who is a PhD prepared tenure track faculty member in the College of Nursing. Faculty members without previous PhD student supervision experience should have a co-supervisor who has supervised a PhD student to completion. A list of approved doctoral supervisors will be maintained by the graduate program coordinator. Supervisors of doctoral students are expected to be established independent investigators, active in research, have research expertise relevant to the student's proposed research and provide evidence of continuing involvement in research. Optimally, the supervisor has funding in place to support the student.

The graduate chair, or designate, will serve as advisory chair and will actively chair all committee meetings for these students and faculty members.

2. **Each Master's thesis student** must be supervised or co-supervised by a member of both the College of Nursing and the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, in consideration of the student's program of study, research focus and methodological approach. The graduate chair, or designate, will serve as advisory chair.

3. In general, faculty supervising more than 5 graduate students may elect to refer students to other faculty members for supervision, based on experience in the focus area of interest to the student requesting supervision.

4. NOTE: The student may need to consider a change of supervisor at any time if they change their area of research or methodology or if there are communication or other difficulties between and student and supervisor. The student should first attempt communication with the supervisor, document conversations and emails, and then meet with the graduate chair to discuss issues or concerns and plans to move forward with a new Supervisor.

5. NOTE: In general, efforts will be made to ensure a distribution of faculty and graduate student supervision opportunities.

SETTING UP THE STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC)

Each Student Advisory Committee is composed of an advisory chair, student, supervisor (or 2 co-supervisors), and committee members.

1. **Advisory Chair:** The graduate chair is responsible for the success of the program and of individual students (College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Policy 1.2.1). As such the graduate chair, or designate from the Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Subcommittee, will serve as advisory chair for all committees and approve the selection of supervisor and committee members. The graduate chair, or designate from the Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Subcommittee, will chair all student advisory committee meetings, exams and defenses as needed. The chair of the committee does not have an advisory or evaluation role but provides oversight of key processes and the integrity of the graduate programs.

2. **Student:** The student and their supervisor(s) should be encouraged to send an agenda and take minutes of each meeting. The supervisor and student are responsible for collating the minutes and communicating this through email following the meeting. Once agreed upon, the minutes should be sent to the graduate program coordinator to be placed in the student's file.

3. **Supervisor or 2 Co-Supervisors:** Supervisor(s) will be approved by the graduate chair and the Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Subcommittee.

4. **Committee Members:**

a. Each PhD committee requires at least 2 committee members from the College of Nursing who are also members of College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, as well as a cognate member who is also a member of College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies and from a different academic unit than the student and supervisor. (See policy 10.1 Advisory Committee)

b. Each Master's thesis committee requires at least 1 additional member from the College of Nursing who is also a member of College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. (See policy 10.1 Advisory Committee).

c. Each Master's course based committee requires 1 committee member from the College of Nursing who is also a member of College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for the semester the student is enrolled in NURS 824.6 Advanced Integrative Exercise Course.

If a Master's prepared faculty or community member is appointed to the committee, it must be in addition to the numbers above. In the event that a proposed member is not known to the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, an application memo from the graduate chair along with a CV for the requested member (one time add) must be approved by College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. Supervisors will be required to provide rationale for the inclusion of members from outside the academic community.

Student Advisory Committee members are expected to provide support, advice, and evaluation of the student's work. Students are expected to initiate contact with committee members as necessary.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO STUDENT

Within the first year of a student's registration in a graduate degree program, the Advisory Committee is charged with the responsibility of developing an individualized program on behalf of the student. If the criteria is in agreement with the nursing program, this forms a contract between the university and the student such that successful completion of the noted courses and other requirements, passing required examinations and defence of the thesis/dissertation will result in the conferring of the degree.

Changes in course work requirements, supervisor or committee membership, or significant change in research area, require that the student's program be updated in the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies area of DegreeWorks. Course adjustments and changes in committee structure are made in discussion with the graduate chair and forwarded to the graduate program coordinator.

PhD Qualifying Examination Procedures

Students admitted to the PhD Program in the College of Nursing who did not complete a thesis within their Master's Degree will be required to complete a qualifying exam as early as possible within the first term of course work (preferably by the end of September).

Students who are currently in our Master of Nursing program, completed at least 15 credit units, and are showing exceptional promise in research, writing, and scholarly work may be considered as a transfer to the PhD program. The Master of Nursing Student's Advisory Committee must initiate this request by submitting a letter, the student's CV, and a sample of independent academic writing to the graduate chair.

Faculty members of the College of Nursing Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Subcommittee, or alternates if there is a conflict of interest, will form the examining committee and meet to determine if the student demonstrates significant potential in both academic accomplishments and potential for research prior to the student completing a qualifying exam. The College of Nursing will ensure that there is a member on the committee with expertise in the phenomena of interest. If the student meets these requirements, the exam is to take place prior to the start of their first term in the PhD program (see policy 10.5.5 below).

The qualifying exam will take the form of a research proposal and oral presentation of the proposal to the examining committee. The research proposal document will include: a statement of research objectives; theoretical and empirical

rationale; and a description of methodology, including research design, sample, measures (if applicable), and plan for analysis. The document will be 10 –12 pages long (excluding references), double-spaced, and supported with relevant appendices.

The purpose of this proposal is to demonstrate that the student is developing a realistic research project that will contribute to their chosen field of study. A secondary purpose could be to apply for doctoral fellowship funding, in which case the student would use the guidelines for a relevant funding agency in developing the research proposal.

The qualifying exam will be evaluated by the examining committee with the understanding that this short proposal will not be as detailed as a comprehensive research protocol. The proposal and oral presentation will be evaluated on a “Pass/Fail” basis using the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies literal descriptors with a passing grade of at least 80%. The qualifying exam rubric will be used in determining if the candidate meets or exceeds expectations in all elements of the rubric.

Research experience that is evaluated as acceptable may be considered in lieu of a research proposal. Examples of this would include work as a research assistant, publications, and presentations as evidenced in the student’s CV and reference letter(s), which would be submitted to the graduate chair.

Procedure:

The qualifying exam is a requirement of the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for admission of student without a thesis to the PhD Program.

- The student will develop a 10 – 12 page research proposal independent of their supervisor.
- The proposal will be submitted electronically to the graduate chair and submitted to members of the Grad Education and Postdoctoral Subcommittee at least 2 weeks prior to the exam date. The graduate chair will circulate the proposal to the examining committee.
- The student will provide a 15-minute oral presentation of their proposal followed by 2 rounds of questions from each member. The presentation should include statements from the student about knowledge yet to be explored and work to be done to further develop their proposal through exposure to theory, substantive area, and methodology in PhD course work.
- Assessment of proposal should focus more on the critical appraisal of research methodology and the quality of writing versus scientific rigor in view of student’s stage in program.
- The qualifying exam should be perceived as an endorsement of admission into the PhD program.
- The rubric for the qualifying exam will direct the grading of the student’s proposal and presentation.
- The College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies literal descriptors will inform the rubric for grading the qualifying exam.
- Passing grade for the qualifying exam is 80%.
- This examination for the purposes of transfer to PhD can only be taken once. A student failing the qualifying exam, or any part thereof, cannot be recommended for transfer.

For rubric and literal descriptors, please make an appointment to meet with the graduate program coordinator.

PhD Comprehensive Examination

PURPOSE, POLICY, AND TIMELINE

The purpose of the comprehensive exam, according to the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Policies (Section 12.6.2) is to determine whether the student has a “mature and substantive grasp of the field as a whole”. The

exam is normally takes place after course work is completed; before the proposal defence and beginning doctoral research. The comprehensive exam is to be held within 24 months of commencing the program.

PROCESS FOR COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

The Student Advisory Committee is responsible for determining the detailed procedure for the administration of the examination. Each member of Student Advisory Committee (excluding the chair) and the doctoral student submit two to three questions to the supervisor. The committee will meet in person or by email to review the questions and select three questions (one question in each area of examination) by consensus.

The three areas of examination are: (1) nursing theory and philosophy (knowledge of the discipline), (2) substantive theory and research pertinent to the student's field of study, and (3) research design and analysis. The final questions for the written and oral components of the examination will be checked and refined for the best possible wording.

The chair will send the questions by email to the graduate program assistant to send to the student, with a copy to the other advisory committee members. The PhD student will return the three papers to the graduate program assistant within 28 days of receiving the questions. The graduate program assistant will send the papers to the committee members.

The written component is assessed on a pass/fail basis. Each paper is weighted equally towards the overall assessment of the written submission. The student is provided written feedback one week prior to the oral exam.

During the oral component, the student will have an opportunity to discuss the papers, respond to questions by the examiners, and provide clarification. At the completion of the oral component, an overall pass/fail grade will be given based on the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies minimum pass of 70% for the PhD program.

Each committee member will ask questions based on their review of the three papers. Starting with the cognate member, each committee member will ask the student a question related to the written paper. There will be two rounds of questioning, followed by any last questions as time permits. The oral component will take no more than 2.5 hours, leaving at least 30 minutes for the committee decision process.

After the question period is over, the student will be asked to leave the room while the committee discusses the written and oral components of the exam and reaches consensus on the student's performance on both components of the exam. The chair will inform the student of the committee's decision of whether the comprehensive examination was a pass or fail. The PhD student who has passed the comprehensive exam is deemed a PhD Candidate.

REPEATING COMPREHENSIVE EXAM (IF REQUIRED)

The comprehensive examination may be repeated once, with permission of the Dean of the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. In the case of a repeat examination, the same questions will be used again.

Dissertation/Thesis

PROPOSAL DEFENCE

The first stage of the dissertation/thesis project is the creation of a research proposal. The proposal is written with the guidance of the supervisor and the Student Advisory Committee. When the student and supervisor agree that the proposal is complete, the student will send a draft to the members of the committee after which a committee meeting is called. This meeting is called the proposal defence. Copies should be sent to all committee members by the student at least three weeks prior to the date of the proposal defence. For the proposal defence, the student prepares a presentation approximately 15 minutes in length, after which the student and the Student Advisory Council members engage in a discussion of the proposal, research design and feasibility. The committee will then decide whether the

written proposal meets the standards of the College of Nursing and the student's ability to carry out the research or requires revisions. If the proposal requires revisions, a meeting will be convened to provide the student an opportunity to present the revised proposal for approval prior to proceeding. Minutes taken by the committee chair detailing the results of the proposal defence will be reviewed and sent by the supervisor to the graduate program coordinator who maintains the student's records.

ETHICAL APPROVAL FOR DISSERTATION RESEARCH

All research on campus that uses human subjects must be submitted for ethical approval. After the proposal has been approved by the Student Advisory Committee, ethical approval must be sought from either the University Advisory Committee on Ethics in Human Experimentation (Health Sciences), or the University Advisory Committee on Ethics in Behavioural Science Research. Procedures and forms are available online at <http://research.usask.ca/>. A copy of the approval is sent to the graduate program coordinator for entry into the students records.

TRADITIONAL VS. MANUSCRIPT STYLE DISSERTATION

The College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies has regulations regarding manuscript style thesis. The manuscript style thesis is a manuscript or a series of manuscripts written in a style for publication in research journals. Although the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies has adopted a flexible approach to the format, it does reserve the right to approve the format recommended by individual units.

<https://students.usask.ca/graduate/graduate-students.php#ThesisandDissertation>

Supervisors and students need to ensure that a discussion about the format for the thesis/dissertation occurs with the Student Advisory Committee at the proposal defence.

PREPARING THESIS FOR ETD SUBMISSION

Once a student's revisions have been approved by the supervisor, the student must ensure that the thesis follows the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies style/format. [https://students.usask.ca/graduate/thesis-
etd.php##Submissiondeadlines](https://students.usask.ca/graduate/thesis-etd.php##Submissiondeadlines)

Dissertation/Thesis Defence

Prior to the defence, a meeting is held with the Student Advisory Committee to determine whether the dissertation is ready to go forward for defence. All members (including the chair of the committee) must have a copy of the dissertation at least three weeks before the scheduled meeting. The examining committee consists of the Student Advisory Committee and an external examiner. The defence is an open presentation by the student to the university community. The defence takes a similar format to the oral comprehensive exam.

SELECTION OF EXTERNAL EXAMINER

The purpose of the external examiner is to provide an independent assessment by someone who is at "arm's length" from the student, supervisor and advisory committee.

<http://www.usask.ca/College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies/defences/defence.php#Externalexaminers>

At the pre-defence meeting, the Student Advisory Committee identifies and approves three potential external examiners. Possible dates for the defence are also discussed. The supervisor contacts the graduate chair to inform that the student is planning to defend the PhD thesis. The supervisor provides the graduate chair with three names for possible external examiners. The supervisor must provide written rationale (and a brief CV or web site information) of

the first choice as well as three or four possible dates for the examination.

The graduate program assistant can assist in searching any potential examiners for conflict of interest to the Nursing Program as per the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Policies on Criteria for Selection of the External Examiner (Master's Theses Section 13.2.2). The Criteria for Selection of the External Examiner for PhD Theses is Section 13.2.1.

Potential external examiners are contacted by whom to establish willingness to sit as external examiner and to discuss availability for suggested dates for defence. If the external is available, a formal CV is requested. The external examiner is asked if they prefer hard copy or electronic copy of the thesis which will be forwarded as soon as possible.

Due to possible conflict of interest (of improper influence), the supervisor and student **must not** have any contact with the external examiner. The graduate chair or the graduate program assistant will assist with this process. The graduate program assistant will request two copies, one of which must be a printed paper copy. The thesis/dissertation and the external examiner's CV will be sent to the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies office along with the GSR 300.1 defence request (**required a minimum of 4 weeks prior to the defence date**).

PhD students will be contacted by the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies to provide a dissertation summary. The College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies prepares the forms which the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Dean or Designate takes to the defence. PhD defences are formally chaired by the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies dean or designate. The College of Nursing prepares the forms for Master of Nursing thesis students which the chair takes to the defence.

The committee's decision on the defence **must be listed on GSR 403.3** and signed by the external examiner. (<https://www.usask.ca/College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies/forms.php>)

GRADUATING FROM THE PROGRAM

At the time of the defence, the student and the committee are given forms to complete. The student will make any necessary changes suggested by the committee. If the supervisor is satisfied with the revisions, he/she will contact the graduate chair for the paperwork to be signed and forwarded to the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. The student can then upload to the University Library Electronic Thesis Dissertation (ETD) site and apply to graduate through their PAWS account.

Students in course based programs need only to apply to graduate. All paperwork is completed by the graduate program assistant for signature by the graduate chair and forwarded on the student's behalf to the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

Students who wish to arrange for others to submit their post-defence paper work need to complete an authorization form. No information about a student can be released to a third party without the student's authorization.

<https://students.usask.ca/graduate/graduate-students.php#Manageyourprogram>

TUITION REFUNDS

Thesis students who register and pay a term tuition fee may be entitled to a partial refund of tuition. Students who defend their thesis prior to the end of a term may be eligible for a tuition refund. Students in course based programs are not eligible for a tuition refund.

All requirements must be complete (paperwork and upload of thesis). Credits are pro-rated monthly and will be placed on the student's account by Registrarial Services, Student and Enrolment Services Division.

<http://www.usask.ca/College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies/>

PUBLICATIONS FROM GRADUATE WORK

It is expected that students will publish from their dissertation work in collaboration with their supervisor. Students are also encouraged to publish course work and project work in consultation with faculty/supervisors. The student and the faculty member should discuss early in the process the extent of the faculty member's contributions, and authorship on the paper or presentation.

College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Policies

<http://www.usask.ca/College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies/policy-and-procedure/index.php>



GRADUATE STUDENT - SUPERVISOR AGREEMENT¹

Student

Name :	Email :
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Course

Degree :	Start Date:
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Title of Project

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Supervisor(s)

Name :	Email :
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Department/College

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Student's Advisory Committee Members

<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••

Student Funding

Source:
Amount:
Duration :

- This agreement is to be regarded as an aid to planning and completing the project. It is not intended to be legally binding.
- The supervisor and the student are free to change, omit, or add items to suit their joint purposes.
- If the research question or methods change substantially, or issues arise which require that the agreed dates be altered, modify the contract, **highlighting the changes**.
- **Copies** should be provided to both signatories.

¹ Modified from: Hopkins, W.G. (2001). A research agreement for students in exercise and sport science. Sport Science, 5, available at: <http://sportsci.org/>.

What **question(s)** does the project address?

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1. Describe the **design** of the study, the **subjects**, **sample size**, and the **independent** and **dependent variables**.
- For multiple projects, duplicate this panel:

Design :
Subjects :
Sample size :
Independent Variables :
Dependent Variables :

2. Who is giving **statistical advice** on the design and analysis?

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3. List any **difficult, invasive, or time-consuming measures** that require another person's help. Who is helping, and what is their status on any publication (co-authorship or acknowledgement)?

Measures :
Person(s) :
Publication Status :

4. Describe any **pilot work completed** or needed to be completed to establish the feasibility of the project, including student training (animal care; statistics including commercial software such as SPSS, etc.).

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5. What is the supervisor's **initial** intellectual contribution to this research project?

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6. What is the student's **initial** intellectual contribution to this research project?

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7. Are there any pre-existing contracts that impact on the student's ability to claim **Intellectual Property rights** or that may delay publication?

- Supervisor and student should discuss IP rights and append any written agreement to this document.

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8. What is the **approximate cost** of the research project not including the student's stipend? Where are the funds coming from?

- If the student is expected to contribute to the cost of the project this must be made clear at the outset.

Cost :	Funding source(s) :
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9. If ethics approval is required, who will write the first draft of the application? What is the timeline for submission?

Who :	Timeline :
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10. Indicate **who is responsible** for each of the following issues.

- Securing assistance of others (e.g. technician, statistician) :
- Certification of student (e.g. for lab safety procedures) :
- Calibration and maintenance of equipment :
- Agreements or contracts for access to outside equipment/facilities :
- Intellectual property rights for collaborative work with other institutions :

Issue :	Responsibility :
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11. If human subjects are involved, who will **provide feedback to subjects** when the project is finished?

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12. What will be the **role, if any, of the supervisor in obtaining and analyzing the data?**

- Examples: active assistance with whatever; training of other personnel; guidance with analysis only.

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13. How many **hours per week** will the student spend on the project generally (when gathering data and when writing up)?

Fall Term:
Winter Term ::
Spring/Summer Term:

14. How many **hours per week of additional, formal commitments** (coursework, marking, demonstrating, teaching, outside work) does the student have?

Fall Term:
Winter Term ::
Spring/Summer Term:

15. When will the student table a **written proposal** and give a **seminar** on the proposal?

Written proposal :	Seminar :
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16. How often or when will the student have **regular meetings** with the supervisor and supervisory committee, and who will keep and circulate minutes of the meetings?

Meetings with supervisor :
Meetings with committee :
Minutes :

17. Who is to take responsibility to **arrange meetings?**

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18. If **shared equipment or facilities** must be used, who is responsible for booking the equipment or otherwise ensuring it will be available?

List Equipment/Facility :
Booked by:

19. Which **seminars, colloquia and journal clubs/research teams** is the student expected to attend?

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20. What is the approximate date for completion of lab/field work/collection of data?

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21. What is the approximate date for completion of data analysis?

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22. Indicate the approximate dates of submission of the first draft of the thesis (could be subdivided by section of thesis).

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23. How long at most will the supervisor take to review and return each draft?

# of drafts :	Turn-around time :
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24. Will the student write up the project for **journal publication(s)** before extending it into a thesis?

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25. If the data are sufficient to **submit for publication**, who will write the first draft of the manuscript, and what will be the order of the authors?

Write first draft :
Order of authors :

26. What is the model for the **form of the thesis** (e.g., traditional chapters, collection of manuscripts with Introduction and Conclusion), **style of the thesis** (styles for headings, references, tables, and figures; e.g., APA, a specific journal, a past thesis), and will it be submitted in paper or electronic form?

Form :
Style :
Paper or Electronic :

27. If the student is **dissatisfied with supervision** and has been unable to resolve it with the supervisor, who will the student consult?

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I agree, to the best of my ability, to act in accordance with the above agreement.

Student: **Date:**

Supervisor(s): **Date:**