



PhD in Nursing

STUDENT HANDBOOK

Fall 2026 – Summer 2027

"Nurse Leaders Begin Here"

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Welcome to the UNLV School of Nursing

Welcome from the Dean



Welcome to UNLV and the School of Nursing! We are thrilled that you chose our top-notch programs to further your education and career. We have dedicated, diverse, and talented faculty and staff to ensure that your experience at the School is positive and worthwhile. Taking this next step in your educational journey opens up a world of possibilities, and we are here to support you and cheer you on as you achieve your goals. Our graduate curricula are rigorous yet flexible to allow working professionals to complete their degrees without compromising other responsibilities. This handbook provides you a roadmap for success. On

behalf of the brilliant people who make up the UNLV School of Nursing, I would like to thank you for partnering with us as future nurse leaders who will transform health care and make impactful contributions to your communities, and when you graduate, we encourage you to stay engaged with us as alumni and come back to earn that next degree! Go Rebels!

Sigrid Barrett, PhD, RN, PNP, CNE, FAAN
Dean and Professor

Welcome from the Associate Dean of Advanced Education

Congratulations on joining the UNLV School of Nursing! You are beginning an exciting journey as part of a vibrant community of scholars, educators, and leaders within our nursing profession. Throughout this program, you will have opportunities to grow academically and professionally, benefit from mentorship, and engage in collegial and supportive networks with faculty and fellow students. I encourage you to take full advantage of the many events and opportunities available to connect, collaborate, and build meaningful professional relationships. This handbook is designed to guide you as you get started and to serve as a valuable reference throughout your academic journey. We are delighted to have you as part of our UNLV School of Nursing community.



Reimund Serafica, PhD, MSN, APRN, PMHNP-BC, CNE, FTNSS, FAAN

Welcome from the PhD Program Director



Welcome to the PhD program! We are thrilled that you have chosen to pursue your doctoral studies with us. While the online nature of this program offers you the flexibility to conduct your PhD study from anywhere in the world, please know that you are a vital part of our scholarly community. We recognize that the path to a PhD is both challenging and rewarding, and our primary goal is to provide a supportive environment where your research ideas can flourish. This handbook is designed to help you navigate our virtual resources, program milestones, and academic expectations, ensuring you stay on track. My door is always open, and I look forward to supporting your growth as you move from orientation to graduation.

Jinyoung Kim, PhD, RN, FAAN
Professor and PhD Program Director

The purpose of this handbook is to provide the program-specific information for the School of Nursing's PhD program that is not found in the [UNLV Graduate Catalog](#). Students are responsible for understanding and following the policies and procedures delineated in this document and the [UNLV Graduate Catalog](#), as well as the NSHE Code, UNLV Bylaws, and the UNLV Student Conduct Code. Questions about policies should be directed to the Graduate College: gradassociatedean@unlv.edu.

School of Nursing PhD Program Contact Information

UNLV School of Nursing

Bigelow Health Sciences Building (BHS)
4505 S. Maryland Parkway, Box 453018 Las Vegas, Nevada 89154-3018
Voice: (702) 895-3360 Fax: (702) 895-4807
Email: unlv.nursing@nevada.edu
Website: www.unlv.edu/nursing

Dean and Professor

Dr. Sigrid Barrett, sigrid.barrett@unlv.edu
702-895-3987

Associate Dean of Advanced Education

Dr. Reimund Serafica, reimund.serafica@unlv.edu
702-895-5746

Director/Graduate Coordinator of the PhD Program

Dr. Jinyoung Kim, jinyoung.kim@unlv.edu
702-895-34184451

Director of Student Services

Ms. Elizabeth Gardner, nurs.studentaffairs@unlv.edu
702-895-5923

Graduate Engagement and Retention Coordinator

Ms. Nancy Esposito, nurs.studentaffairs@unlv.edu
702-895-3812

Graduate Enrollment Coordinator

Ms. Bailey Ross, gradnursingadmissions@unlv.edu
702-895-5440

Graduate Administrative Assistant

unlv.nursing@unlv.edu
702-895-3360

Office Information

Bigelow Health Sciences Building (BHS), Room 419
4505 Maryland Parkway, Box 453018
Las Vegas, Nevada 89154-3018
Voice: 702-895-3360 / Fax: 702-895-4807

CHAPTER I. Program Information

The School of Nursing's Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing prepares scholars to advance nursing science and practice through rigorous research, evidence-based education, and dynamic leadership. According to the American Association Colleges of Nursing (AACN) statement:

"The Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) represents the highest level of formal education for a career in research and the scholarship of discovery. It prepares scholars for the expression and communication of the knowledge base in the profession. The Ph.D. graduate develops the science, stewards the profession, educates the next generation of nurses, defines its uniqueness, and maintains its professional integrity."

Mission Statement:

Our mission is to advance the science of health and healthcare by preparing nurse clinicians, educators, leaders, and researchers to optimize health equity and wellness of individuals, families, communities, and populations. The School of Nursing promotes, improves, and innovates nursing through interdisciplinary and transformational education, scholarship, practice, and community engagement.

Program Outcomes:

- Provide leadership in the advancement of nursing as a scientific and practice discipline through the conduct of culturally competent scholarship and identification of implications for policy, the discipline, and the profession.
- Conduct and communicate original research that generates new knowledge.
- Develop, implement, and evaluate innovative approaches to solving nursing problems.

Subspecialty Tracks:

(Please see Graduate Catalog for current and official track offerings).

Our program offers four distinct pathways, each tailored to your previous academic background and your long-term career aspirations in nursing science.

Post-master's Nursing Education track

This track is designed for masters-prepared students who are ready to transition into the role of the nurse-educator-scholar. Beyond simply mastering instructional techniques, the curriculum focuses on the scholarship of teaching and learning - empowering students to conduct research that evaluates innovative teaching strategies and educational outcomes.

An accelerated Nursing Education track is also available for those who have already earned a master's degree with a specific focus on nursing education. By streamlining the education-focused coursework, this track allows you to move more rapidly into advanced research methodologies and the development of your dissertation.

Post-master's Clinical Research track

This track is designed for Master's-prepared students who aim to drive systemic change through the rigorous advancement of nursing science. Centered on the 'scholarship of discovery,' this pathway emphasizes the development of a robust research portfolio—from conceptualizing theoretical frameworks to masterfully applying diverse quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Students engage in high-level clinical inquiry, investigating the complex intersections of patient outcomes, health disparities, and health systems research to generate the evidence necessary to advance nursing and global healthcare.

Post-DNP to PhD track

Recognizing the unique expertise of the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) graduate, this bridge track focuses on the transition from advanced clinical practice to original research generation. While the DNP

focuses on the application of evidence, this PhD track prepares you to create the evidence. It is a rigorous path for clinical leaders who wish to add a heavy research portfolio to their existing doctoral credentials, enabling them to lead interdisciplinary research teams.

Academic Calendar:

The School of Nursing operates on a trimester system with three 15-week terms: fall (September–December), spring (January–April), and summer (May–August) with a two-week break in between trimesters. Please note that the School of Nursing follows a different **academic calendar** than the rest of the university.

CHAPTER II. Registration, Requirements, and Orientation

Notice of Acceptance:

After the Graduate College notifies students of their acceptance to UNLV, the School of Nursing will send each student important information regarding program requirements that must be completed prior to the start of their first semester.

Orientation:

All students are required to attend an in-person School of Nursing New Graduate Student Orientation prior to starting their program. Lack of attendance at orientation without proper approval from the PhD Program Director may result in loss of admission to the program and separation (dismissal) from the university.

UNLV Student Accounts:

There are three UNLV accounts you will need to activate and bookmark prior to orientation.

1. **ACE account.** ACE accounts are created for students upon admission to UNLV. Students will receive an email to their personal email address with their ACE credentials and account setup instructions. ACE credentials are used to log in to all UNLV student platforms.
2. **UNLV Rebelmail.** All official UNLV correspondence must be sent to and received through a student's Rebelmail account; communication using personal email addresses is not permitted. If you do not activate this account, you will not receive UNLV-wide student announcements or be able to participate in graduate listserv communications. Step-by-step instructions for activating Rebelmail can be found [here](#).
3. **Canvas (Webcampus).** Canvas (Webcampus) is the student platform used to access all online courses. Step-by-step instructions for accessing Canvas (Webcampus) can be found [here](#). Note: Once you've completed the registration process, the course(s) you registered for will be accessible in Canvas approximately one week before the start of class or once the course instructor has published the course.

If you are having difficulties activating or accessing any UNLV student platforms, please contact the UNLV IT Help Desk for technology troubleshooting assistance.

CHAPTER III. Fees, Expenses, and Financial Assistance

Tuition and Fees:

Detailed information concerning tuition and fees can be found on the Cashiering and Student Accounts Office website.

Financial Assistance:

UNLV and the School of Nursing provide several resources for students seeking assistance with funding their graduate education, including but not limited to:

1. Financial Aid & Scholarships Office. The Financial Aid & Scholarships Office can provide students with information on available scholarships and loans and answer questions related to the disbursement of financial aid. To learn more, visit the Financial Aid & Scholarships Office website.
2. Graduate College. The Graduate College offers a number of funding opportunities for graduate students of all disciplines, including fellowships, Graduate Assistantships, and scholarships. To learn more, visit the Graduate College website.
3. School of Nursing. The School of Nursing offers various scholarships to nursing graduate students, including the M. Smyer Nursing Dissertation Award, Yaffa Dahan Nursing Education Fund, and PhD Student Project Award. Detailed information regarding application cycles and eligibility requirements is sent via the PhD student listserv.

To ensure maximum eligibility for financial aid, students are encouraged to submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) each year.

Graduate Assistantships:

Graduate assistantships are available in the SON. A graduate assistant (GA) may be employed to teach or assist faculty involved in research and other scholarly activities. A limited number of graduate assistantships are available. For more information about Graduate Assistantships, visit the following websites:

- Information from the Graduate College about [becoming a GA can be found here](#)
- Information about [becoming a GA for the School of Nursing can be found here](#)

CHAPTER IV. Pathway to Completion

Advisement:

Students admitted to the School of Nursing will be assigned a faculty advisor/chair upon admission. The student will retain that faculty advisor/chair for the duration of the nursing program but may request a change. Students will meet with their advisor/chair on a regular basis to review the student's progress. Failure to communicate with the advisor/chair when requested may result in being placed on probation and possible separation (dismissal) from the SON.

Student Responsibilities:

1. Respond promptly to advisor communications by e-mail, mail, or telephone.
2. Attend scheduled in-person, phone, or video conferencing meetings with advisor/chair.
3. Make appointments with advisor to discuss general progress, dissertation, or academic difficulties.
4. Review the student handbook and policies and procedures periodically.
5. Seek help from student support services (nurs.studentaffairs@unlv.edu) as appropriate.

Graduate Advisory Committee:

For programs that require a thesis or dissertation, a Graduate Advisory Committee (GAC) is mandatory and must conform to the Degree Progression Policies and Procedures provided in the graduate catalog.

A complete GAC consists of a Chair, two additional committee members from the UNLV School of Nursing, and one faculty member from outside the School of Nursing who serves as the Graduate College Representative (GCR). **Membership on the GAC is to be determined by the student in consultation with their advisor, other members of the SON faculty, and/or the program director.** Students are strongly encouraged to establish the GAC during the first year of the program.

The GAC Chair and SON committee members are typically full-time, PhD-prepared faculty of the UNLV School of Nursing. Faculty members holding other doctoral degrees (e.g., EdD or DNP) may serve as Co-Chairs or committee members when their substantive or methodological expertise supports the student's research. While the student's advisor may serve as Chair of the GAC, this is not required.

With the agreement and approval of the Chair, only one of the two SON committee members may be replaced by a PhD-prepared faculty member from outside the UNLV School of Nursing, provided that the individual holds approved UNLV Graduate Faculty Status.

IMPORTANT! All GAC members must hold approved UNLV Graduate Faculty Status (GFS). A current listing of the graduate faculty can be found in the UNLV Graduate Catalog. Faculty must hold graduate faculty status to be involved in graduate education at UNLV. For up to date information regarding graduate faculty status in your department, visit the [Graduate Faculty status web page](#).

Program Requirements:

Program requirements regarding [admission, coursework and culminating experience](#) are found in the [Graduate Catalog](#).

A grade point average of 3.0 must be maintained in all courses required for the degree; no grade less than B in any course is acceptable for curricular completion of the program.

Sample Required PhD Program Core Courses

Course Number and Title	Credit Hours
NURS 770 Knowledge Development in Nursing	3
NURS 780 Quantitative Research Methods in Nursing	3
NURS 781 Qualitative Research Methods in Nursing	3
NURS 749 Interdisciplinary Research & Scholarship Seminar	2-6
NURS 771 Theory Development in Nursing	3
NURS 742 Foundation to Research Designs in Nursing	3
NURS 775 Statistical Methods for Nursing Research I	3
NURS 776 Statistical Methods for Nursing Research II	3
NURS 800 Scholarly Writing for Dissemination	3
NURS 797 Dissertation	12
TOTAL	41-45

Additional Courses for Nursing Education Sub-Plans (Example only)

Course Number and Title	Credit Hours
NURS 774 Educational Theory & Philosophy for Nursing	3
NURS 709 Teaching and Learning in Nursing Education	3
NURS 710 Course Level Evaluation Strategies for Nurse Educators	3
NURS 724 Developing and Evaluating Curriculum for Nursing Education	4
NURS 733 Nursing Education Practicum I	2
NURS 790 Independent Teaching Practicum Seminar	1
NURS 791 Independent Teaching Practicum	1-5
TOTAL	17-22

Additional Courses for Clinical Research Sub-Plan (Example only)

Course Number and Title	Credit Hours
NURS 759 Clinical Research: Advanced Study Design	3
NURS 787 Advanced Quantitative Research Methods in Nursing*	3
NURS 786 Advanced Qualitative and Mixed Methods for Nursing Research*	3
NURS 792 Research Ethics and Inclusion: Vulnerable Populations and Lifespan Considerations	3
NURS 779 Writing a Research Grant Application	3
TOTAL	12

Note: For courses marked *, only one is required.

Please note that courses and sub-plans are subject to change, and these lists are intended only as examples. Official degree requirements are found in the [graduate catalog](#). Course sequencing, content, and schedules are subject to change.

Annual Mandatory Individual Development Plan (IDP)

Each winter break and early spring term, graduate students are **required** to complete the Graduate Student Individual Development Plan (IDP) form [Formerly known as the Student Annual Review]. The review covers the prior calendar year and assesses student progress, and it establishes reasonable goals for the year ahead.

Faculty Advisors/Graduate Coordinators have the option to provide feedback to each student's submitted IDP and provide acknowledgement that they have reviewed the IDP.

Reported student data is shared with students' graduate coordinators and advisors to foster opportunities for discussion about students' strengths and weaknesses, accomplishments and next requirements, and mentoring plans so that students know what they need to do in order to progress successfully through their programs in a timely manner.

Students who are graduating are also required to complete the form in order to record their achievements since the data is also used to track UNLV metrics related to the annual productivity of all students.

Doctoral Student Update Form

Each Fall and Spring, doctoral students are **required** to meet with their chair/advisor to review their School of Nursing Plan of Study and complete the PhD Student Academic Update Form (Academic Update Form) form. The Academic Update Form should indicate any changes that need to be made to the Plan of Study, including approved course substitutions and courses taken outside of UNLV, as well as any accomplishments, awards, or other honors that the student has received since the last update. Both the student and chair/advisor can also add comments about the student's progress and plans, and both should then sign the form. The signed form and updated Plan of Study is due to the PhD Director and Graduate Engagement and Retention Coordinator no later than week 8 of each Fall and Spring term. Registration for the subsequent term may be delayed if these forms are not received by the established deadline.

Preliminary Dissertation Meeting:

Students in the PhD in Nursing program are strongly encouraged to identify and confirm the membership of their GAC within the first year of study to remain on the standard full-time graduation timeline. While the GAC must be confirmed no later than the end of the 4th trimester, forming it after the first year may delay progress toward graduation. See the sample timeline for completion of program benchmarks in the table below. Students should meet regularly with their chair and GAC in preparation for development and completion of the Comprehensive Examination, Dissertation Proposal, and Dissertation. Structured preliminary dissertation meetings (a.k.a., PDMs or committee meetings) are recommended as follows:

Preliminary Dissertation Meeting 1 (PDM 1):

Students should complete PDM 1 at least two trimesters before the Comprehensive Exam and Dissertation Proposal. This meeting may be conducted in person or via video conference.

The purpose of the PDM1 is for the student and committee members to discuss the broad dissertation topic the student is interested in pursuing for their dissertation. Prepare a 1 to 2-page document and/or presentation that identify a phenomenon of interest and research ideas. The document should broadly identify the research problem, purpose, sample, design, significance and feasibility of the study. Participation is optional for the Graduate College Representative at this stage.

Preliminary Dissertation Meeting 2 (PDM 2):

Students should complete PDM 2 at least one trimester before the Comprehensive Exam and Dissertation Proposal. This meeting may be conducted in person or via video conference.

The purpose of the PDM2 is for the student to refine their research focus and dissertation plan. Students will incorporate feedback from PDM1 to prepare a 4-to-5-page document and presentation. This material must include the study's: Significance of the Research Problem, Gaps in the current literature, Study Purpose, Sample, Design, Measurements, and Data Analysis Plans. Participation of the Graduate College Representative is required at this stage.

Additional PDMs:

Additional PDMs might be necessary at the discretion of the chair and committee. Process and requirements will be discussed individually with students by the committee.

Steps to schedule and complete PDMs:

1. The student should take the initiative to identify potential dates and times for the PDM meeting in consultation with their chair and committee members to ensure full committee availability
2. Once the meeting date and time are confirmed, the student should submit the **Doctoral Scheduling Request Form**. A member of the SON main office will create an official meeting invitation that includes a meeting link or on-campus meeting and distribute the evaluation surveys to the committee. Neither students nor committee members may create meeting links or reserve on-campus locations on their own.
3. The student and committee members will meet to discuss the broad dissertation topic the student has identified. The committee will help the student focus and refine their dissertation plans.
4. Following the meeting, the chair and committee members will complete the evaluation survey regarding the student's performance and progress. The committee's feedback, submitted via evaluation survey, will then be delivered to the student.

Sample timeline for completion of Benchmarks for the PhD in Nursing

(Full-time; students seeking part-time study status should contact the Student Services office for modified plans of study)

Year 1

Fall	Spring	Summer	Throughout
Core coursework	Core coursework	Additional coursework or independent study as needed	Meet with PhD Program Advisor
			Establish GAC members & PDM1

Year 2

Fall	Spring	Summer	Throughout
Core/subplan coursework	Core/subplan coursework	Additional coursework or independent study as needed	Meet with the Chair and GAC members
PDM2	Comprehensive Examination & Proposal Defense		

Year 3 and beyond

Fall	Spring	Summer	Throughout
Dissertation	Dissertation	Dissertation	Meet with the Chair and GAC members

Comprehensive Examination:

The Comprehensive Exam (CE) and Dissertation Proposal are required to advance to candidacy and begin dissertation work. The student should schedule the Comprehensive Examination (CE), concurrent with the final coursework or after completing all required coursework. To schedule the CE after completing all required coursework, the student should enroll in an independent study course (NURS 798 or NURS 789) with their chair or co-chair serving as the instructor. The Graduate College Representative (GCR) does not participate in the CE process.

To enroll in independent study, the student must complete the School of Nursing (SON) Independent Study Agreement form and submit it to the Graduate Engagement & Retention Coordinator via email at nurs.studentaffairs@unlv.edu.

The CE process includes determination of **4** critical dates:

1. The beginning of the three-week independent work period – During this period the student may not consult with members of the GAC, other current or former School of Nursing faculty members, or any other academic expert regarding the CE, its composition, or content. The independent work period must begin no later than Week 7 of the trimester.
2. The due date for submission of the written CE to the GAC for review – The final day of the three-week independent work period will be the due date for submission of the written CE.
3. The due date for completion of review and grading by the GAC – The GAC will have up to 2 weeks to review the written CE. The GAC will complete its review and submit comments and a final grade (pass or fail) to the GAC Chair by the end of the two-week review period. The GAC Chair will notify the student of the final result.
4. The date of the oral exam – The student should discuss and confirm the oral exam date with the GAC prior to the start of the three-week independent work period. Once the date is confirmed, the student will submit the Doctoral Scheduling Request Form to schedule the in-person or Zoom meeting for the exam. Neither the student nor the Chair will create their own meeting link.

Suggested CE Timeline:

- Weeks 4-6: Student independent writing period
- Weeks 7-8: GAC review
- Week 9: Oral exam

The PhD in Nursing program requires completion of a written and oral CE.

1. Written exam: The GAC will develop two questions for the student to address. Over a three week writing period, the student will respond to each question in a paper of 10-15 pages. The written CE must be formatted according to APA style and submitted electronically in either MS Word or Adobe PDF file format.
2. Oral exam: Once the GAC has finalized the grading of the written component, the student may proceed to the oral exam. For the oral component, the student will deliver a 20-minute presentation explaining how the content of the written component aligns with their intended dissertation study. GAC members will then have up to 30 minutes to ask questions related to the written component and/or the presentation. The GAC may subsequently meet in closed session to determine the outcome of the examination, after which each member will submit a completed grading rubric to the GAC Chair and PhD Director within one week of the examination. The oral exam should be scheduled no later than week 13 of the trimester.

The GAC must unanimously agree that the student has passed the CE, including both written and oral examinations, before the student may proceed in the program. If the student does not pass the written examination on the first attempt, a second attempt must be scheduled no sooner than 3 months and no later than 6 months following the first attempt. If the student does not pass the examination on the first attempt, the student will be placed on probation through the Graduate College process. If the student is not successful in the second attempt, they will be separated from the PhD Program in Nursing.

If the student does not pass the oral examination, the student is considered to have failed the CE and must schedule a second CE attempt as described above. In such a case, the student must repeat BOTH written and oral examinations to pass the CE. Failure of either the written or oral exams during the first attempt will result in the student being placed on probation through the Graduate College process. If the student is not successful in the second attempt, they will be separated from the PhD Program in Nursing.

Dissertation Proposal:

Upon successful completion of the CE, the student should begin developing the Dissertation Proposal and determine a date for the Dissertation Proposal Defense. The complete written Dissertation Proposal must be submitted to the GAC, including the GCR, no less than **2 weeks** before the oral Dissertation Proposal Defense Date. The student should prepare a 20-30 minute presentation on the Dissertation Proposal for the GAC on this date. The GAC will critique and comment on the written proposal and oral presentation at this time. The Dissertation Proposal must be unanimously approved by the student's GAC at the time of the oral defense. If the GAC cannot come to a unanimous decision at the time of the defense, the GAC chair will communicate the committee's concerns to the student and request revisions to the Dissertation Proposal. This process for addressing the committee's concerns on the written proposal and oral presentation may be repeated until the GAC comes to consensus OR a maximum of 2 attempts. If the student does not pass the Dissertation Proposal Defense on the first attempt, the student will be placed on probation through the Graduate College process. If the student is not successful in the second attempt, they will be separated from the PhD Program in Nursing. Only after successfully passing the Dissertation proposal and defense and have successfully completed all course requirements (except for dissertation credits), and filed the appropriate form, is the student considered to have attained Advanced to Candidacy status. Only after attaining Advanced to Candidacy status, is the student permitted to enroll in dissertation course credits.

Advancement to Candidacy:

Advancement to Candidacy must be achieved before the student is permitted to enroll in NURS 797: Dissertation. Upon successful completion of the items below, the student is ready to advance to candidacy.

- All required coursework, except NURS 797: Dissertation
- Comprehensive exam (written and oral)
- Dissertation proposal (written and oral defense)
- Approval of Appointment of Advisory Committee form by the Graduate College
- Approval of Plan of Study Parts I and II forms by the Graduate College

The student should complete and submit the Advancement to Candidacy form on Grad Rebel Gateway. Once the form has been submitted, the student should notify the SON Graduate Engagement and Retention Coordinator at nurs.studentaffairs@unlv.edu for course permission to enroll in NURS 797: Dissertation.

Dissertation:

The culminating experience demonstrates the student's mastery of their research, scholarship, creative abilities, and written and oral communication skills in the chosen discipline. The final document is intended to benefit the student and contribute to the academic discipline or profession. This policy is supplemental to the UNLV [Graduate College policies](#) and is specific to the School of Nursing PhD in Nursing Program. Students in the School of Nursing must adhere to both the Graduate College policies and the School of Nursing policies.

To begin dissertation work, the student must have achieved Advancement to Candidacy status. To enroll in NURS 797: Dissertation, the student should email the SON Graduate Engagement and Retention Coordinator at nurs.studentaffairs@unlv.edu for course permission each term that enrollment in NURS 797: Dissertation is needed. The chair of the GAC will serve as the instructor of record for NURS 797.

There are two possible formats for the complete Dissertation:

1. The multiple-article Dissertation
2. The traditional format Dissertation

The student should consult with the GAC to determine which format the final Dissertation will take. Each format is detailed below.

Multiple-article Dissertation

The Multiple Article Dissertation must include a minimum of three under-review, in-press, or published articles reporting on research or scholarship undertaken as a doctoral student at UNLV (prior research, scholarship, creative activity, articles or publications may not be used in a UNLV dissertation). The purpose of the dissertation is to demonstrate research competence as a culminating product of the graduate program. The Multiple Article Dissertation option provides PhD students an alternative to the Traditional Dissertation for their final culminating experience. In addition, it provides students with a structured opportunity to disseminate publications earlier in their professional careers.

Working under the supervision of the Graduate Advisory Committee Chair and members, the student must produce three original manuscripts to graduate.

Multiple-Article Dissertation Format

- A. The manuscript option format must follow the UNLV Graduate College requirements and instructions for preparation and submission of Doctoral Dissertation available at the Graduate College Website.
- B. With the guidance of the Graduate Advisory Committee Chair and Members, students will develop a plan and timeline for completion of the manuscripts for the Multiple Article Dissertation option.

- C. The manuscripts must be part of the work the student performed while attending UNLV School of Nursing PhD Program, be related to the topic of the dissertation, and contribute to a unified work.
 - D. Changes to the dissertation option (Traditional vs. Multiple Article) must be discussed and approved by the student's Graduate Advisory Committee Chair and Members.
- I. Abstract
 - A. The written dissertation will include an abstract describing the full dissertation and be no more than 350 words (not counting title and author's name)
 - B. The abstract structure will be determined by the Graduate Advisory Committee Chair and Members
 - II. Chapter 1: Introduction
 - A. The Introduction sets the stage for the three manuscripts to follow (see below) and will include the review of the literature.
 - B. The Introduction Chapter should include:
 - 1. rationale for the research;
 - 2. discussion of gaps in the literature addressed by the research;
 - 3. identification of the aims of the overall dissertation project; and,
 - 4. description of the proposed manuscripts and explanation of how they are linked to the dissertation topic.
 - III. Chapters 2, 3, & 4
 - A. The student will prepare three manuscripts to the Graduate Advisory Committee Chair and Members and then submit for publication to one or more peer-reviewed journals. The student and her/his Graduate Advisory Committee Chair and Members will agree on the nature and topics of the three manuscripts, but all must be clearly linked to the aims established for the dissertation.
 - B. Article chapters must be included in the appropriate Graduate College format, consistent with the Introduction and Conclusion chapters. Students may not simply "add in" a journal article reprint to serve as a dissertation chapter.
 - C. At least one manuscript must be data-driven, report the results of the student's dissertation study, and identify the student as first author. The other two manuscripts may focus on a synthesized review of the literature pertinent to the program of study, an instrument development, any methodological issues, a conceptual analysis or theory application related to the study, or clinical application of the findings to practice with the student as first author.
 - D. The student should strive to submit for publication the three manuscripts well before the time of the student's Dissertation Defense. The Graduate Advisory Committee Chair and its members must approve each manuscript prior to any journal submission. Please note per Catalog, a minimum of three articles must be submitted and under-review, in-press, or published.
 - IV. Chapter 5: Conclusion
 - A. This format must also include a concluding chapter that puts the multiple manuscripts in a broader context and explains their significance to the field, as well as offer suggestions for future research.
 - B. This concluding chapter should provide an overall discussion of:
 - 1. the study undertaken;
 - 2. an integrative summary of findings, strengths, and limitations; and,
 - 3. implications for research, education, or practice.
 - V. Authorship
 - A. For coauthored chapters in multiple article dissertations, the student must have made a substantial and documented contribution to the work in order to include it in the dissertation. In practice, this may be acknowledged by the student being the first author on a manuscript. If not the first author on an article, the student should have made substantial contributions to the research design, execution of the study, analyses, and/or write-up and these must be documented, as well as reviewed and approved by the student's Graduate Advisory Committee Chair and Members. Quantifying the requirements of "substantial" can be challenging, with best

practices in leading peer-reviewed journals (such as PLOS ONE, Nature, CReDiT) offering guidelines for determining sufficient contribution for journal publication authorship, and in turn for inclusion in a dissertation. A student's contribution in coauthored chapters should be noted and clearly explained either in the general Introduction or in Introductions to respective coauthored chapters.

- B. According to the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors, the Authorship credit should be based on 1) substantial contributions to conception and design, acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data; 2) drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content; and 3) final approval of the version to be published. All authors should meet these conditions. Since the relative contributions of co-authors may change over the course of a project and across manuscripts, the student can revisit this as appropriate prior to actual manuscript submission. All authors must review and approve the manuscript prior to submission.

Traditional Dissertation

Traditional dissertations have certain characteristics in common. They have a sole author; consist of a series of sequential chapters, each of which presents the student's literature review, methodology, theoretical framework, research findings, or discussion of the findings, and advances the student's thesis; reflect original ideas and new contributions to the field; and constitute a single, generally linear narrative on the topic at hand.

The traditional dissertation format typically consists of the following core elements, with each typically comprising one chapter:

1. Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter introduces the research problem and establishes the significance of the study. It should include the background and context of the problem, a clear statement of the research problem, the purpose of the study, specific aims or research questions/hypotheses, and the significance of the research. Key definitions, assumptions, delimitations, and an overview of the dissertation structure are also typically included.

2. Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter provides a critical and integrative review of the existing literature relevant to the study. It should synthesize current knowledge, identify gaps or inconsistencies in the literature, and justify the need for the proposed research. A conceptual or theoretical framework guiding the study is usually presented and discussed in this chapter.

3. Chapter 3: Methods

This chapter describes how the study was conducted in sufficient detail to allow replication. It includes the study design, setting, sample and sampling procedures, inclusion/exclusion criteria, measures and instruments, data collection procedures, ethical considerations (including IRB approval), and data analysis plans. Strategies to ensure rigor, validity, and reliability (or trustworthiness for qualitative studies) should also be addressed.

4. Chapter 4: Results

This chapter presents the findings of the study without interpretation. Results should be organized by research question or aim and presented clearly using text, tables, and figures as appropriate. Statistical analyses or qualitative findings should be reported objectively and consistently with the methods described in Chapter 3.

5. Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

- This chapter interprets the findings and situates them within the context of existing literature and the study's conceptual or theoretical framework. It should address the implications of the findings for nursing research, practice, education, and policy, as appropriate. Study limitations, strengths, and recommendations for future research are also discussed, followed by a brief conclusion.

For both multiple-article and traditional dissertation formats, the student should follow School of Nursing Guidelines and the Graduate College guidelines for formatting the final product.

CHAPTER V. Graduation

Dissertation Defense:

Once the dissertation proposal is approved, the committee will work closely with the student to provide guidance on completing the dissertation study. Over the course of this process, the student will write the dissertation chapters or manuscripts and follow a review process determined and agreed upon by their chair and committee. Once the chair and committee are satisfied with the written chapters and have determined the student is ready to defend their dissertation, the student will complete the following steps. The student **must** travel to the UNLV campus to complete the Dissertation Defense. For additional information, please also refer to the Graduate College's Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines.

Prior to Dissertation Defense:

- Apply for graduation in MyUNLV.
- Submit the Advancement to Candidacy Form to the Graduate College via Grad Rebel Gateway. This form should be submitted immediately after the dissertation proposal defense. The Culminating Experience form must be submitted via Grad Rebel Gateway prior to the Dissertation defense.
- Confirm a defense date with the committee.
- Submit the **Doctoral Scheduling Request Form** to schedule the dissertation defense. Defenses must be scheduled via official School of Nursing channels; neither students nor committee members may create their own virtual links or reserve presentation rooms.
- Three weeks prior to the Defense, the student must provide a copy of their dissertation to the committee.
- All dissertations must be submitted to iThenticate for a similarity check prior to submission of the final document to the Graduate College. A copy of the similarity report must be submitted to the GAC three days before the defense, and it will be taken into account when determining the outcome of the defense.
- The dissertation defense will be open to the public. The defense date and time will be announced to various student and faculty populations at least 2 weeks prior to the defense date. Students may have family and or friends attend their defense during the open segment of the defense.

While at UNLV:

- The student should arrive at least 30 minutes prior to their scheduled defense time and check in at the UNLV School of Nursing main office located in Rod Lee Bigelow Health Sciences (BHS) 419. The student must ensure their presentation is accessible from an on-campus (non-personal) computer via Gmail, Rebelmail, or Google Drive. It is recommended that students bring their dissertation presentation on a flash drive as an added safety measure.
- Oral Defense presentation must be no longer than 40 minutes, however the entire Dissertation Defense may take 1 – 1 ½ hours.

Dissertation Submission Process:

- After the defense, the student may need to make additional changes to the dissertation based on committee feedback.
- If the student makes any changes (other than simple grammatical changes), they must re-submit the dissertation to iThenticate.
- For official policy please see the [Graduate College website](#).

CHAPTER VI. Professional Code of Ethics/Discipline Guidelines

UNLV Graduate College policy regarding academic integrity can be found in the [graduate catalog](#).

Nursing Standards:

The American Nurses Association has defined standards and codes by which all nurses practice. As a professional program it is expected that students will demonstrate behaviors that reflect the defined standards of nursing throughout their academic experience. Students in the specialty areas will also be guided by published standards appropriate to their specialty.

American Nurses Association Standards of Nursing Practice

- The collection of data about the health status of the client/patient is systematic and continuous. The data are accessible, communicated, and recorded.
- Nursing diagnoses are derived from health status data.
- The plan of nursing care includes goals derived from the nursing diagnoses.
- The plan of nursing care includes priorities and the prescribed nursing approaches or measures to achieve the goals derived from the nursing diagnoses.
- Nursing actions provide for client/patient participation in health promotion, maintenance and restoration.
- Nursing actions assist the client/patient to maximize his health capabilities.
- The client's/patient's progress or lack of progress toward goal achievement is determined by the client/patient and the nurses.
- The client's/patient's progress or lack of progress toward goal achievement directs reassessment, reordering of priorities, new goal setting and revision of the plan of nursing care.

Code of Ethics:

The graduate program also adheres to the Code of Ethics for Nurses as published by the American Nurses Association (2015). Interpretive statements related to the statements identified below may be found at [American Nurses Association Ethics](#)

1. The nurse practices with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and unique attributes of every person.
2. The nurse's primary commitment is to the patient, whether an individual, family, group, community, or population.
3. The nurse promotes, advocates for, and protects the rights, health, and safety of the patient.
4. The nurse has authority, accountability, and responsibility for nursing practice; makes decisions; and takes action consistent with the obligation to provide optimal care.
5. The nurse owes the same duties to self as to others, including the responsibility to promote health and safety, preserve wholeness of character and integrity, maintain competence, and continue personal and professional growth.
6. The nurse, through individual and collective effort, establishes, maintains, and improves the ethical environment of the work setting and conditions of employment that are conducive to safe, quality health care.
7. The nurse, in all roles and settings, advances the profession through research and scholarly inquiry, professional standards development, and the generation of both nursing and health policy.
8. The nurse collaborates with other health professionals and the public to protect human rights, promote health diplomacy, and reduce health disparities.
9. The profession of nursing, collectively through its professional organizations, must articulate nursing values, maintain the integrity of the profession, and integrate principles of social justice into nursing and health policy.

Discipline Resources:

Writing Style

The School of Nursing utilizes the American Psychological Association (APA) formatting conventions for all written work. Information on the most current version of this style and relevant documentation can be found at: [APA Style](#)

SIGMA THETA TAU INTERNATIONAL

The Zeta Kappa Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International was chartered at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas in 1981. The purposes of Sigma Theta Tau are to recognize the achievement of scholarship of superior quality, to recognize the development of leadership qualities, to foster high professional standards, to encourage creative work and to strengthen commitment on the part of individuals to the ideals and purposes of the profession of nursing. Each year an invitation to membership is extended to selected students in the undergraduate and graduate programs who demonstrate the qualities identified by the purposes of Sigma Theta Tau. Faculty members and community nursing leaders who possess the minimum of a Baccalaureate in Nursing are also invited to membership. Meetings of educational nature are planned four times per year. Learn more about the Zeta Kappa-At-Large Chapter by visiting: [Zeta Kappa](#)

University Resources:

The Graduate Academy: Innovative Leadership, Professional, and Career Development

The goal of the Graduate Academy is to serve as a virtual resource providing support and many professional opportunities to UNLV graduate students. The Academy offers information about events and services such as graduate certificate programs, workshops, training sessions and career services. You can follow Academy activities via social media or look for regular updates on the website.

Alumni Engagement

With an alumni base 150,000+ strong, the UNLV Alumni Engagement offers a variety of services and opportunities in support of alumni and their families. UNLV alumni are encouraged to support the values of higher learning through advocacy, involvement, and giving.

Commencement Office

Located in the UNLV Office of the Registrar, the [commencement office](#) is the last step in the graduation process. Please check with the commencement office for information on the commencement ceremony and your diploma; for all other information about graduate student degree completion and graduation, including thesis/dissertation requirements and doctoral hooding, please contact the Graduate College. It is the students' responsibility to ensure they apply for [graduation on time](#) and submit all required forms to the Graduate College. Questions regarding thesis/dissertation should be directed to the Graduate College [Student Services Team](#) and questions regarding required forms should be directed to the Graduate College [RPC Team](#).

Institutional Engagement and Experience

The vision of the [Institutional Engagement and Experience](#) is to advocate, promote, and support the advancement of equity, inclusiveness, and empowerment of a continuously changing collegiate and global community. The mission is to provide leadership and support for UNLV's engagement mission: *to nurture equity, diversity, and inclusiveness that promotes respect, support, and empowerment*. This Office is housed under the Division of Human Resources and also handles UNLV Title IX questions, inquiries, and reporting.

Disability Resource Center (DRC)

The [DRC](#) is committed to supporting students with disabilities at UNLV through the appropriate use of advocacy, accommodations, and supportive services to ensure access to campus courses, services, and activities. The DRC is the university-designated office that determines and facilitates reasonable accommodations in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Graduate students with disabilities must disclose to the DRC in order to receive appropriate accommodations.

Graduate Appeals and Issue Resolution

The Office of Graduate Student Services at the Graduate College assists graduate and professional students with addressing concerns and overcoming personal, academic, or financial challenges that might hinder their ability to be successful in their program. The office also provides information and student-centered issue-resolution services and offers guidance, information, and assistance when regular channels have failed to provide graduate students with the information they need to solve problems. Please see website for more information: <https://www.unlv.edu/graduatecollege/appeals-issue-resolution>

UNLV Global and the Office of International Student and Scholar Compliance

[International Student and Scholar \(ISSC\)](#) ensures compliance with both SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) and federal law, so that the university can continue to be authorized by the U.S. federal government to enroll international students; host and hire international scholars; assist and advise employment eligibility and authorization relating to international students and scholars, and visa, travel, and immigration issues; provide critical and specialized services to the international students and scholars of the UNLV community; and facilitate their transition to the campus and the U.S.

The Care Center

The [Care Center](#) is committed to creating a supportive and inclusive environment for all genders through programming, services, and advocacy for the UNLV community. The Women's Center has informational resources, brochures, and flyers for a variety of on and off campus organizations to help empower and protect yourself, and learn about your options. They also provide free tampons, pads, and condoms.

The Intersection

[The Intersection](#) is a one-stop resource for UNLV's highly diverse student body — a comprehensive multicultural center grounded in the academic life of our students. As an intersecting campus resource, the Intersection helps ensure students, particularly first-generation and students of color, successfully navigate their academic careers. Here, all members of campus can discuss their differences, discover their similarities, and build a shared sense of belonging.

UNLV Libraries

[UNLV Libraries](#) has always been more than books; they are about encouraging students and creating quality programs that elevate growth and learning. Please visit their website for important information about the services they offer to graduate students.

Graduate & Professional Student Association (GPSA)

The [Graduate & Professional Student Association](#) serves all currently enrolled University of Nevada, Las Vegas graduate and professional students. The GPSA maintains the Graduate Student Commons located in the Lied Library room 2141 and Gateway Building PDAC Room. The facility a working office equipped with a copier, fax, flatbed scanners, color laser printer, office supplies, and computers with printers and a small kitchen area. The GPSA is the graduate student governance body at UNLV; the GPSA Council consists of one graduate student representative from each graduate department, and they meet monthly. The GPSA also

provides volunteer opportunities, sponsors social events, and supports graduate student research through the graduate research and travel grants program.

Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities

The [Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) is a student-centered, service-oriented office located within the Division of Student Affairs. The Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities collaborates with the UNLV community to provide an inclusive system through enforcement of the UNLV Student Code of Conduct by:

- Promoting awareness of student rights and responsibilities;
- Establishing accountability for student choices;
- Creating opportunities for involvement in the process; and
- Striving to uphold the values and ethics that advance the common good.

Military and Veteran Services Center

The [Military and Veteran Service Center](#) is staffed with veterans and veteran education benefits-experienced staff to assist more than 1,800 veterans, dependents, active duty service members, National Guard members, and reservists attending UNLV. Their mission is to develop a welcoming, veteran-friendly campus environment that fosters academic and personal success.

The Financial Aid & Scholarships Office

The [Financial Aid & Scholarships Office](#) supports higher-education access and persistence by providing financial aid to eligible students. The office partners with student organizations, the UNLV Foundation, the Graduate College, and other external constituents to provide financial aid learning opportunities and scholarship support for graduate students.

Writing Center

This is a free service to UNLV students to help you with any writing project, from papers to creative writing, to resumes, and we can work with you at any stage of the writing process. The center can help you brainstorm, make an outline, work on your drafts, or just be a soundboard for your ideas. The center staff can assist you in person, or via the [Online Writing Lab \(OWL\)](#) page.

University Policies and Procedures:

Graduate students are responsible for knowing and acting in accordance with UNLV Policies and Procedures. To view the most commonly referenced campus policies and procedures, you can refer to the following websites:

- [Academic Integrity](#)
- [Activation for Military Service](#)
- [Change of Address](#)
- [FERPA/Privacy Rights](#)
- [Health Insurance - Mandatory](#)
- [Jean Clery Campus Safety and Security Report](#)
- [Proof of Immunization](#)
- [Policies and Procedures on the Protection of Research Subjects](#)
- [Rebelmail Policy](#)
- [Student Conduct Code](#)
- [Student Computer Use Policy](#)
- [Title IX](#)

UNLV does not discriminate in its employment practices or in its educational programs or activities, including admissions, on the basis of sex/gender pursuant to Title IX, or on the basis of any other legally

protected category as is set forth in NSHE Handbook Title 4, Chapter 8, Section 13. Reports of discriminatory misconduct, questions regarding Title IX, and/or concerns about noncompliance with Title IX or any other anti-discrimination laws or policies should be directed to UNLV's Title IX Coordinator Michelle Sposito.

The Title IX Coordinator can be reached through the [online reporting form](#), by email at titleixcoordinator@unlv.edu, by phone at (702) 895-4055, by mail at 4505 S. Maryland Parkway, Box 451062, Las Vegas, NV, 89154-1062, or in person at Frank and Estella Beam Hall (BEH), Room 555.

To ensure compliance with Graduate College policies and procedures, please review the relevant sections of the [Graduate Catalog](#):

- [Academic Calendar](#)
- [Academic Policies](#)
- Admission and Registration Information
- [Degree Progression Policies & Procedures](#)

In addition, the [Graduate College website](#) contains additional information regarding policies and procedures. Nothing in this handbook supersedes any NSHE, UNLV, or Graduate College policy.

Handbook Information

Please include the faculty vote of approval in the table below.

Last revised	Revised by	Department Vote Tally: Yes/No/Abs. (date of vote)	Changes summary
3-26-24	C. Burton		Updated to include Doctoral Student Update form requirement
4-10-24	C. Burton	15/0/3 (4/9/24)	Updated to include voting and revised TOC
2-21-25	C. Burton	30 / 0 / 2 2/24/2025	Updated to include additional detail on the multiple-article Dissertation option.
3/10/26	J. Kim	19/1/0 Voted 2/23/26	Updated to include detailed policies on orientation, comprehensive exam, dissertation format and process, and graduation.