



# BOSTON COLLEGE

## Connell School of Nursing

# Graduate Student Handbook

# 2024-2025

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# GENERAL INFORMATION FOR ALL GRADUATE STUDENTS

## **Introduction**

The first section of the graduate handbook contains information applicable to all graduate programs. Additional program information is also available on the Boston College web site at [www.bc.edu/nursing](http://www.bc.edu/nursing). The student handbook reflects current policies and procedures; however, procedures may be revised and updated during the year as necessary. Please check with the Assistant Director of Graduate Student Services for the most up-to-date policies and procedures.

## **HISTORY OF GRADUATE PROGRAMS IN NURSING**

Boston College began offering graduate courses in 1952. In the spring of 1956, nursing sought to bring its program into conformity with the standards of the profession, and proposed a Master of Science degree in Nursing, with a minor in education. Boston College began awarding the Master of Science degree in Nursing in 1958. The Ph.D. program, approved by the board of trustees in September 1986, began in fall 1988. Ten students were admitted in the program's initial year; the program expanded to 30 students at the end of three years. The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program was initiated in 2019. This terminal, practice-focused doctoral program prepares Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) as Nurse Practitioners and Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs).

## **CONNELL SCHOOL OF NURSING MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the Boston College Connell School of Nursing is to prepare compassionate, professionally competent nurses whose practice and scholarship are scientifically based and grounded in humanizing the experience of health and illness. In keeping with the University's Jesuit, Catholic ideals, we focus on formation of the whole person and promotion of social justice. The Connell School of Nursing educates students as reflective lifelong learners who use knowledge in service to others. The faculty develops and disseminates knowledge for the advancement of professional nursing practice and the improvement of health and health care for a diverse global society.

The graduate of the baccalaureate program is prepared as a generalist who promotes, maintains, and restores the health of individuals, families, and communities/populations across the lifespan through evidence-based practice. The graduate of the master's program is prepared as an advanced generalist nurse with disciplinary knowledge and skill to improve the delivery of care through leadership, mentorship, and evidence-based practice. The graduate of the doctorate in nursing practice program is prepared for the advanced practice role and is eligible for national certification in a specialty area. The graduate of the Ph.D. program is prepared to engage in and contribute to theoretically driven research and scholarship that address significant problems in nursing and health care and to influence policy.

## **CONNELL SCHOOL OF NURSING PHILOSOPHY**

Nursing is the art and science of human caring. The recipients of nursing care are individuals, families, aggregates of people, and communities/populations who are sick and well; culturally and linguistically diverse; within all socioeconomic strata; and at all stages in the life cycle. The study of nursing is based on a common intellectual heritage transmitted by a liberal education and the art and science of nursing. Nursing focuses on the life processes and patterns of the individual in the context of the family and the community and also the health needs of the population. Nursing recognizes the contribution of cultural diversity and social environments to the health/illness beliefs, practices, and behavioral responses of individuals and groups.

Nursing education prepares students for the appropriate level of knowledge and skills by building on the liberal arts and sciences. Nursing curricula are logically ordered to provide core knowledge and opportunity for the application of that knowledge. The preparation for holistic nursing care requires a holistic approach in education, and education is most effective when it involves active participation by the learner. Students are supported in developing clinical skills as well as the ability to think and act ethically. Students are active participants in shaping the learning environment within the Connell School of Nursing.

The Boston College Connell School of Nursing instills the values of service to others, truth through scholarly inquiry, and justice through promoting equal access to care for all people. Service, scholarship, and justice in caring include all people in the global community, particularly the underserved. The faculty believe that promoting the physical, psychological, and spiritual aspects of health are essential to understanding the human dimension of holistic nursing care. Nurses engage in partnerships with individuals and groups to promote and optimize wellness. The nurse respects the uniqueness of the person and the individual's right to choose and actively participate in decisions about health care. Nursing promotes self-determination by empowering clients and advocating for those who cannot do so independently. (rev 4/14)

## **Accreditation & Certification**

The Bachelor of Science, Master of Science, and Doctor of Nursing Practice degrees from the Connell School of Nursing are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). Graduates are eligible to apply to take the certification examinations offered by the credentialing bodies of their specialty.

## **Board of Registration in Nursing Regulation Policies**

### **GRADUATE ADMISSION POLICY**

All graduate nursing students are admitted through the Graduate Programs Office in accordance with the university admission procedures. CSON admits students into a Master of Science degree program, which prepares students as advanced generalist registered nurses. CSON admits students into a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree program, which prepares students as advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs), including nurse practitioner and certified registered nurse anesthetists.

The graduate admission process at Boston College is highly selective. A holistic review of applications for admission, ensuring that all aspects of candidates' applications are carefully considered, is utilized. While academic preparation is the most important factor considered, admission decisions are made holistically. A wide range of criteria are considered including, but not limited to: academic performance, the rigor of applicants' prior college transcripts, performance on standardized tests, leadership, recommendations, co-curricular involvement, work experience, potential for future success, and when appropriate, the ability to succeed despite facing significant obstacles or hardships.

Candidates are required to submit an application through the online application system, college transcripts, letters of recommendation, two completed essays, and standardized test scores when applicable. Each DNP applicant selects an advanced practice specialty (NP/CRNA) at the time of application to the DNP program. Advanced Generalist Nursing programs (RN prepared applicants) admit candidates twice each year (fall and spring). Post-Baccalaureate DNP programs admit candidates twice each year (fall and spring). CRNA applicants are required to have a minimum of one-year of critical care nursing experience and current PALS, ACLS, and CCRN certifications. These candidates are admitted one time each year (summer). The Direct Entry program admits candidates one time each year (fall).

All candidates must comply with the immunization requirements specified by the [Massachusetts Department of Public Health](#). Official high/secondary school transcripts are required for admitted master's entry students prior to matriculation.

For international students who do not speak English as their primary language, the recommended minimum English language proficiency scores are 100 on the TOEFL and 7.5 on the IELTS. Candidates must include evaluations and translations, when necessary, of International transcripts.

Boston College does not set its level of selectivity; the size and quality of the applicant pool does. Therefore, decisions are made after all applications have been fully evaluated. This ensures that decisions are equitable and consistent within the context of our highly competitive pool.

CSON faculty have developed technical standards competency domains that they believe to be necessary for participation and success in clinical education with or without reasonable accommodations.

The Assistant Dean of Graduate Enrollment, Student Services, and Financial Aid along with full-time faculty members, who serve as graduate program directors, work collaboratively and are in frequent communication during the admission cycles to ensure that the academic quality and preparation of incoming students meets the faculty's expectations and standards.

Candidates are notified of admission decisions by the Assistant Dean of Graduate Enrollment, Student Services, and Financial Aid at the Connell School of Nursing.

#### VETERAN AND ROTC APPLICANTS

Boston College encourages veterans and individuals considering a career in the armed forces to apply. We value the perspective gained through military experience and the benefits for our campus community when veterans become students. The Connell School of Nursing Graduate Programs adhere to all [university policies regarding veterans and ROTC applicants](#).

### **Graduate Academic Standard Policies**

The CSON Academic Standards Review Committee (ASRC) is a committee composed of CSON faculty and staff and an external representative to CSON, from the Division of Student Affairs within the University. The ASRC is advisory to the Dean. ASRC voting members are elected by the faculty. Elected members on the committee shall serve for a 2-year term and may be reelected for one additional consecutive 2-year term.

The committee membership will consist of the following persons:

Voting Members:

- Committee Chair, Faculty
- Four additional CSON full-time faculty members representing both Professors of the Practice and Tenure-Track Faculty

Advisory Members (Non-Voting):

- Associate Dean Inclusive Excellence, Diversity, and Belonging
- Associate Dean Student Outreach and Support, Division of Student Affairs
- Assistant Dean, Undergraduate Student Services

- Assistant Dean, Graduate Student Services

The ASRC will meet at the end of each semester and summer term to review the records of CSON students with course failures, course deficiencies, and low GPAs. The Committee may also meet at any time during the academic year in exigent circumstances upon faculty request (i.e., unprofessional conduct or clinical safety concerns, student grievance). Students will be notified before undergoing Committee review. This Committee makes recommendations about progression in the program and or academic standing in accordance with the policies described below and other relevant University policies.

Graduate students are expected to maintain good academic standing at all times, as detailed below, and progress through their program of study in accordance with program standards and performance expectations. Students who do not meet the required minimum grades, and are not in good academic standing, or are not progressing are subject to review by the Graduate Academic Standards Review Committee.

### GRADE POINT AVERAGE

All graduate students in the Connell School of Nursing are expected to earn minimum marks of B- across all graduate coursework, with the exception of those listed in the Pre-licensure Coursework policy, below.

### PRE-LICENSURE COURSEWORK

If a student receives a grade of B- (80%) or above in a pre-licensure course they will pass the course. If a graduate student receives a C (74-79%) on a NURS pre-licensure course (listed below), the Graduate Academic Standards Review Committee will be convened to hear the case.

- NURS 8000 Direct Entry Clinical Pharmacology
- NURS 8004 Direct Entry Adult Nursing Clinical with laboratory
- NURS 8005 Direct Entry Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing Theory
- NURS 8006 Direct Entry Psychiatric Mental Health Clinical
- NURS 8007 Direct Entry Child Health Theory
- NURS 8008 Direct Entry Child Clinical
- NURS 8009 Direct Entry Childbearing Theory
- NURS 8010 Direct Entry Childbearing Clinical
- NURS 8011 Nursing Synthesis Practicum
- NURS 8012 Population Health Clinical
- NURS 8013 Direct Entry Adult Health Theory

The Graduate Academic Standards Review Committee will determine the best course of action. The student will be placed on academic notice and remedial steps may require the graduate student to:

- Contact the Connors Learning Center to receive support and/or tutoring;
- Achieve >83 on a course-specific NCLEX preparation platform approved by the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Faculty Development

If a graduate student receives a failing grade F (< 74%) on a NURS pre-licensure course or strategically withdraws from the course (i.e., withdraws from the course on a date later than the course withdrawal deadline to avoid failure from the course), the Graduate Academic Standards Review Committee will be convened to hear the case and determine the best course of action. The student will be placed on academic notice and at minimum, be required to retake the course before advancing in the curriculum. Students have only one opportunity to repeat a nursing course after course failure or strategically withdrawing from the course. All above NURS courses must be taken at Boston College.

### GRADUATE COURSEWORK



The minimum acceptable passing grade for graduate courses (other than the NURS pre-licensure courses listed above) is a B- (80%). If a student receives a grade below B- in any graduate course other than the above NURS pre-licensure courses or strategically withdraws from a course, the Graduate Academic Standards Review Committee will be convened to hear the case. The student will be placed on academic notice and at minimum, be required to retake the course before advancing in the curriculum. Graduate students have only one opportunity to repeat a nursing course after strategically withdrawing from the course or not achieving a B- (80%).

If a graduate student has more than one grade below B- (80%), more than one strategic withdrawal, or a combination of a grade below a B- and a strategic withdrawal (in any graduate nursing course other than the pre-licensure courses listed above), the Graduate Academic Standards Review Committee will be convened to hear the case and determine the best course of action, including up to dismissal from the nursing program.

Any graduate student who, by the faculty's evaluation, is deemed to have engaged in unsafe clinical practice or who otherwise demonstrates unprofessional conduct in the clinical setting, will be removed from the setting immediately. These behaviors are grounds for failure in any clinical course. In such cases, the Graduate Academic Standards Review Committee will be convened to hear the case and determine the best course of action, including up to dismissal from the program.

If a graduate student demonstrates unprofessional conduct in the classroom and/or interactions with BC faculty or staff, or engages in academic dishonesty and/or other ethical violations, including in the conduct of academic research, they will be reviewed by Graduate Academic Standards Review Committee to hear the case and determine the best course of action, including up to dismissal from the program.

The ASRC Chair will notify the student of the outcome of academic review within five (5) business days of the committee meeting. A student may communicate a formal appeal of the ASRC decision to the Associate Dean for Student Services if they believe there has been a procedural violation, a mistake of fact, or an arbitrary or unethical evaluation. The Associate Dean for Student Services will notify the relevant Department Chair of the appeal and the Department Chair will initiate the process of independent review. The relevant Department Chair will be determined by the program of study in which the student is enrolled (i.e. baccalaureate, graduate direct-entry, graduate post-baccalaureate, PhD).

Graduate students who are on notice are not eligible for teaching assistantships, research assistantships, fellowships and/or any type of merit-based tuition remission award.

#### CSON CLASS and CLINICAL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Graduate students are expected to attend classes regularly, take tests, and submit assignments at the times specified by the professors on the course syllabi. For any absence, students must still meet all course requirements and learning objectives. Attendance in nursing class, clinical, simulation, and lab is expected for all students. Excused absences include student illness, bereavement for an immediate family member, military obligations, or religious observances. Students who anticipate military and religious absences should notify the faculty at the beginning of the semester so accommodations can be made to complete the learning objectives in a timely way. Students are required to communicate an unexpected absence no later than two hours before class or clinical in the method requested by the faculty.

#### GRADUATE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND PATIENT SAFETY POLICIES

Should a student become aware of a risk to patient safety, the student **MUST IMMEDIATELY** report this to their preceptor, the clinical coordinator, and program administration. There are **NO** exceptions to this policy.

Unsafe clinical practice and/or unprofessional conduct are grounds for failure in any clinical course and may result in immediate removal from the clinical site. Students who demonstrate unsafe or unprofessional conduct in a clinical laboratory or clinical practice site will undergo review by the Academic Standards Review Committee and may be dismissed from the program. Students may also be immediately removed from the clinical site, undergo review by the Academic Standards Review Committee and/or be dismissed from the program under the following conditions:

1. Clinical performance endangering patient safety;
2. Use of drugs / alcohol rendering the student unfit for safe and competent clinical performance and endangering patient safety;
3. Physical health and/or mental health problems rendering the student unfit for safe and competent clinical performance and endangering patient safety;
4. Unprofessional behavior in the clinical setting; and /or
  - a. Expected ethical behavior in clinical situations is based on the American Nurses' Association Code of Ethics for Nurses (ANA, 2001, 2010, 2015). Students are expected to protect patients' confidentiality at all times, and to be honest in any documentation regarding the patient's condition and their own assessments and interventions. Students are expected to maintain high professional standards, including being physically, intellectually, emotionally, and academically prepared when caring for patients. Unprofessional conduct is considered serious and may result in dismissal from the school.
5. Behavior that violates the ANA Code of Ethics for Nurses.

#### COURSE EXEMPTION POLICY

The Direct Entry program is an accelerated and intensive curriculum that prepares graduates to practice as registered nurses and/or advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) in the nurse practitioner role. Due to the specific course work and sequencing required to complete the pre-licensure components of the program, course exemptions are not allowed in the pre-licensure master's program. Students who hold a graduate degree from another accredited university, may waive a course in the post-licensure component of the Direct Entry program if they have previously completed an equivalent course. (See Transfer of Credits policy, pp 10)

#### ADVANCED PLACEMENT POLICY

Graduate students, including students enrolled in the Direct Entry program, may not waive graduate course work based on previously completed Advanced Placement course work and/or examinations.

#### TRANSFER / OPT-OUT POLICY

Matriculated graduate students may request permission to transfer up to 6 credits of graduate course work completed at another regionally accredited graduate university.

To request to have an outside course considered for transfer, the student must email a copy of the course description for electives and course syllabus for core courses to the graduate office. To be considered for transfer, the course must meet all of the following criteria:

- i) the course was completed within the past five years.
- ii) the course was not applied to a prior degree\*
- iii) the student earned a grade of 80% (B-) or better in the course.
- iv) the CSON TOR and Associate Dean of Academics deem the course equivalent.
- v) excludes any clinical courses or practica, including but not limited to, pre-clinical courses such as Health Assessment and Advanced Pharmacotherapeutics

*\*if the course was applied to a prior degree, the student may be approved to Opt-Out of the course, and would have to replace the credits with elective credits.*

If approved for course transfer, the student must submit an official transcript documenting a grade of 80% (B-) or better to the graduate office for processing. The transfer course and credit will be recorded on the student's transcript after the completion of one full semester at Boston College. Once matriculated, only graduate courses taken at Boston College (or consortium) will count towards degree requirements. Core courses (i.e., Boston College Graduate nursing courses) that were taken prior to matriculation may be considered on a case-by-case basis (i.e. an Ethics course completed at BC).

### EDUCATIONAL MOBILITY

The RN-MS, Advanced Generalist program is designed for associate's prepared registered nurses without a BSN, who wish to earn an MS degree as an advanced nursing generalist.

RN-MS students undergo an educational portfolio review at the time of application and a plan of study is developed. There is no set plan of study for the RN-MS program; students may choose to complete the program on a part-time or full-time basis.

Prior to matriculation, RN-MS students must hold a valid RN license in Massachusetts, have completed required prerequisite courses and have completed the equivalent of approximately 100 – 120 college credits. Completion of prerequisite nursing, science and liberal arts courses establishes baccalaureate level competencies as the basis for master's education.

Based upon the educational portfolio review and professional experience, students may be required to enroll in bridge courses prior to enrolling in MS courses. After fulfilling pre-requisite and bridge coursework, RN-MS students complete the master's degree in the same sequence and in the same courses as other master's students.

Completion of the RN-MS program results in the awarding of the MS degree in Nursing.

Additional related information can be found in the Transfer and Course Exemption policies.

The RN-DNP program is designed for registered nurses without a BSN degree (with or without a baccalaureate degree in another field), who wish to earn a DNP degree and become nurse practitioners in one of the five clinical specialty programs offered: Adult-Gerontology (primary care), Family (primary care), Pediatric (primary care), Psychiatric-Mental Health, and Women's Health.

RN-DNP students undergo an educational portfolio review at the time of application and a plan of study is developed. There is no set plan of study for the RN-DNP program; students may choose to complete the program on a part-time or full-time basis, depending on clinical availability.

Prior to matriculation, RN-DNP students must hold a valid RN license in Massachusetts, have completed required prerequisite courses and have completed the equivalent of approximately 100 – 120 college credits. Completion of prerequisite nursing, science and liberal arts courses establishes baccalaureate level competencies as the basis for the study of advanced practice nursing.

Based upon the educational portfolio review and professional experience, students may be required to enroll in bridge courses prior to enrolling in DNP courses. After fulfilling pre-requisite and bridge coursework, RN-DNP students complete the master's degree in the same sequence and in the same courses as other DNP students.

Completion of the RN-DNP program results in the awarding of the Doctor of Nursing Practice degree; students are eligible to sit for the NP certification examination in their clinical specialty.

Additional related information can be found in the Transfer and Course Exemption policies.

#### GRADUATE STUDENT PARENTAL & ADOPTION ACCOMMODATION POLICY

Boston College recognizes the importance of family obligations to its graduate students. Any full-time graduate student in good academic standing who is the parent of a newborn child or an adoptive child under the age of 13 newly placed in the home is eligible for an accommodation. This student accommodation is not an employee medical leave or a leave of absence from the academic program.

Following the birth of a child, a graduate student who is the parent of the child is eligible for an accommodation extending for a period of up to twelve consecutive weeks. A graduate student who is the parent of an adoptive child under the age of 13 newly placed in the home is eligible for an accommodation extending for a period of up to twelve consecutive weeks immediately following the placement of the child in the home. The accommodation must be taken within the 12-month period following birth or placement of the child.

During the accommodation period, the graduate student will be relieved of the service requirements that accompany his or her funding. During the remainder of the semester (before and/or after the accommodation period), the student's program will assign service duties consistent with the academic nature of a graduate assistantship.

During the accommodation period, the graduate student may attend classes and work on course assignments to the extent possible. The student and graduate program director should work with the professors in these courses to adjust, to the extent reasonably possible, attendance requirements, assignment deadlines, and exam dates during the accommodation period. Graduate program directors and professors should work with graduate students to establish appropriate timetables for completing course work and exams during the semester in which the accommodation is taken.

Funding provided by the University, including funding for health insurance, will continue during the accommodation period. In addition:

- The accommodation policy will not extend the total number of years of funding available to a student.
- Students who receive an accommodation under this policy will receive automatically a one semester extension to their maximum time to complete their degree for every childbirth or adoption placement. Total extensions invoked under this policy will ordinarily not exceed a year.
- For students with 9-month stipends, funding is for the academic year only.

Students funded by government grants or other external sources must follow the policies of their funding agency. If external funding is suspended or reduced during the accommodation period, the University will assume funding responsibility for the accommodation period. Details of the arrangement should be worked out in writing between the student, graduate program director and the Associate Dean for Graduate Academic Affairs, and reported to the Vice Provost for Faculties before the accommodation period begins.

Graduate students anticipating a childbirth or adoption accommodation must notify their advisor and submit a written request to their graduate program director and the Associate Dean. The Associate Dean will inform the Vice Provost for Faculties of all such requests. Requests for accommodation should be made as soon as practicable and ideally no less than three months before the expected start of the accommodation period in order to allow appropriate arrangements to be made to cover any teaching,

teaching assistantship, or research responsibilities. Departments are encouraged to work out specific arrangements with students, on a case-by-case basis, within the broad framework of this policy.

#### WITHDRAWAL FROM A COURSE

The last date for withdrawal from a course is specified on the academic calendar each semester. Students are not permitted to drop courses during the last three (3) weeks of classes or during the exam period. A withdrawal during the last three (3) weeks or withdrawing from a course to avoid failure is considered a “strategic withdrawal” (see academic standards review policy). Graduate students may only repeat a course once.

#### WITHDRAWAL FROM BOSTON COLLEGE

Graduate and professional students who wish to withdraw from Boston College in good standing are required to submit an online Withdrawal Form, found on the [Academic Forms](#) page of the Student Services website, which will be routed to the appropriate Associate Dean’s Office for review and processing. In the case of students who are dismissed for academic or disciplinary reasons, the Associate Dean will process the withdrawal.

#### READMISSION POLICIES

Graduate student readmission will be granted in accordance with university policies.

#### STUDENT RIGHTS AND GRIEVANCES

In some cases, a student’s grievance may be more appropriately addressed by another University grievance procedure. Students should pursue the matter through that procedure. For example, if the student believes that they have experienced discriminatory harassment, the student should follow the discriminatory harassment policies described in the University Policy against Discriminatory Harassment in the Boston College Policies and Procedure Manual.

#### ACADEMIC EVALUATION DISPUTES/GRIEVANCES

Instructors are expected to provide a syllabus specifying due dates for assignments and examinations and the weight given to each course component in determining the final grade. The instructor has the right to determine which course components will be graded and the weight that will be given to each. Students who believe that they have been graded unfairly should first meet with the instructor, bring a copy of the paper, exam, or other evaluation in question, and request an explanation for the grade.

Students should communicate with the faculty member involved as soon as possible, but no later than the close of the semester immediately following the semester in which the action giving rise to the complaint occurred. The faculty member should communicate within two weeks of the student’s request to discuss the dispute.

If such a discussion results in a mutually acceptable resolution, the matter will be considered closed. It is recommended that the resolution be documented in a signed written statement that is retained by both parties. This written statement should be completed no later than two weeks after the mutually acceptable resolution has been reached. If the instructor and student are unable to resolve their differences the student may pursue a grievance via the ASRC process. The student may notify the Associate Dean for Student Services to initiate the process.

If a mutually acceptable remedy cannot be achieved, the faculty member involved will notify the ASRC Chair in writing of the dispute and pertinent information within one (1) week. Within one (1) week of receiving this communication, the ASRC Chair will outreach to the student to request a written statement regarding their grievance. The student will have one (1) week following outreach from the ASRC Chair to

submit a written statement explaining their grievance. The ASRC will review materials submitted by all parties and render a written decision within two (2) weeks.

#### APPEAL OF ACADEMIC STANDARDS REVIEW COMMITTEE DECISION

The student has the right to request an appeal in cases where they can identify that there has been a procedural violation or a demonstrable mistake of fact. A written petition of appeal must be submitted by the student to the Associate Dean for Student Services within thirty (30) days of written notification of the ASRC decision. The petition should succinctly state all facts relevant to procedural violations or factual errors and clearly specify the nature of the complaint and the remedy requested. The Associate Dean for Student Services will notify the appropriate CSON Department Chair.

The CSON Department Chair will appoint an Ad Hoc Appeals Committee to review the decision. The Ad Hoc Committee shall be composed of three faculty members (not members of the ASRC). The Department Chair will provide oversight but will not be a voting member. In the event that the student's Department Chair, advisor, preceptor, Dean or Associate Dean is a party to the grievance that person should recuse themselves from considering the matter, and the appropriate administrator will identify a replacement to serve in that role. The final decision regarding the Ad Hoc Committee membership rests with the Department Chair.

The Department Chair and Ad Hoc Committee will receive from the ASRC Chair all materials that the ASRC reviewed to make its decision. The Ad Hoc Committee members may request additional materials that they deem necessary to conduct an independent review of the process and circumstances. The Ad Hoc Committee will conduct an independent review of the appeal, which will include meeting with the student to discuss the grievance, the faculty, and other individuals involved. In presenting to the Ad Hoc Committee, the student shall introduce material of a substantiating nature and may request additional information from specific sources or individuals having knowledge relevant to the issue under appeal.

Within thirty (30) days of receiving the formal appeal, the Ad Hoc Committee will provide a written statement of the committee's resolution of the matter to the Associate Dean for Student Services and the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Faculty Development. The Associate Dean for Student Services will share the Ad Hoc Committee's written decision with the student. The Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Faculty Development will share the written decision with the faculty against whom the grievance was brought.

Confidentiality of the student(s) and faculty members(s) involved should be maintained at all times.

If the student is dissatisfied with the decision of the Ad Hoc Committee, the student may submit a written appeal to the Dean. The appeal must be submitted as soon as possible but no later than thirty (30) days after the student has received the written decision of the Ad Hoc Committee.

A formal appeal to the Dean consists of a written explanation of the appeal, which should include the reasons the student believes that there was a procedural violation or a demonstrable mistake of fact (e.g. the faculty member's or preceptor's evaluation was arbitrary, unethical, or based on extrinsic error) and the reasons why previous decisions were not satisfactory. Copies of the decisions made by the ASRC and the Ad Hoc Committee will be forwarded to the Dean for their consideration in this review of the student's appeal. Within thirty (30) days of receipt of the student's appeal, the Dean will render a decision. The decision of the Dean is final, and will be communicated to the student in writing, with copies to the person(s) against whom the grievance was brought, and the CSON Department Chair and Associate Deans.

## **Related Policies**

### **POLICY ON NOT REGISTERED (NR) STUDENTS**

Matriculated students who are not registered for a course during a given semester must complete a leave of absence or withdrawal form and return it to the Graduate Programs Office. Failure to do so may result in the university deactivating the student's enrollment and their dismissal from the program. Graduate forms can be found here:

[https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/offices/student-services/registrar/academic-forms.html#tab-graduate\\_forms](https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/offices/student-services/registrar/academic-forms.html#tab-graduate_forms)

### **LEAVE OF ABSENCE (LOA)**

Graduate students enrolled in a degree program who do not register for course work, doctoral advisement, or doctoral continuation in any given semester must request a leave of absence (LOA) for that semester. LOAs are granted for one semester at a time. Students may complete a Leave of Absence request form online at

[https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/offices/student-services/registrar/academic-forms.html#tab-graduate\\_forms](https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/offices/student-services/registrar/academic-forms.html#tab-graduate_forms)

which will be routed to the Graduate Programs Office for the Associate Dean of Student Services approval. Leave time will be considered a portion of the total time limit for the degree unless due to active military service.

Students must meet any conditions specified for return from an LOA. Students on LOA must still follow procedures and deadlines for initiating the placement process for clinical courses; clinical placements will be on a space available basis. Students must notify the Graduate Programs Office by March 1st for a Fall return, or September 1st for a Spring return.

When a student takes an LOA from Boston College for health reasons, returning to Boston College requires a review by Dr. Craig Burns (Director of University Counseling Services at 617-552-3310) and/or Dr. Douglas Comeau (Director of University Health Services and Primary Care Sports Medicine at 617-552-3225), as appropriate. The review is conducted by University personnel in order to ensure that the student is best positioned for success in order to complete the academic program. This review by Dr. Burns and/or Dr. Comeau will be shared with the Associate Dean of Student Services, who will then determine readmission

### **GRADUATION**

The University awards degrees in May, August and December; commencement ceremonies are held only in May.

### **MAY GRADUATION**

Graduate degrees are awarded at the annual May commencement. Students who plan to graduate in May should file a graduation form (online) by the deadline stated in the academic calendar (usually early in February). Students who sign up for graduation but do not graduate on the anticipated date are automatically moved to the next scheduled graduation period by the registrar's office.

Diplomas are distributed to individual students at the Connell School of Nursing ceremony immediately following the completion of the university commencement exercises. Diplomas will be mailed to students unable to attend commencement. Diplomas or transcripts will not be awarded or issued until all degree credits have been recorded on the student's permanent record and all accounts and fees have been paid.

### **AUGUST AND DECEMBER GRADUATIONS**

Graduate students who have completed all degree requirements by August 30th or December 30th are eligible to receive their degree as of those dates. The procedure is the same as for May graduation. Since

there are no commencement exercises in December or August, the names of those receiving degrees will be included in the Boston College program for the following May commencement. Those students who would like to participate in the May ceremonies must notify the Graduate Programs Office by January 15th.

## **Academic Policies & Procedures**

### **FACULTY**

Faculty may be full-time or part-time. Most full-time faculty teach in more than one level of the program. **Teachers of Record (TOR)** are faculty who are responsible for coordinating faculty and student activities within a course. Their areas of responsibility include the course syllabus, compiling exams, and computing grades.

### **COMMUNICATIONS**

The Graduate Programs Office uses BC email for all communications. Upon admission, every student receives a BC email address. Students must activate their BC email address in order to receive important announcements. All students are responsible for checking their BC email routinely. Students can visit <http://g.bc.edu> to log in to the BC email account. Students may forward their email messages from their University e-mail accounts to non-university e-mail systems. In such cases, students shall be solely responsible for all consequences arising from such forwarding arrangements, including any failure by the non-university system to deliver or retain official University communications. Students should send test messages to and from their University e-mail account on a regular basis, to confirm that their email service is functioning reliably.

Each faculty member and staff member has voicemail and email. Each faculty or staff person at BC can be reached via email. Email addresses may be obtained by searching the directory on Agora (<https://services.bc.edu/directorysearch/search!displayInput.action>)

### **ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY**

Students are expected to maintain high standards of integrity in both the academic and clinical settings. CSON adheres to the Boston College policies surrounding academic integrity. This policy is outlined in the Boston College catalog. The catalog may be accessed online at [Policies and Procedures - University Catalog - Boston College \(bc.edu\)](#).

Expected ethical behavior in clinical situations is based on the American Nurses' Association Code of Ethics for Nurses (ANA, 2001, 2010, 2015). Students are expected to protect patients' confidentiality at all times, and to be honest in any documentation regarding the patient's condition and their own assessments and interventions. Students are expected to maintain high professional standards, including being physically, intellectually, emotionally, and academically prepared when caring for patients. Unprofessional conduct is considered serious and may result in dismissal from the school.

### **RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF SCIENCE**

Scientific integrity, the conscious adherence to a set of ethical principles, is the hallmark of all scholarly disciplines, including nursing. Boston College is guided by the ethical principles regarding all research involving human subjects. Graduate students in the Connell School of Nursing who plan to conduct research with humans or material of human origins must submit their research proposals to the Boston College Institutional Review Board (BCIRB) for review and approval prior to carrying out the project. See the website:

<https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/research/sites/vice-provost-for-research/research-protections.html>.



### GRADUATE CONSORTIUM

Graduate students in the Connell School of Nursing may cross register for one (1) course each semester (fall/spring) at Boston University, Brandeis, or Tufts. Cross registration information can be found at <https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/offices/student-services/registrar/course-registration/cross-registration.html>. Prior approval by the host institution is necessary. Students should consult with the appropriate BC consortium liaison at the host school about cross registration. Before registering for courses in the consortium, students are required to seek approval from their academic advisor and the associate dean for student services. Cross registration is not available during the summer sessions.

### GRADUATE CONSORTIUM IN WOMEN'S STUDIES

The Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies is an inter-institutional enterprise established to advance the field of women's studies and enlarge the scope of graduate education through new models of team teaching and interdisciplinary study. Faculty and students are drawn from nine member schools: Boston College, Boston University, Brandeis University, Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Northeastern University, Simmons University, Tufts University and the University of Massachusetts Boston. Graduate students enrolled in degree programs at Boston College may with the permission of their department apply to participate in this program. For more information go to <http://mit.edu/gcws>.

### COURTEOUS CELL PHONE USE

Out of respect for faculty and fellow students, please turn off your cell phones in class. If you need to be available in case of personal or professional emergencies, please adhere to the following guidelines:

- Put your phone on a vibrate setting
- Sit near the door
- If you receive a call, immediately exit the classroom and answer the call well out of earshot of classrooms and offices

Students should not use cell phones in the clinical setting.

### EXAMS AND QUIZZES

Students are responsible for taking all tests, quizzes, and examinations when they are given and have no inherent right as students to be given a make-up examination. Therefore, students should pay special attention to the announced dates and double check the time, date, and place of all examinations.

If a student anticipates missing an exam, they should contact the professor in advance and ask if she or he will discuss options. Any arrangements must be worked out between the faculty member and the student.

### LOST WORK

It is the student's responsibility to see that the faculty member receives the work submitted. Students should always make a copy of a paper or project before submitting it, especially if mailing it or leaving it at a department office. If a student does not receive the graded work back on time or if there is any doubt as to whether it has been received, it is prudent to check with the faculty member immediately.

### GRADING

In each course in which the student registers for graduate credit, the student will receive one of the following grades at the end of the semester: A, A-, B+, B, B-, C, or F. For further information, please refer to the Graduate Academic Standard Policy section.

The following scale is used in graduate courses in the Connell School of Nursing:

A 94-100 %

A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C	74-79
F	Below 74

### INCOMPLETE GRADES

All required work in any course must be completed by the date set by the course faculty member. A student who has not completed the research or written work for a course, may, with adequate reason and at the discretion of the faculty member, receive an “I” (incomplete). All of the course requirements for an incomplete course must be completed, and the “I” grade resolved, within the deadlines set forth by the university (March 1st for fall courses; August 1st for spring courses; October 1st for summer courses). After these deadlines, the “I” grade will convert to an “F” grade. Any exceptions must be approved by the Associate Dean for Student Services.

All courses must be successfully completed and all incomplete course grades must be resolved in order for students to be eligible to complete the clinical practicum sequence. Students must successfully complete any pre-requisite course (and all of the requirements within that course) before being allowed to enroll in a subsequent course for which the incomplete course was a prerequisite. Students may not enroll in a graduate course while they have an “I” (incomplete) in a prerequisite course.

### LATE PAPERS/RESEARCH PROJECTS AND EXAMINATIONS

Students are responsible for submitting all work for a course to the faculty member by the specified deadline and taking examinations at their scheduled time and location (except as arranged in advance for specific learning needs). Professors are not obliged to accept any work beyond the deadline or to grant extensions. Any requests for extensions must be made prior to the original due date. All arrangements for submission of the work must be negotiated directly between the faculty member and the student. Students who anticipate a conflict with a scheduled examination should notify the Teacher of Record as soon as possible prior to the scheduled exam. Faculty members are not obliged to provide early or late exams. Make-up examinations will be given at the discretion of the faculty and only under extreme circumstances. Students who do not show up for a scheduled examination without prior notification to the teacher of record will receive a grade of “0” for the exam.

### ACADEMIC EVALUATION DISPUTES

Students have the right to know the components of a course on which the final grade will be based, to be graded fairly, and to understand why a particular grade was given. The faculty member has the right to determine which course components will be graded and the weight that will be given to each, the right to determine the grading scale to be employed, and has a responsibility to grade students consistently on that scale. Faculty are also expected to provide a syllabus for each course, specifying dates for assignments and examinations, and the weight given to each course component in determining the final grade, as well as objectives for the course. If a student feels, in light of the above, that a grade is unfair, the student should first make an appointment to see the professor, bring a copy of the paper or exam in question, and request that the faculty explain why and how the grade was determined. If, after discussing the grade with the faculty member, the student still feels the grade is unfair, the student may appeal through the process detailed in the Graduate Coursework section within the Graduate Academic Standard Policy.

### TIME LIMITS

Students in the MS program have five (5) years from initial enrollment to complete their program of study.

Students in the DNP and Ph.D. program have eight (8) years from initial enrollment to complete all degree requirements, including defending and submitting the final version of the dissertation.

Graduate students who exceed the program time limits or who fail to make progress towards their degree will be reviewed by the Academic Standards Review Committee and may be subject to dismissal from the program.

### ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT

It is the student's responsibility to take advantage of the advisement process. Each student is assigned to an academic advisor. Students are expected to meet with their advisors on a regular basis, keep their advisors informed about their academic progress and seek assistance with problems in a timely manner. Advisor information is available on the Agora Portal.

### SUMMER SESSIONS

The Connell School of Nursing normally offers graduate courses\* during Summer terms.

\*Courses with fewer than 10 students enrolled may be canceled.

## **Financial Aid**

### FINANCIAL AWARDS

A limited number of Connell School of Nursing partial scholarships are available in the form of tuition remission and endowment scholarships. Financial awards are contingent upon compliance with all academic standards and regulations. See the CSON website (<https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/schools/cson/admission-aid/tuition-aid.html>) for additional information about external sources of scholarships and financial aid.

### TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS (TA)

Teaching assistants are graduate students enrolled in the Connell School of Nursing who are in good academic standing. The graduate school has a limited number of teaching assistantships available each semester. The teaching assistant (TA), in addition to the student's program of studies, is usually responsible for up to 15 hours per week of teaching/instructional activities in the undergraduate or graduate program performed under the supervision of the course faculty and/or teacher of record. TAs are compensated with a stipend. The Graduate Programs Office will send out applications for TA positions prior to each semester.

### RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIPS (RA)

Research assistantships may be available through faculty grants. The nature and number of hours involved are determined by the faculty member holding the grant. Students who wish to be considered for these opportunities should contact the Office for Nursing Research.

### TUITION REMISSION (TR)

The Graduate Programs Office provides partial tuition remission awards on the basis of merit and/or financial need.

### ENDOWMENT SCHOLARSHIPS

Through generous funding from private endowments, the Connell School of Nursing is able to offer small partial tuition scholarships to the most qualified students who meet the criteria for the specific endowment scholarship. The Graduate Programs Office will distribute applications for endowment scholarships.

### PROCEDURES FOR FINANCIAL AID RECIPIENTS

An aid recipient who wishes to relinquish an assistantship or a tuition scholarship must report this matter in writing to the Associate Dean of Student Services. These awards may be discontinued at any time during an academic year if either the academic performance or in-service assistance is unsatisfactory. They may also be discontinued for unprofessional conduct or conduct injurious to the reputation of the University.

#### OTHER SOURCES OF FINANCIAL AID

Students interested in other sources of financial aid, such as work-study funds and various loan programs, should inquire at the University Financial Aid Office where all such aid is administered. Students receiving loans are expected to meet their ethical, legal and professional responsibilities in repayment of these loans. Another useful website for scholarship information is [www.discovernursing.com](http://www.discovernursing.com). Information about university-wide teaching or graduate assistantships may also be available through the Murray Graduate Center website: [Murray House - Graduate Student Life - Boston College \(bc.edu\)](http://Murray House - Graduate Student Life - Boston College (bc.edu))

### **Additional Resources**

Information about activities and resources for graduate students across the university is located at the Graduate Student Life website: [Home - Graduate Student Life - Boston College \(bc.edu\)](http://Home - Graduate Student Life - Boston College (bc.edu))

#### GRADUATE NURSES ASSOCIATION (GNA)

The Graduate Nurses Association (GNA) meets regularly in the Connell School of Nursing to provide a forum for concerns and interests of graduate students. They sponsor coffee hours, luncheons and other social events so that graduate students can interact with each other and with faculty on an informal basis. The GNA also hosts a graduate student banquet prior to May commencement for graduating students and their families. They are also involved in a variety of projects to help fund various groups in the community. The GNA office can be reached at [bcgradnurses@bc.edu](mailto:bcgradnurses@bc.edu). The GNA has membership in the GSA and two members of the GNA are appointed to represent graduate nursing students at GSA meetings and activities.

### **UNIVERSITY RESOURCES**

#### THE LIBRARIES

The Boston College Libraries offer a wealth of resources and services to support the teaching and research activities of the University. The book collections exceed 2 million volumes, and approximately 21,000 serial titles are currently received. Special collections for nursing are housed in the Mary Pekariski Nursing Archives in Burns Library and include: nursing ethics, nursing history, and the recently acquired collections of the North American Nursing Diagnosis Association (NANDA) and the American Association of Nursing Attorneys.

Membership in two academic consortia, the Boston Library Consortium and the Boston Theological Institute, adds a greater dimension to the resources of the Boston College Libraries, providing Boston College faculty and graduate students who have special research needs access to the millions of volumes and other services of the member institutions. Through membership in New England Library Information Network (NELINET), students have online access to publishing, cataloging, and interlibrary loan location from the OCLC, Inc. database, which contains over 36 million records from the Library of Congress and from more than 25,000 contributing institutions worldwide.

Boston College Libraries is a member of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL). Boston College was among the first schools in the country to offer an online public computer catalog of its collections.

The libraries' computerized system provides instant access to information on library holdings, as well as supporting book circulation and acquisitions' procedures. Students may browse the catalog using video display terminals in all the libraries, and may access the catalog via computer from their homes or offices at [www.bc.edu/libraries](http://www.bc.edu/libraries). In addition, the libraries offer computer searching of hundreds of commercial databases in the humanities, sciences, business, and social sciences through an in-house CD-ROM network, through access to outside databases, and through the library computerized system. Access to an increasing number of full-text journals is also available online.

Information on use of the libraries is contained in the Guide to the Boston College Libraries, on the Boston College website, and other brochures available in the libraries. There is a reference librarian assigned to each discipline. The reference librarian for nursing is listed in the Important Contacts section. Students should arrange for orientation to the library resources through the many library offerings provided.

#### MURRAY GRADUATE STUDENT CENTER

The John Courtney Murray, S.J. Graduate Student Center is a facility established to meet the needs of graduate students. It is located across Beacon Street at 292 Hammond Street. The Murray Graduate Student Center provides opportunities to gather for discussion, reflection, presentations, meals, and social functions. It offers a computer lab with PCs and Macs, study rooms with network stations, network activated jacks and wireless network connections for laptop computers, and an administrative staff to act as advocates for all graduate students. The Murray Graduate Student Center also serves as a coordinating center for graduate student groups such as the Graduate Student Association, Graduate International Student Association, and the Graduate AHANA Student Association. To reserve space for graduate events or for more information, please see the Murray Graduate Student Center website [Home - Graduate Student Life - Boston College \(bc.edu\)](#) or call 617-552-1851.

#### STUDENT LOUNGES

Students may use student lounges in all Boston College buildings. Students are able to book study rooms in O'Neill Library or in the Murray Graduate Student Center for small group study.

The simulation laboratory in Maloney Hall is a state-of-the art facility in which students may learn and practice a variety of nursing skills. This may be used by students as part of their coursework. The nursing student lounge is located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of Maloney Hall and is available for use by all undergraduate and graduate students. The lounge houses a printer, two small refrigerators and a microwave, as well as student lockers. If students are interested, they can reserve a locker through the Graduate Programs Office; lockers are first-come, first-serve and may be reserved for a full academic year.

#### WIRELESS NETWORK

The wireless network at Boston College provides laptop users with the flexibility to access the network from many points on campus including libraries, classrooms, dining halls, and even outdoor common areas. The Connell School of Nursing is equipped with a wireless network.

#### CONNORS FAMILY LEARNING CENTER

The Connors Learning Center provides free tutoring to the student body at large, support services to students with learning disabilities or attention deficit disorder, and instructional support for graduate students and faculty. They also assist students who need help improving their writing skills. The Connors Family Learning Center is located on the second floor of the O'Neill Library.

#### AHANA STUDENT PROGRAMS

The goal of this office is to promote the optimal academic achievement of African-American, Hispanic, Asian and Native-American (AHANA) students at Boston College, especially those identified as being at potential academic disadvantage. Services available include tutorial assistance, academic advisement, individual and group counseling, tracking of academic performance, and career counseling. In addition to these services, the office assists AHANA student organizations in developing and implementing cultural programs. Students can contact the Graduate AHANA Association through the Murray Graduate Student Center.

### CAREER CENTER

The Career Center provides comprehensive resources and information concerning all aspects of career planning and job hunting, which includes providing group and individual assistance in resume writing, interview preparation, and job-hunting strategies. They also offer an on-campus-recruiting program, current job listings and a credentials service. These services are available to graduate and undergraduate students in all schools and concentrations, as well as to alumni.

Graduate students are encouraged to visit the Career Center in Southwell Hall at 38 Commonwealth Avenue, where they can pick up the Center's monthly publications. Students are encouraged to make an appointment through the Career Center's website:

<https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/offices/student-affairs/sites/careers.html>.

### OFFICE OF CAMPUS MINISTRY

The Office of Campus Ministry strives to deepen the faith of Boston College students by offering opportunities to discover, grow, express and celebrate the religious dimensions of their lives in personally relevant ways. In addition, it works to foster justice by developing social awareness and to build a sense of community as a Christian value in the whole University. Chaplains from a variety of faiths are available. Offices are located in McElroy Commons, Room 233.

### UNIVERSITY COUNSELING SERVICES (UCS)

University Counseling Services (UCS) provides counseling and psychological services to the students of Boston College. The goal of UCS is to enable students to develop fully and to make the most of their educational experience. Services available include individual counseling and psychotherapy, group counseling, consultation, evaluation and referral. Students wishing to make an appointment may contact UCS at 617-552-3100 or visit the office in Gasson Hall 001 during regular office hours of Monday through Friday 8:45AM-4:45PM.

### OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT OF STUDENT AFFAIRS (VPSA)

The Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs (VPSA) coordinates the planning, implementation and evaluation of programs and services for graduate student development. This includes overseeing students' clubs and organizations, programming, the Graduate Student Association, alcohol and drug education, off-campus and commuting student affairs, and international student services. The VPSA is also responsible for coordinating policies and procedures concerning student conduct and discipline, and the judicial process. Graduate students can visit the Director of Graduate Life, Dr. Carole Hughes, at the John Courtney Murray, S.J. Graduate Center on 292 Hammond Street or contact via 617-552-1855 or [gsc@bc.edu](mailto:gsc@bc.edu).

### SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Any student who wishes to request reasonable accommodations due to a documented disability should notify the faculty within the first two (2) weeks of a course. For more information regarding services for students with disabilities contact Caroline Davis, Associate Dean, Office of Student Outreach and Support Services ([davisfc@bc.edu](mailto:davisfc@bc.edu)). For more information regarding services for students with learning

disabilities, contact Dr. Kathleen Duggan, Director, Connors Family Learning Center, O'Neill Library ([dugganka@bc.edu](mailto:dugganka@bc.edu)).

### GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION (GSA)

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) of Boston College is an autonomous organization that serves students in the Graduate Schools of Arts and Sciences, Nursing, Social Work, the Lynch Graduate School of Education and the Carroll Graduate School of Management.

The GSA exists to provide academic support to students in the form of conference grants and special group funding, to host social, cultural and academic programs for graduates, and to inform the graduate community of matters of interest to them. The GSA also advocates for graduate student interests within the University community. The GSA nominates graduate students to serve on a variety of committees, including the University Academic Council, the University Committee on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, the Graduate Educational Policy Committee, and the new student center committee.

The GSA is funded by the activity fee charged to every graduate student at registration and is governed by the GSA Student Council, composed of student representation from each academic department. The council and staff work together to strengthen the collective voice of graduate students. The GSA publishes an annual Graduate Students Achievement Profile online, that lists all graduate students who have published or presented papers, won awards, or otherwise been acknowledged for their work.

The GSA is located in the Murray Graduate Student Center at 292 Hammond Street across Beacon Street from McElroy Commons. Contact [gsa@bc.edu](mailto:gsa@bc.edu) for more information.

### UNIVERSITY HEALTH SERVICES (UHS)

The primary goal of University Health Services (UHS) is to provide confidential medical/nursing care and educational programs to safeguard the physical well-being and mental health of the student body. It is located on the ground floor of 2150 Commonwealth Avenue on the Chestnut Hill Campus; the phone number is 617-552-3225. The entrance is on St. Thomas More Road. The services include a walk-in clinic as well as medical, surgical, gynecological, orthopedic, nutrition, physical therapy, allergy, and immunization clinics. The in-patient infirmary is open 24 hours a day when school is in session.

The health/infirmary fee for medical care on campus is not a substitute for a health insurance policy. Massachusetts law requires that all university students registered for 75 percent of a full-time course load be covered by an accident and sickness insurance policy so that protection may be assured in case of hospitalization or other costly outside medical services. Insurance information is available online: [Medical Insurance - Office of Student Services - Boston College \(bc.edu\)](#).

### UNIVERSITY MEDICAL INSURANCE

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has mandated that all students, graduate and undergraduate, taking at least 75% of full-time credit hours must be covered by medical insurance providing a specified minimum coverage. Students in the School of Nursing who register for 7 or more credits are considered 75% full-time. Additionally, all students attending clinical are considered full-time. Boston College will offer all students the option of participating in the medical insurance plan offered at the University (linked above under the University Health Services section) or submitting a waiver. Students are not employees of the clinical site and therefore are not covered by Workers' Compensation.



# THE MASTER'S PROGRAM

## **Curricular Overview of the Master's Program**

Students begin the master's program through various routes of entry to enroll as a generalist RN. Examples of program-specific plans of study are below. Students are responsible for reviewing and updating their plans of study as needed.

The MS curriculum is designed around three components: (a) core content considered basic to advanced practice nursing regardless of specialty area; (b) support courses (electives and required prerequisites); and (c) specialty courses (theory and practicum courses). Core courses provide a foundation for the study of patient responses and therapeutics within each clinical specialty area used by nurses to effectively intervene and resolve patient problems. The clinical specialty courses consist of a two-semester sequence (fall-spring). See section [Clinical Practice](#) for more clinical information. The support courses are cognates, electives, or other required prerequisite courses that support the student's development as an advanced practice nurse in his/her area of specialization.

## **Master's Program Objectives**

### **ADVANCED GENERALIST MASTER'S**

The graduate of the advanced generalist master's program is prepared as an advanced generalist nurse with disciplinary knowledge and skill to provide culturally sensitive, safe, and high-quality care. The graduate will improve the delivery of care through leadership, mentorship, and evidence-based practice. The graduate will have met the AACN Essentials of Master's Education in Nursing. The graduate without a baccalaureate degree in nursing will have met the AACN Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice and will be eligible to sit for the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-RN). The graduate:

1. Implements a philosophy of nursing congruent with values that support the intrinsic worth of each human being.
2. Synthesizes knowledge from science and the humanities to promote ethical nursing care for individuals, families and populations.
3. Integrates knowledge from nursing and other disciplines to identify and address root causes of health problems in diverse individuals, families and populations.
4. Develops systems knowledge and leadership skills to guide and support culturally sensitive, safe, and high quality patient care across health care settings.
5. Utilizes implementation science to inform clinical practice, promote change, and improve quality of care for individuals, families and populations.
6. Applies clinical and administrative data, evidenced-based findings, and performance measures to improve quality of care within a practice setting or organization.
7. Utilizes technology and data to coordinate and enhance care for individuals, families and populations.
8. Applies knowledge of policy development and advocacy strategies to influence policies that promote individual, family and population health.



9. Collaborates with patients and interdisciplinary colleagues to promote and improve health of diverse individuals, families and populations.
10. Articulates a plan for continuing personal and professional development.

## **Direct Entry, Master of Science in Nursing, Advanced Generalist Program**

The DE-MS program is an accelerated program designed for individuals who have a baccalaureate or master's degree in another field and who are not already nurses. In this program, students complete extensive pre-requisite courses prior to acceptance and enrollment. Students study and complete generalist nursing requirements on an intensive full-time basis over five (5) semesters. After successfully completing the program, students are conferred a Master of Science in Nursing as a Generalist Nurse and are eligible to sit for the NCLEX.

\*Plan of study is contingent upon course offerings, faculty and clinical availability

<b>Fall Semester 1 (17 credits)</b>
HLTH8000 Examining Diversity in Nursing and Health Care (3 cr.)
NURS8013 Direct Entry Adult Health Nursing Theory (6 cr.)
NURS8004 Direct Entry Adult Health Clinical w/lab (5 cr.)
NURS8000 Direct Entry Clinical Pharmacology (3 cr.)
<b>Spring Semester 1 (13 credits)</b>
NURS8007 Direct Entry Child Health Nursing Theory (3 cr.)
NURS8008 Direct Entry Child Health Nursing Clinical (2 cr.)
NURS8009 Direct Entry Childbearing Nursing Theory (3 cr.)
NURS8010 Direct Entry Childbearing Nursing Clinical (2 cr.)
NURS8715 Nursing Leadership in Complex Health Care Settings (3 cr.)
<b>Summer Semester (9 credits)</b>
NURS8011 Nursing Synthesis Practicum [Clinical] (3 cr.)
NURS9720 Epidemiology (3 cr.)
NURS8712 Health Care Quality Management (3 cr.)
<b>Fall Semester 2 (10 credits)</b>
NURS9816 Population Health Principles, Program Planning and Evaluation (3 cr.)
NURS8012 Population Health Clinical (2 cr.)
NURS8005 Direct Entry Psych-Mental Health Nursing Theory (3 cr.)
NURS8006 Direct Entry Psych-Mental Health Nursing Clinical (2 cr.)
<b>Spring Semester 2 (9 credits)</b>
NURS8716 Health Care Policy for Nursing Leaders (3 cr.)
NURS8717 Foundations of Evidence Based Advanced Nursing Practice (3 cr.)
NURS8718 Health Information Technology for Nursing Professionals (3 cr.)
Total Credits: 58
Master's conferred in May & sit for the NCLEX

\*Curricula Subject to Change

## **Master of Science in Nursing, Advanced Generalist Program**

The Master of Science in Nursing, Advanced Generalist program does not have a set plan of study. Although some courses are prerequisites for later courses, there is some flexibility in when students take courses and in whether they study on a part-time or full-time basis. Students should contact the graduate office to develop a plan of study tailored to their specific needs. This program is designed for ASN- or BSN-prepared RNs, who are seeking to earn an advanced degree, other than APRN. For ASN-prepared RNs additional Boston College bridge course credits will be required prior to beginning the MS curriculum. These credits are determined on an individual basis by the graduate office based on a portfolio review.

<b>Course Number</b>	<b>Course Name</b>	<b>Credits</b>
HLTH8000	Examining Diversity in Nursing and Healthcare	3
NURS8714	Nursing Ethics and Professional Responsibility in Advanced Practice	3
NURS8712	Healthcare Quality Management	3
NURS8718	Health Information Technology for Nursing Professionals	3
NURS8715	Nursing Leadership in Complex Healthcare Settings	3
NURS8716	Healthcare Policy for Nursing Practice Leaders	3
NURS8717	Foundations of Evidence-based Advanced Nursing Practice	3
NURS9720	Epidemiology	3
NURS9816	Population Health Principles, Program Planning and Evaluation	3
NURSXXXX	Graduate Level Elective	3
NURSXXXX	Clinical Practicum	2
	<b>TOTAL MS CREDITS</b>	<b>32</b>

*\*Curricula Subject to Change*

## Technical Standards Competency Domains

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Standards</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Communication	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Able to communicate sensitively and effectively in interactions with clients (patients/persons, families and/or communities)</li> <li>2. Able to communicate effectively with the healthcare team (patients, their supports, other professional and non-professional team members).</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Accurately and clearly conveys information to and interprets information from patients and the health care team in spoken and written English.</li> <li>● Accurately elicits and interprets information from medical history and other data sources to adequately and effectively evaluate a client's or patient's condition.</li> <li>● Uses and comprehends standard professional nursing and medical terminology when using and/or documenting in a patient's print or electronic record.</li> <li>● Conveys appropriate information to patients and the health care team and teaches, directs and counsels a wide variety of individuals</li> </ul>
Psychomotor	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Able to move in and around care settings, handle equipment safely and participate in the physical care of patients in clinical placement settings</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Possesses sufficient proprioception (position, pressure, movement, stereognosis, and vibration), physical strength and mobility to carry out physical assessments and other nursing procedures</li> <li>● Demonstrates sufficient manual dexterity and fine and gross muscular coordination to provide safe general care and specific treatments</li> <li>● Demonstrates an appropriate and timely response to emergency situations, including any circumstance requiring immediate and rapid resolution.</li> <li>● Navigates patients' rooms, work spaces, and treatment areas with appropriate precision and speed to carry out the nursing process during the delivery of general nursing care or in emergency situations.</li> <li>● Has the endurance to complete all required tasks during a clinical practice day of a customary or contracted length</li> </ul>
Data gathering and interpretation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Able to observe patient conditions and responses to health and illness</li> <li>2. Able to assess and monitor health needs</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Accurately obtains and interprets information from comprehensive assessment of patient status and responses such as assessing respiratory and cardiac function, blood pressure, blood sugar, neurological status, etc.</li> <li>● Accurately obtains and interprets information regarding a patient's environment</li> <li>● Synthesizes objective and subjective findings and diagnostic studies in order to formulate nursing diagnoses</li> </ul>
Critical thinking	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Able to think critically, solve problems and make decisions needed to care for persons, families and/or communities across the health continuum in various settings</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Synthesizes and critically interprets data on ongoing basis to carry out the nursing process (i.e. assessment, diagnosis, goals, plan of care, and evaluation)</li> <li>● Retrieves and critically appraises reference material to use in a patient's nursing plan of care</li> </ul>

	<p>2. Able to accomplish the learning objectives of each course in their specific program as well as the terminal objectives of the program by the time of graduation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Uses information from written documents, demonstrations, and patient records to carry out the phases of the nursing process</li> <li>● Accurately follows course syllabi, assignment directions, patient care protocols and corrective learning plans developed by faculty or health care agency staff</li> </ul>
<p>Behavior and social interaction</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Able to demonstrate concern for others, integrity, ethical conduct, accountability, interest and motivation</li> <li>2. Possesses interpersonal skills necessary for interactions with diverse populations of individuals, families and communities in the course of the clinical education program</li> <li>3. Possesses interpersonal skills for professional interactions with members of the healthcare team in the course of the clinical education program</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Conforms to all requirements set forth by the Connell School of Nursing's health care agency's affiliation agreements as well as any additional regulations and practices specific to a particular clinical settings.</li> <li>● Conforms to Connell School of Nursing attendance and clinical dress code/professional appearance requirements for on-campus clinical simulation and off-campus clinical learning session.</li> <li>● Maintains effective, appropriate, and empathic communication and relationships with clients/patients, students, faculty, staff and other professionals under all circumstances.</li> <li>● Makes appropriate judgments regarding safe, confidential, and respectful care and interactions with patients.</li> <li>● Functions calmly and effectively under stress and adapts to changing environments inherent in clinical practice.</li> <li>● Integrates constructive criticism from instructors and clinical agency personnel into performance</li> <li>● Correctly judges when a nursing intervention requires additional assistance from clinical faculty or clinical agency staff</li> </ul>

## Master's Program Forms

Available on the Current Student Resources webpage:

[https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/cson/sites/students.html#master\\_s](https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/cson/sites/students.html#master_s)

- MS, Advanced Generalist Plan of Study
- Direct Entry Generalist Plan of Study
- Independent Study Form
- Research Elective Form
- Graduate Student Grievance Procedure
- Immunization Release Form
- Emergency Contact Form

## UNIVERSITY FORMS

Available in the Office of Student Services or on the web at:

[https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/offices/student-services/registrar/academic-forms.html#graduate\\_for\\_ms](https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/offices/student-services/registrar/academic-forms.html#graduate_for_ms)

- Graduate Withdrawal/Leave of Absence Form



# THE DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE PROGRAM

## Curricular Overview of the Doctor of Nursing Practice Program

The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program prepares graduates for advanced nursing practice as nurse practitioners. Advanced nursing practice encompasses the direct care role and other role components including evidence-based practice, quality improvement, informatics, policy change and leadership. The direct care role reflects independent, autonomous evidence-based actions at the expert level. Overall role development as an advanced practice nurse is based on nursing knowledge and the utilization of knowledge from other disciplines.

The American Nurses Association's definition of advanced nursing practice provides a general framework for the program curriculum:

*Nurses in advanced practice have a graduate degree in nursing. They conduct comprehensive health assessments. They demonstrate a high level of autonomy and expert skill in the diagnosis and treatment of complex responses of individuals, families and communities to actual or potential health problems. They formulate clinical decisions to manage acute and chronic illness and promote wellness. Nurses in advanced practice integrate education, research, management and consultation into their clinical role and function in collegial relationships with nursing peers, physicians, professionals and others who influence the health environment (American Nurses Association, 1991, 2003, 2004).*

Advanced nursing practice is concerned with the recognition and treatment of complex human responses in health and illness within a specific patient population. Clinical judgment is a decision making process that uses diagnostic, therapeutic and ethical reasoning to identify and respond to patients' needs. This process is used to isolate problems and implement evidence-based nursing interventions to achieve desired patient outcomes.

Specialization occurs through the acquisition of in-depth knowledge about life processes as well as identification of responses and phenomena occurring in a particular patient population. DNP students select their area of specialization at the time they apply. Advanced practice nursing specialty programs are currently offered in the areas of: Adult-Gerontology (primary care), Family (primary care), Pediatric (primary care), Psychiatric-Mental Health, and Women's Health.

## Curricular Overview of the DNP Program

Students may enter the DNP Program through a number of different routes of entry (e.g., direct entry, post-baccalaureate, post-Master's, RN (ASN) to DNP) and may enroll in one of five clinical specialty tracks: Adult-Gerontology (primary care), Family (primary care), Pediatric (primary care), Psychiatric-Mental Health, and Women's Health. Therefore, there are several different plans of study available. Post-baccalaureate and post-Master's students can also specialize in Nurse Anesthesia (CRNA). Examples of program-specific plans of study are included in this section. Students are responsible for reviewing and updating their plans of study every year and whenever changes are made.

The DNP curriculum is designed around five components: (a) core DNP sequence; (b) evidence-based practice and scholarly inquiry (DNP project) sequence; (c) advanced practice nursing core; (d) advanced practice clinical specialty sequence; and (e) support courses (electives and required prerequisites).

DNP core courses in epidemiology, informatics, health care policy, quality improvement, population health program planning and evaluation, and leadership provide a foundation for the DNP prepared advanced practice nurse to improve the health of populations in his/her role as a nursing leader.

The evidence based practice sequence begins with a foundational course, which addresses the nursing theory, research practice triad as well as major research designs and culminates with the development, implementation and evaluation of a DNP project. A novel approach to the DNP projects will be utilized. Students will be assigned to project teams in which they will complete both group and individual level work on an assigned project. Projects will be coordinated by course faculty in consultation with our practice partners. Each project team will include a collaborating practice partner and faculty member. The DNP project is designed to be completed in two semesters after the project charter is approved.

The advanced practice nursing core includes the three Ps (advanced pathophysiology, advanced pharmacology, advanced health/physical assessment), which are the foundational courses for specialty nurse practitioner education and practice. The advanced clinical specialty courses vary by specialty but include a combination of didactic, simulation and clinical practicum courses. For example, the psychiatric-mental health nurse practitioner sequence includes specialty didactic and clinical courses, as well as courses in individual psychotherapy, family and group therapy, psychopharmacology and psychobiology. See section [Clinical Practice](#) for more clinical information.

The support and elective courses are intended to support other aspects of the advanced practice nursing role and include courses on diversity and inclusion, ethics and the role of the advanced practice nurse. Elective courses are designed to support the student's individual interests and areas of specialization. Students may choose to take electives through the School of Nursing, through other schools within Boston College (including the Lynch School of Education and Human Development, and the Graduate School of Social Work), or they may complete elective coursework through the University consortium.

Please see the following pages for specific plans of study for post-baccalaureate and post-master's DNP curriculum. Additionally, course syllabi are available through the Agora portal. Full time Doctor of Nursing Practice program students with accepted publications or presentations at a conference may submit a [Travel Approval Form](#) to our finance team for consideration of up to \$1000 of reimbursement per academic year.

## **Doctor of Nursing Program (DNP) Objectives**

1. Generate a personal philosophy of nursing congruent with the Judeo-Christian values that support the intrinsic worth of each human being.
2. Synthesize knowledge, skills, and attitudes to promote personal and professional growth and lifelong learning in service to others.
3. Translate knowledge from sciences, humanities, nursing and other clinical disciplines to inform the development of a conceptual framework that guides the art and science of advanced practice nursing.
4. Develop strategies to manage organizational, business, and financial systems to ensure the delivery of safe, high quality and cost-effective person-centered care.
5. Critically evaluate and translate research findings into practice to improve and transform health care and patient outcomes.
6. Participate in the design, selection, and implementation of information systems and utilize data to monitor and evaluate programs, outcomes, and systems of care.
7. Lead in the development and evaluation of health care policy that advocates for social justice, equity, and ethical decision-making for the care of diverse populations.

8. Lead interprofessional health care teams in diverse and complex health care settings and systems.
9. Use evidence to design, implement, and evaluate programs that promote and sustain the health of individuals, families, communities, and populations.
10. Deliver knowledge driven, evidence based, comprehensive, person-centered care according to the standards and competencies of specialty practice.

## **Direct Entry Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Program**

The Direct Entry Doctor of Nursing Practice program is an accelerated program designed for individuals with a baccalaureate degree or higher in fields other than nursing who wish to pursue preparation as an advanced practice nurse. The Direct Entry DNP provides a seamless, integrated curriculum to prepare students for license as registered nurses and for certification as advanced practice nurses. In this program, students complete extensive pre-requisite courses prior to acceptance and enrollment. Students study and complete generalist nursing requirements on an intensive full-time basis during the five (5) semesters of the program.

Students will meet both the AACN Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice and the AACN Essentials of Master's Education in Nursing during the pre-licensure portion of the program. A Master of Science in Nursing as a Nursing Generalist is conferred upon successful completion of the pre-licensure coursework, whereupon students are eligible to sit for the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-RN). The pre-licensure component of the program consists of 61 academic credits.

After passing the NCLEX-RN exam and receiving a license as a registered nurse, students proceed into the doctoral level coursework in one of the following nurse practitioner specialty areas of practice: Adult-Gerontology (primary care), Family (primary care), Pediatric (primary care), Psychiatric-Mental Health, or Women's Health. In order to progress to nurse practitioner study (doctoral level), students must be in good academic standing and be licensed as registered nurses. The program includes a clinical project associated practicum, 1,000 clinical practice hours, and an additional 46 credits following conferral of the pre-licensure master's degree.

Applicants are reviewed and accepted into the clinical specialty program to which they apply and are assigned a clinical placement year at that time. Students are permitted to slow down and attend part-time during the nurse practitioner component. To do so, they should contact the graduate office to find out when a clinical seat would be available. Students who wish to change specialty programs must contact the graduate office and the two program directors, apply and be accepted into the desired specialty program. Acceptance is not guaranteed and may slow completion of the degree as the clinical year is assigned on a space available basis.

Direct Entry program students are not eligible to apply to the Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA) program because admission to this program requires a minimum of one-year of experience as a registered nurse in an intensive care (ICU) setting.



<b>Direct Entry Master of Science Curriculum</b>
<b>Fall Semester 1 (17 credits)</b>
HLTH8000 Examining Diversity in Nursing and Health Care (3 cr.)
NURS8013 Direct Entry Adult Health Nursing Theory (6 cr.)
NURS8004 Direct Entry Adult Health Clinical w/lab (5 cr.)
NURS8000 Direct Entry Clinical and Pharmacology (3 cr.)
<b>Spring Semester 1 (13 credits)</b>
NURS8007 Direct Entry Child Health Nursing Theory (3 cr.)
NURS8008 Direct Entry Child Health Nursing Clinical (2 cr.)
NURS8009 Direct Entry Childbearing Nursing Theory (3 cr.)
NURS8010 Direct Entry Childbearing Nursing Clinical (2 cr.)
NURS8715 Nursing Leadership in Complex Health Care Settings (3 cr.)
<b>Summer Semester 1 (9 credits)</b>
NURS8011 Nursing Synthesis Practicum [Clinical] (3 cr.)
NURS9720 Epidemiology (3 cr.)
NURS8712 Health Care Quality Management (3 cr.)
<b>Fall Semester 2 (10 credits)</b>
NURS9816 Population Health Principles, Program Planning and Evaluation (3 cr.)
NURS8012 Population Health Clinical (2 cr.)
NURS8005 Direct Entry Psych-Mental Health Nursing Theory (3 cr.)
NURS8006 Direct Entry Psych-Mental Health Nursing Clinical (2 cr.)
<b>Spring Semester 2 (12 credits)</b>
NURS8716 Health Care Policy for Nursing Leaders (3 cr.)
NURS8717 Foundations of Evidence Based Advanced Nursing Practice (3 cr.)
NURS8718 Health Information Technology for Nursing Professionals (3 cr.)
NURS9730 Advanced Physiology and Pathophysiology across the Lifespan (3 cr.)
<i>Required to continue on to DNP coursework</i>
<p style="text-align: center;">Master's conferred in May, sit for the NCLEX following conferral  58 credits minimum to be awarded Advanced Generalist MS degree  61 credits needed for Direct Entry students to move on to DNP</p>

*\*Curricula Subject to Change*

<b>Direct Entry DNP Curriculum</b>
<b>Summer Semester 2 (9 credits)</b>
NURS9731 Pharmacotherapeutics in Advanced Practice Nursing (3 cr.)
NURS9732 Advanced Health/Physical Assessment across the Lifespan (3 cr.)
NURS8714 Nursing Ethics & Professional Responsibility in Advanced Practice (3 cr.)
<b>Fall Semester 3 (9 credits)</b>
NURS9717 Methods of Advanced Scholarly Inquiry (3 cr.)
NURS9815 Role of the Advanced Practice Nurse (3 cr.)
NURS9814 Bridge to Primary Care Practice (3 cr.) [AGNP, FNP, PNP, and WHNP]
NURS7426 Advanced Psychopharmacology (3 cr.) [PMHNP only]
<b>Spring Semester 3 (11 credits)</b>
NURSXXXX NP Clinical Specialty I (6 cr.)
NURS9904 DNP Project Seminar I (2 cr.)
NURS9834 Developmental, Behavioral and Mental Health in Pediatrics (3 cr.) [PNP only]
NURS9838 Individual Therapy (3 cr.) [PMHNP Only]
NURSXXXX Specialty Elective (3 cr.) [FNP, AGNP, WHNP]
<b>Summer Semester 3 (1 cr.)</b>
NURS9906 DNP Seminar II (1 cr.)
<b>Fall Semester 4 (7 credits for PNP and WHNP) (10 credits for PMHNP, FNP, AGNP)</b>
NURSXXXX NP Clinical Specialty II (6 cr.)
NURS9840 Family & Group Therapy (3 cr.) [PMHNP Only]
NURSXXXX Specialty Elective (3 cr.) [FNP, AGNP]
NURS9908 DNP Seminar III (1 cr.)
<b>Spring Semester 4 (6 credits for FNP, AGNP, PMHNP, and WHNP) (9 credits for PNP)</b>
NURSXXXX NP Clinical Specialty III (6 cr.)
NURS9832 Clinical Decision Making (3 cr.) [PNP Only]
<b>Total Post-Master's DNP Credits: 46</b>
<b>Total Credits required for Direct Entry DNP degree is 107</b>

*\*Curricula Subject to Change*

## **Post-Baccalaureate Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Program**

The Post-Baccalaureate DNP provides a seamless, integrated curriculum to prepare registered nurses for certification as advanced practice nurses. This program is designed for individuals who hold baccalaureate degree in nursing and wish to specialize in one of the following nurse practitioner specialty areas of practice: Adult-Gerontology (primary care), Family (primary care), Pediatric (primary care), Psychiatric-Mental Health, or Women’s Health. Students can complete the program on a full- or part-time basis, which includes a clinical project associated practicum, 1,000 clinical practice hours, and 73 academic credits.

<b>Course Code</b>	<b>Course Name</b>	<b>Credits</b>
HLTH8000	Examining Diversity in Nursing and Health Care	3
NURS8712	Health Care Quality Management	3
NURS8718	Health Information Technology for Nursing Professionals	3
NURS8714	Nursing Ethics & Professional Responsibility in Advanced Practice	3
NURS8715	Nursing Leadership in Complex Health Care Settings	3
NURS8716	Health Care Policy for Nursing Leaders	3
NURS8717	Foundations of Evidence Based Advanced Nursing Practice	3
NURS9717	Methods of Advanced Scholarly Inquiry	3
NURS9720	Epidemiology	3
NURS9730	Advanced Physiology and Pathophysiology across the Lifespan	3
NURS9731	Pharmacotherapeutics in Advanced Practice Nursing	3
NURS9732	Advanced Health/Physical Assessment across the Lifespan	3
NURS9814	Bridge to Primary Care for Nurse Practitioner Students (AGNP, FNP, PNP, WHNP)	3
NURS9815	Role of the Advanced Practice Nurse	3
NURS9816	Population Health Principles, Program Planning and Evaluation	3
NURS9904	DNP Project Seminar I	2
NURS9906	DNP Project Seminar II	2
NURSXXXX	Specialty Clinical I	6
NURSXXXX	Specialty Clinical II	6
NURSXXXX	Specialty Clinical III	6
NURS9836	Advanced Psychopharmacology (PMHNP)	3
NURS9838	Individual Therapy (PMHNP)	3
NURS9840	Family and Group Therapy (PMHNP)	3
NURS9832	Clinical Decision Making (PNP)	3
NURS9834	Developmental, Behavioral and Mental Health in Pediatrics (PNP)	3
NURSXXXX	<b>Elective(s)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 2 electives required for AGNP, FNP, and WHNP</li> </ul> No electives required for PMHNP and PNP students	6
	<b>Total Credits</b>	73

*\*Curricula Subject to Change*

## **Post-Master's Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Program**

The Post-Master's DNP program is designed for currently practicing master's prepared nurses who wish to complete a terminal practice degree program with the option to pursue a nurse practitioner specialty. Following a complete portfolio review and building on prior clinical knowledge and experience, students will focus on innovative core class work in healthcare quality, safety, informatics and policy. Master's prepared nurses have the option to pursue a nurse practitioner specialty through this route of entry. Building on a foundation of evidence-based practice knowledge, students will develop and lead an innovative practice improvement or change project. The program includes a project associated practicum and a minimum of 34 academic credits.

<b>Course Number</b>	<b>Course Name</b>	<b>Credits</b>
HLTH8000	Examining Diversity in Nursing & Healthcare	3
NURS8712	Healthcare Quality Management	3
NURS8714	Nursing Ethics and Professional Responsibility in Advanced Practice	3
NURS8715	Nursing Leadership in Complex Healthcare Settings	3
NURS8716	Healthcare Policy for Nursing Leaders	3
NURS8717	Foundations of Evidence-based Advanced Nursing Practice	3
NURS8718	Health Information Technology for Nursing Professionals	3
NURS9720	Epidemiology	3
NURS9816	Program Planning and Evaluation for Population Health	3
NURS9717	Advanced Scholarly Inquiry Methods	3
NURS9904	DNP Project Seminar I	2
NURS9906	DNP Project Seminar II	2
	<b>Total Credits:</b>	34

*Curriculum is laid out for students who will not pursue a nurse practitioner specialty. For Post-Master's DNP applicants who wish to pursue an NP specialty, a portfolio review will be conducted to determine total credits required.*

*\*Curricula Subject to Change*

## **RN (ASN) to Doctor to Nursing Practice (DNP) Program**

The RN to DNP program is designed for associate's prepared registered nurses who wish to earn a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree and become nurse practitioners in one of the nurse practitioner clinical specialty programs offered. RN-DNP students undergo an "educational portfolio review" at the time of application and an individualized plan of study is developed. There is no set plan of study for the RN-DNP program; students may choose to complete the program on a part-time or full-time basis, depending on clinical availability.

Prior to matriculation, RN-DNP students must hold a valid RN license in Massachusetts, have completed required prerequisite courses and have completed the equivalent of approximately 112 college credits. Completion of prerequisite nursing, science and liberal arts courses establishes baccalaureate level competencies as the basis for the study of advanced practice nursing. Based upon the educational portfolio review and professional experience, students may be required to enroll in additional courses prior to enrolling in DNP courses. Completion of the RN-DNP program results in the awarding of the DNP degree in Nursing; graduates are eligible to sit for the NP certification examination in their clinical specialty.

<b>Course Code</b>	<b>Course Name</b>	<b>Credits</b>
HLTH8000	Examining Diversity in Nursing and Health Care	3
NURS8712	Health Care Quality Management	3
NURS8718	Health Information Technology for Nursing Professionals	3
NURS8714	Nursing Ethics & Professional Responsibility in Advanced Practice	3
NURS8715	Nursing Leadership in Complex Health Care Settings	3
NURS8716	Health Care Policy for Nursing Leaders	3
NURS8717	Foundations of Evidence Based Advanced Nursing Practice	3
NURS9717	Methods of Advanced Scholarly Inquiry	3
NURS9720	Epidemiology	3
NURS9730	Advanced Physiology and Pathophysiology across the Lifespan	3
NURS9731	Pharmacotherapeutics in Advanced Practice Nursing	3
NURS9732	Advanced Health/Physical Assessment across the Lifespan	3
NURS9814	Bridge to Primary Care for Nurse Practitioner Students (AGNP, FNP, PNP, WHNP)	3
NURS9815	Role of Advanced Practice Nurse	3
NURS9816	Population Health Principles, Program Planning and Evaluation	3
NURS9904	DNP Project Seminar I	2
NURS9906	DNP Project Seminar II	1
NURS9908	DNP Project Seminar III	1
NURSXXXX	Specialty Clinical I	6
NURSXXXX	Specialty Clinical II	6
NURSXXXX	Specialty Clinical III	6
NURS9836	Advanced Psychopharmacology (PMHNP)	3
NURS9838	Individual Therapy (PMHNP)	3
NURS9840	Family and Group Therapy (PMHNP)	3
NURS9832	Clinical Decision Making (PNP)	3

NURS9834	Developmental, Behavioral and Mental Health in Pediatrics (PNP)	3
NURSXXX	<b>Elective(s)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 electives required for AGNP, FNP, and WHNP</li> </ul> No electives required for PMHNP and PNP students	6
	<b><u>Total Credits required after completion of bridge coursework - determined by portfolio review</u></b>	73

*\*Curricula Subject to Change*

## **Nurse Anesthesia (CRNA) Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Program**

The Nurse Anesthesia Program is a collaborative effort between the William F. Connell School of Nursing and Anesthesia Associates of Massachusetts. The curriculum design takes advantage of the core courses common to all DNP nursing specialties. In addition, students learn the advanced physiologic and pharmacologic principles specific to nurse anesthesia practice. The Nurse Anesthesia program of study includes 49 credits of core courses and 51 credits of specialty and theory clinical practicum. Clinical practica take place at the varied facilities where Anesthesia Associates of Massachusetts provide services and give students broad hands-on experience and in on-campus clinical simulation activities; this provides students with a broad range of hands-on experiences. Clinical placements may be located outside of the Boston area. Students are responsible for providing their own transportation and all costs pertaining to that transportation. The 36-month full-time curriculum is accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs; graduates are eligible to sit for the National Certification Examination of the Council on Certification. The Nurse Anesthesia Program is accredited through June 2026 by the Council on Accreditation (COA) for Nurse Anesthesia Programs. **CRNA students should refer to the CRNA Student Handbook for additional policies and procedures that apply to them and their participation in the CRNA / Nurse Anesthetist Program.**

<b>Summer Semester 1</b>	
NURS9720 Epidemiology (3 cr.)	
NURS9730 Advanced Physiology and Pathophysiology across the Lifespan (3 cr.)	
NURS9731 Pharmacotherapeutics in Advanced Practice Nursing (3 cr.)	
NURS9864 Chemistry, Biochemistry and Physics for Nurse Anesthesia Practice (3 cr.)	
NURS9866 Respiratory Physiology and Pathophysiology for Nurse Anesthesia Practice (3 cr.)	
	<b>Total: 15</b>
<b>Fall Semester 1</b>	
NURS8714 Nursing Ethics and Professional Responsibility in Advanced Practice (3 cr.)	
NURS8715 Nursing Leadership in Complex Health Care Settings (3 cr.)	
NURS9816 Population Health Principles, Program Planning and Evaluation (3 cr.)	
NURS9860 Pharmacotherapeutics in Nurse Anesthesia Practice (3 cr.)	
NURS9862 Foundations of Nurse Anesthesia Practice (3 cr.)	
	<b>Total: 15</b>
<b>Spring Semester 1</b>	
HLTH8000 Examining Diversity in Nursing and Health Care (3 cr.)	

NURS8718 Health Information Technology for Nursing Professionals (3 cr.)	
NURS9732 Advanced Health/Physical Assessment across the Lifespan (3 cr.)	
NURS9868 Cardiovascular Physiology & Pathophysiology for Nurse Anesthesia Practice (3 cr.)	
NURS9870 Nurse Anesthesia Care for Patients with Coexisting Diseases (3 cr.)	
	<b>Total: 15</b>
<b>Summer Semester 2</b>	
NURS8712 Health Care Quality Management (3 cr.)	
NURS9815 Role of Advanced Practice Nurse (3 cr.)	
NURS9849 Nurse Anesthesia Clinical Practice I (5 cr.)	
NURS9850 Advanced Practice Principles for the Nurse Anesthetist I (3 cr.)	
	<b>Total: 14</b>
<b>Fall Semester 2</b>	
NURS8717 Foundations of Evidence Based Advanced Nursing Practice (3 cr.)	
NURS9851 Nurse Anesthesia Clinical Practice II (5 cr.)	
NURS9852 Advanced Practice Principles for the Nurse Anesthetist II (3 cr.)	
	<b>Total: 11</b>
<b>Spring Semester 2</b>	
NURS8716 Health Care Policy for Nursing Leaders (3 cr.)	
NURS9717 Methods of Advanced Scholarly Inquiry (3 cr.)	
NURS9853 Nurse Anesthesia Clinical Practice III (5 cr.)	
	<b>Total: 11</b>
<b>Summer Semester 3</b>	
NURS9904 DNP Project Seminar I (2 cr.)	
NURS9855 Nurse Anesthesia Clinical Practice IV (5 cr.)	
	<b>Total: 7</b>
<b>Fall Semester 3</b>	
NURS9906 DNP Project Seminar II (2 cr.)	
NURS9857 Nurse Anesthesia Clinical Practice V (5 cr.)	
	<b>Total: 7</b>
<b>Spring Semester 3</b>	
NURS9859 Nurse Anesthesia Clinical Practice VI (5 cr.)	
	<b>Total: 5</b>
	<b>Total Credits: 100</b>

*\*Curricula Subject to Change*

## **Doctor of Nursing Practice Forms**

Available on the Current Student Resources webpage:

<https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/cson/sites/students.html#tab-dnp>

- Direct Entry DNP Plan of Study
- Post-Baccalaureate DNP Plan of Study
- Post-Masters DNP Plan of Study
- RN (ASN) - DNP Plan of Study
- Nurse Anesthesia DNP Plan of Study
- Independent Study Form
- Research Elective Form
- Course Transfer Request Form
- Tuition Remission Request Form
- Teaching Assistantship Application
- Change of Specialty Request Form (available by request from the Graduate Programs Office)
- Recommended Electives

### **UNIVERSITY FORMS**

Available in the Office of Student Services or on the web at:

[https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/offices/student-services/registrar/academic-forms.html#graduate\\_forms](https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/offices/student-services/registrar/academic-forms.html#graduate_forms)

- Graduate Withdrawal/Leave of Absence Form



2018-2028



# CLINICAL PRACTICE

The Clinical Placement Office is responsible for collecting and documenting all graduate students' required immunizations and other requirements requested by clinical partners, to send appropriate records to each clinical site. The Clinical Placement Office is also responsible for notifying students about (and ensuring compliance with) requirements that are unique to their agencies. The standard requirements include:

- Personal Health Insurance, either private or through BC
- An Immunization and Health Verification Form signed by a healthcare provider
- Proof of immunity for MMR, Varicella and Hepatitis B; Hepatitis B- 3 vaccines and Titer, MMR- 2 vaccines and Titer, Varicella- 2 vaccines or Titer
- A negative PPD within one (1) year (summer prior to clinical year) or appropriate follow-up if PPD is positive
- Other immunizations required for all BC students: Tdap (with booster), polio, meningitis (or signed waiver), flu, COVID-19 and booster.
- All graduate students are required to submit updated documentation for expired immunizations and submit proof of a yearly physical
- RN license for the state(s) in which you will have clinical; this is due as soon as you have the RN license and can then apply for malpractice insurance
- Malpractice Insurance (Coverage as an NP student \$1 million / \$6 million)
- CPR certification within the year (Not to expire before June of the current year – Must be at the health care provider level through the American Heart Association or the American Red Cross)
- All graduate students are required to complete an **annual** Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check for Massachusetts. In addition, students will be asked to complete an expanded national background check.
- Proof of N95 fit-testing
- Copy of Resume/Curriculum Vitae

In addition, certain sites may require a two-step PPD or a blood test within 90 days of the start date. Individual sites may have additional requirements.

Students are not allowed to attend any clinical activities and are not allowed in clinical agencies / sites until all clinical requirements have been met and documented with the Clinical Placement Office. It is the student's responsibility to make sure that all requirements are met prior to the announced deadline. The Clinical Placement Office will notify students who are not in compliance with these requirements. In the event that a student is still not compliant with these requirements after notification, the TOR for the clinical practicum and the Associate Dean of Student Services will be notified. At this point, clinical faculty will need to follow up and the student(s) will not be allowed in clinical areas until all requirements are met.

## **Clinical Placements & Preceptors**

All advanced practice specialty programs require that students complete a minimum number of hours of precepted and supervised clinical practice in their area of specialization in order to demonstrate competence. The minimum number of clinical hours varies by clinical specialty. The specialty program directors and faculty are knowledgeable about credentialing organizations' requirements regarding the numbers of precepted and supervised clinical hours that must be completed and the variety of clinical sites in which clinical practica should occur, in order for a student to demonstrate competence and qualify to sit for the certification examination in their specialty. As such, the program director or designated

faculty member assigns clinical placements based upon the program requirements, the requirements of credentialing organizations, and the students' learning needs. The Assistant Dean of Clinical Placement and their staff assist specialty program directors with arranging placements and ensuring that clinical site contracts and preceptor documentation are in place and verified prior to clinical placements.

**Students should not attempt to arrange their own clinical experiences, nor should they make changes to their clinical placements.** Students are encouraged to bring ideas for new clinical sites to the program director. Sites and preceptors must be reviewed and approved by the program director and the Clinical Placement Office. Clinical placements that are not approved and arranged in accordance with school policies cannot be counted towards the minimum clinical hours required for credentialing. In order to avoid potential conflicts of interest, clinical preceptors should not be family members or family friends of students they are asked to precept. Similarly, students should not engage in personal relationships with preceptors and clinical supervisors in order to avoid the perception of conflict of interest and bias. Clinical placements may be located outside of the Boston area. Students are responsible for providing their own transportation and all costs pertaining to that transportation.

Students are assigned a clinical year at the time of admission. Students who wish to change their clinical year will be accommodated when possible on a space-available basis. Scheduling of clinical practica may vary from year to year. Students must have up-to-date immunizations, malpractice insurance, background checks and complete all other pre-clinical requirements prior to participating in any clinical placements. In the clinical setting, students should clearly identify themselves with a name badge as a graduate student in the Connell School of Nursing.

Students must complete their assigned clinical hours within the academic semesters. In the event a student needs to complete clinical hours during school breaks, they need to contact the Graduate Programs Office as soon as possible.

## **Clinical Hours During International Service Learning Trips and Experiences**

Graduate nursing students who wish to participate in international service learning trips and experiences and have those hours count towards the required supervised and precepted clinical hours for their specialty program should contact their specialty program director. Clinical hours from international service trips and experiences must be pre-approved by the specialty program director, Assistant Dean of Clinical Placement and Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Faculty Development. The ability to count these experiences towards the minimum number of clinical hours required to sit for certification exams varies by specialty and depends upon many factors, including the credentials of the supervising faculty and preceptors. In addition, international clinical experiences must:

- be supervised by a CSON faculty member
- be precepted by an approved preceptor
- include a 1:1 ratio if the preceptor is seeing patients or 1:2 if not seeing patients
- include direct patient care
- record and document clinical hours accurately

## **Liability Insurance**

Students who are registered nurses (RNs) must arrange for their own individual malpractice liability insurance as advanced practice nursing students. Nurse anesthesia students will obtain student nurse anesthetist liability insurance through the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists when instructed to do so by the program director. Master's students must provide evidence of individual liability insurance and RN licensure prior to enrollment in a course with an advanced practice (APRN) clinical component.

## **Immunization / Health Requirements**

Commonwealth of Massachusetts law requires all graduate nursing students to show evidence of satisfactory immunization against measles, mumps, rubella, tetanus, diphtheria, varicella, hepatitis B, and COVID-19. Students are also required to have the meningitis vaccine or sign a waiver if they decide not to be immunized against meningitis. Students who fail to provide adequate documentation of immunizations will not be permitted to register and attend classes. The only exceptions permitted are when immunization requirements conflict with personal religious belief, supported by documentation from a religious leader, or when a physician documents that immunizations should not be given due to pre-existing medical problems. The Connell School of Nursing also requires certified evidence of good health and an annual TB test completed just prior to enrollment in a clinical practicum course. More frequent testing for TB may be required by specific clinical agencies. Some clinical sites may require drug testing; any positive tests could result in, up to, dismissal from the program.

## **Expanded National Background Checks (ENBC)**

Hospitals and health care agencies that are used by Connell School of Nursing for clinical experiences require that all students and faculty undergo expanded national criminal background checks before they can be at that agency. The mechanism for this is called a ENBC or iCORI check. All students must have permission on file in the Graduate Programs Office for Boston College to obtain ENBC checks and permission for the actual ENBC requests. Failure to have these on file could prevent a student from participating in a clinical practicum. A background check that comes back positive (i.e., shows a misdemeanor or felony) may prevent the student from participating in a clinical practicum.

Clinical agencies may refuse to take students with positive criminal histories. This could potentially delay or prevent completion of the program. Students are encouraged to contact the Clinical Placement Office ([csoncp@bc.edu](mailto:csoncp@bc.edu)). Some school systems and other health care agencies may also require fingerprinting. Some organizations require that fingerprinting be completed through their designated fingerprinting agency. Students will need to complete the requirements of the specific agency where they will be placed for clinical practice. Flexibility may be required as requirements change over time.

## **Safe, Competent and Professional Clinical Practice**

Graduate students from the Connell School of Nursing who are engaged in clinical courses and other types of supervised clinical training experiences are expected to perform and practice in a manner that is at all times safe, competent, and consistent with the Nurse Practice Act and the ANA Nurses' Code of Ethics. Unsafe or incompetent clinical practice and/or unprofessional conduct are grounds for failure in any clinical course and may result in immediate removal from the clinical site. Students who demonstrate unsafe or unprofessional conduct in a clinical practice site will undergo academic review and may be placed on probation or dismissed from the program (please see ACADEMIC STANDARDS REVIEW).

## **Documentation of Supervised Clinical Experiences**

It is the student's responsibility to maintain written documentation regarding supervised clinical experiences and practica. Specific requirements for clinical documentation are determined by the program director. In general, at a minimum, this documentation should include dates, hours, preceptor, agency, population focus, age group seen and activities. It is the student's responsibility to document all clinical hours and obtain the appropriate supervisor's sign-off. Students should maintain their own educational, immunization, and training records in a portfolio after graduation.

## **Blood-Borne Pathogens Exposure Policy**

Every clinical student in the Connell School of Nursing is required to complete yearly training in Standard Precautions, Prevention of Blood Borne Pathogens and Prevention of Tuberculosis. The training modules are located on the Centralized Clinical Placement website of the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education. This website is updated yearly. Completing training modules is a professional responsibility and required for participation in clinical nursing courses.

Students who are exposed to blood or bodily fluids will immediately notify their on-site clinical instructor or preceptor and they will follow the protocols for Occupational Exposure to Blood-Borne Pathogens in place at their clinical site. If the agency does not have a protocol for occupational exposures, then the student should be directed to the nearest emergency room for treatment. At the earliest reasonable time, but no later than 24 hours, the student and faculty will notify the Associate Dean of Student Services.

The Connell School of Nursing will document student exposures according to OSHA Requirements as they apply.

## **Tuberculosis Exposure Policy**

Connell School of Nursing graduate students are not routinely assigned to care for patients with active tuberculosis or suspected tuberculosis because they have not been fit-tested for a respirator mask.

Students who have been inadvertently exposed to tuberculosis should be directed to the University Health Services OR to their primary health care provider. The student and faculty will notify the Associate Dean of Student Services.

Current policies consistent with existing OSHA and CDC guidelines will be posted in the simulation laboratory.

If a student, while engaged in clinical practice activities, has an exposure to potentially infected body fluid from a client, the student should do the following:

- a. Immediately remove soiled clothing and wash the exposed area with soap and water
- b. Notify faculty member
- c. Report to nearest emergency room on site at the agency or as directed by the University Health Service within 1-2 hours
- d. Identify self as student with a possible HIV/HBV exposure
- e. Give close attention to filling out the Incident Report for the agency, the Connell School of Nursing and University Health Services. A copy of the agency report form must be forwarded to the Associate Dean of Student Services within 72 hours of the exposure

Boston College will assume the financial responsibility, if necessary, for emergency assessment and interventions through the first 72 hours after an exposure incident. No member of the Boston College community, either student or faculty member, shall be denied medical evaluation and counseling. The Connell School of Nursing will keep a confidential record of medical treatment and evaluation according to OSHA standards.

## **Reasonable Accommodations for Qualified Individuals with Disabilities in Clinical Courses**

\*\* Adapted from the model technical standards in Marks and Ailey, White Paper on Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Nursing Educational Programs for the California Committee on Employment of

People with Disabilities (CCEPD), and the web-published technical standards of the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing and the New York University College of Nursing.

The Connell School of Nursing is committed to providing educational opportunities to otherwise qualified students with disabilities and/or learning differences. Such students will be provided with opportunities equal to those provided to non-disabled students to achieve desired educational outcomes. A “qualified individual” with a disability is one who, with or without reasonable accommodations, meets the Connell School of Nursing’s academic requirements and Technical Standards. Students with disabilities are not required to disclose their disability to the Connell School of Nursing. However, students wishing to request reasonable accommodations must register with Connors Family Learning Center (CFLC) and/or Disability Services Office (DSO) to initiate the process.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act define a person with a disability as someone who: (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; OR (2) has a record of such an impairment; OR (3) is regarded as having such an impairment. Students are encouraged to meet with a CFLC and DSO representative when unsure if a condition qualifies as a disability. Please note that limitations created by short-term illnesses are not normally covered by these guidelines.

The CFLC or DSO determine qualified disability status and assist students in obtaining appropriate accommodations and services. Decisions regarding reasonable accommodations are made on a case by case basis taking into consideration each student’s disability-related needs, disability documentation and program requirements. While the process for requesting reasonable accommodations may be started at any time, reasonable accommodations may not be implemented retroactively. It is therefore important that students allow ample time for their accommodation requests to be processed. While the Connell School of Nursing will make every effort to work with students with disabilities to accommodate their learning difference or disability-related needs, the Connell School of Nursing is not required to provide accommodations that fundamentally alter or waive essential program requirements.

This information is intended to facilitate discussions between the Office of Student Services and other school officials, faculty, and students as a list of capabilities believed to be necessary to participate and succeed in a clinical education with or without reasonable accommodations. If you believe you may have a qualifying disability or are concerned that you require reasonable accommodations to meet any of these technical standards, you may contact DSO, CFLC, or the Associate Dean of Student Services for further information. Clinical or lab faculty may also come forward to the Office of Student Services to indicate concerns regarding these technical standards for participation in clinical placements that will then be discussed with the student with appropriate steps taken.

# THE PH.D. PROGRAM

According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree represents the highest level of formal education for nurses in preparation for a career in research and the scholarship of discovery. Ph.D. graduates are prepared to build and communicate the knowledge base in the profession, develop the science, steward the profession, educate the next generation of nurses, define the uniqueness of nursing and maintain its professional integrity. In the academic setting, the Ph.D. is the highest academic degree and is required for success as a scientist in the multiple disciplines represented within educational institutions. In the scientific arena, the Ph.D. is the beginning preparation for the development of an independent research trajectory. Attainment of the Ph.D. requires a strong scientific emphasis within the discipline, an understanding of the science of related disciplines and translation science, dissemination of innovations, and interdisciplinary collaboration. In addition, for the profession to achieve this vision and make the maximum impact on the healthcare system, Ph.D. nursing scientists should reflect society at large (from: AACN, 2010, *The Research-Focused Doctoral Program In Nursing: Pathways To Excellence*).

The Ph.D. program at the Boston College Connell School of Nursing is a post-master's research-focused degree. The program aims to prepare nursing scholars and researchers who are prepared to lead the field. Ph.D. students are offered a variety of learning opportunities through close faculty-student mentorship, course work, interdisciplinary colloquia, independent study, and research practica. Ph.D. students have the opportunity to take courses and study with experts within the Connell School of Nursing, across the Boston College campus and with colleagues at affiliated health centers and universities in the greater Boston area. Policies and procedures for the program are consistent with those of the University. Individual plans of study are determined according to the student's background, research interests, and stage of scholarly development prior to enrollment.

Low student-faculty ratios, research mentorship and hands-on training experiences facilitate the development of students' scholarly and research trajectories and permit program completion within a normative amount of time. Ph.D. students have opportunities to work and study with accomplished faculty, many of whom have externally funded research grants (NIH and other), are fellows in the American Academy of Nursing, and contribute as journal editors and manuscript reviewers. This provides students with opportunities to work on the cutting edge of nursing science.

Although there is currently no formal accreditation body for Ph.D. programs in nursing, the Connell School of Nursing subscribes to the standards and recommendations outlined in the AACN (2010) report, *The Research-Focused Doctoral Program In Nursing: Pathways To Excellence*.

## **Program Objectives**

The graduate of the Ph.D. program will be prepared to:

1. Constructively critique and synthesize nursing and interdisciplinary knowledge within a substantive area of inquiry relevant to nursing practice.
2. Design, conduct, and disseminate innovative, rigorous, and ethically sound research that draws upon multiple methods to advance nursing science.
3. Assume leadership and collaborate with other disciplines to address contemporary healthcare concerns affecting health and well-being.

4. Use scholarly inquiry to generate and disseminate knowledge that facilitates humanization, advances the discipline, informs practice, and reshapes policy.
5. Articulate the perspective of nursing in interdisciplinary dialogue for the common good of a diverse and global society.

## **Ph.D. Student Fellowships and Other Funding Opportunities**

### **UNIVERSITY FELLOWSHIPS**

With generous funding from the university, CSON is able to award university fellowships to well qualified full-time Ph.D. students at the time of admission. The purpose of the university fellowship is to encourage highly qualified students to enroll in doctoral studies and to increase engagement as a student and developing researcher. University fellowships usually include full-time tuition (approximately 47 credits), health insurance, and a stipend across three (3) years of fellowship funding. University fellowship stipends (approximately \$30,000 per year in 2024-2025) are comparable to NIH pre-doctoral stipend levels.

University fellowships may be renewed up to twice (for a total of up to 3 years of funding), provided fellows remain in good academic standing, demonstrate significant progress toward the degree, demonstrate scholarly productivity and meet the expectations of the fellowship experience. Fellows are expected to be full-time students (i.e., enrolled in  $\geq 9$  credits per semester), committed to work approximately 16 hrs. per week on a faculty member's research project and limit outside employment to a maximum of two days per week during the semester. Fellows are also expected to attend brown bag seminars, PhD student forums, and other seminars and conferences (approximately 4 hrs. per week). Full time Ph.D. students may submit a [Travel Approval Form](#) to our finance team for consideration of up to \$1000 of reimbursement per academic year, up to the third year of active fellowship funding. Fellows sign an annual fellowship contract outlining these expectations.

Students who are on academic review and/or do not pass the comprehensive examination are not eligible to receive fellowship or other funding. Fellowship funds may not be used towards tuition for coursework unrelated to the Ph.D. or for coursework or comprehensive examination credits that are being repeated. Ph.D. fellows who obtain outside funding through NRSA awards, RWJF or similar mechanisms, may be eligible to retain a portion of their university fellowship. Please contact the office of the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Faculty Development to discuss fellowship and funding policies.

### **NATURE OF FELLOWSHIP WORK**

All full-time students who receive university fellowships will be assigned a research supervisor at the start of the program. The research supervisor may be the student's academic advisor, but may be another CSON faculty member who has agreed to provide and supervise a research fellowship experience. Whenever possible, the research fellowship experience will be in the student's area of interest. The main responsibility of the research fellowship supervisor is to provide opportunities for the fellow to engage in research experiences and activities and develop skills in research and scholarship. During the three year fellowship, students may complete a teaching fellowship. Teaching supervisors will be expert teachers and the TORs for courses that, whenever possible, provide a fit with the student's area of expertise. The teaching fellowship experience should provide students with opportunities to develop teaching skills related to classroom and/or clinical instruction. For more information, please see Experiential Training in Research & Teaching section.

### NIH NRSA PREDOCTORAL (F31) AWARDS

The purpose of the Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award (NRSA) Individual Predoctoral Fellowship (Parent F31) is to enable promising predoctoral students to obtain individualized, mentored research training from outstanding faculty sponsors while conducting dissertation research. Applicants for this F31 program are expected to propose a dissertation research project and training plan in scientific health-related fields relevant to the mission of the participating Institutes and Centers. This training plan should reflect the applicant's dissertation research project, and facilitate and clearly enhance the individual's potential to develop into a productive, independent research scientist. The training plan should document the need for, and the anticipated value of, the proposed mentored research and training in relationship to the individual's research career goals. The training plan should also facilitate the fellow's transition to the next stage of his/her research career. Applicants for the F31 must be Ph.D. students who have identified a dissertation research project and appropriate sponsor(s).

The Kirschstein-NRSA Individual Predoctoral Fellowship (F31) program may provide up to five years (typically 2-3 years) of support for research training which leads to the Ph.D. or equivalent research degree in the biomedical, behavioral, or clinical sciences. NRSA fellowships are available through many NIH institutes, including the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR). The current program announcement outlining the NRSA program may be found at:

<https://www.ninr.nih.gov/training/trainingopportunitiesextramural/training-grants>.

Additional information about NRSA programs may be found at the [Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award \(NRSA\)](#) website. Ph.D. students are encouraged to contact the Associate Dean for Nursing Research & Integrated Science or the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs & Faculty Development, early in their program to discuss NRSA applications.

### SURVEY OF EARNED DOCTORATES

Doctoral students are asked by Boston College to participate in a brief survey following their program completion. This is a university policy in collaboration with the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED) to track all graduating doctoral students across the country. The online survey will be administered by the Graduate Programs Assistant via email to the recent graduates. The survey will encompass all graduates in a given academic year (July 1 through June 30).

## **Faculty Roles in Ph.D. Student Advisement and Mentorship**

In addition to financial funding, the CSON supports its doctoral students and facilitates successful completion of the Ph.D. through close faculty-student mentorship. Ph.D. students work with, study with and are mentored by expert faculty within the CSON and across the university, as well as by inter-professional colleagues from collaborating organizations and universities in the greater Boston area.

Each Ph.D. student is assigned an **academic advisor** within the CSON at the time of admission. This faculty member helps the student to develop his/her plan of study and advises on academic matters, including preparation for the doctoral comprehensive examination. The advisor acts as a role model and mentor, facilitates professional growth and provides career advice. Every funded Ph.D. fellow is also assigned a **research supervisor**, who is an experienced faculty researcher who provides the fellow with "hands-on" research experiences on the supervisor's research projects. When possible, the faculty academic advisor will also be the research supervisor.

Non-fellows and part-time students are encouraged to undertake a similar supervised research experience / practicum. The third important faculty role is the **dissertation chairperson**, who is chosen by the



student (please see below under Dissertation Chair section). Although the way these roles are enacted may vary across individuals, a general summary of the roles and responsibilities follows.

**ADVISOR:** Guides the student through academic coursework and professional development

**Responsibilities:**

1. Collaborates with the student to map out plan to complete doctoral coursework
2. Recommends and facilitates networking to advance academic and professional goals
3. Promotes access to university and external resources

**RESEARCH SUPERVISOR:** Supervises the doctoral student in a research fellowship or practicum

**Responsibilities:**

1. Oversees student engagement in research that may include: CITI completion, literature reviews, IRB preparation, study recruitment and enrollment, preparation of the codebook, data collection, data entry and management, analysis of data, data coding, preparation of reports, and assistance with manuscript preparation
2. Provides a summary and evaluation of student research activity
3. Communicates as needed with the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies.

**DISSERTATION CHAIR:** Oversees all aspects of the dissertation completion from identification of the committee to dissemination of results

**Responsibilities:**

1. Collaborates with the student to identify committee members
2. Leads the dissertation and proposal defense processes
3. Advocates for consistent adherence to the dissertation proposal goals
4. Guides the candidate to set a realistic timeline for completion of the dissertation
5. Assists the candidate in navigating the IRB approval process
6. Guides the candidate toward achieving a high level of technical and ethical quality in the dissertation research
7. Supports dissemination of dissertation findings

## **Summary of Ph.D. Student Advisement & Mentorship**

In order to earn the Ph.D. degree, students must complete all degree requirements within a maximum of 8 consecutive years and a maximum of 10 consecutive years for the MS/PH.D. program. The Ph.D. program requirements are summarized below under five main headings. As the field continues to grow and change, program requirements will continue to shift and evolve in order to continue to prepare nurse scholars and researchers who are well positioned to lead the field into the future. The five major areas of program requirements are listed below and addressed in more depth in the following sections.

- I. CURRICULUM
- II. LANGUAGE COMPETENCY
- III. EXPERIENTIAL TRAINING IN RESEARCH & TEACHING
- IV. COMPLETION OF COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION
- V. DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

## Curriculum

The Ph.D. program curriculum includes core content in three core areas of study: knowledge development in nursing, substantive nursing content, and research methods. The knowledge development component includes courses in philosophy of science, epistemology of nursing, and strategies for developing nursing knowledge. Substantive nursing content is acquired through the study of nursing processes and outcomes, ethics, policy and cognate courses in the student's area of focus. The research component of the curriculum includes qualitative and quantitative research methods, statistics, research practica, and dissertation advisement. Experiential research activities also contribute significantly to students' research development. Relevant cognate courses are required to develop knowledge and expertise in the student's chosen area of focus in addition to the core areas of study. Consistent with AACN recommendations for research-intensive doctoral programs in nursing, most Ph.D. students at CSON pursue full-time study. However, part-time study is possible for well-qualified individuals. Interested students should contact the Associate Dean of Student Services and Ph.D. program director to discuss plans of study and funding opportunities for part-time Ph.D. students.

**Forty-seven (47) credits are the minimum for meeting the Ph.D. degree requirements for post-MS students.** The student's background, focus, and research interests may require additional coursework, training and credits beyond the 47 credit minimum. Students completing the MS/Ph.D. must complete the Master of Science, Advanced Generalist prior to beginning the Ph.D. coursework.

<b>FIRST YEAR</b>
<b>Fall Semester</b>
NURS 9806 Philosophical Inquiry for Knowledge Development in Nursing (3 cr.)
NURS 9807 Strategies for Knowledge Development in Nursing (3 cr.)
NURS 9808 Research Design and Methods I (3 cr.)
NURS 9810 Responsible Conduct of Research (1 cr.)
<b>Spring Semester</b>
NURS 9712 Integrative Review for Nursing Science (3 cr.)
NURS 9809 Research Design and Methods II (3 cr.)
MESA 6469 Intermediate Statistics (3 cr.)
<b>SECOND YEAR</b>
<b>Fall Semester</b>
NURS 9751 Advanced Qualitative Research Methods (3 cr.)
NURS 9812 Research Seminar: Developing the Purpose, Aims & Questions (2 cr.)
XXXX XXXX Cognate / elective or Advanced Statistics # (3 cr.)
XXXX XXXX Cognate / elective or Advanced Research Methods (3 cr.)
<b>Spring Semester</b>
NURS 9716 Healthcare Policy & Social Justice (3 cr.)
NURS 9813 Research Seminar: Refining the Research Plan (2 cr.)
NURS 9901 Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination (0 cr.)
XXXX XXXX Cognate / Elective or Advanced Statistics # (3 cr.)
XXXX XXXX Cognate / Elective or Advanced Research Methods (3 cr.)
<b>THIRD YEAR</b>

<b>Fall Semester</b>
NURS 9902 Dissertation Advisement (3 cr.)
Cognate/Elective (Optional) and Research or Teaching Fellowship/Residency
<b>Spring Semester</b>
NURS 9903 Dissertation Advisement (3 cr.)
Cognate/Elective (Optional) and Research or Teaching Fellowship/Residency
<b>EACH SEMESTER UNTIL GRADUATION</b>
NURS 9911 Doctoral Continuation (1 cr.)
<i>**Students are required to register for Doctoral Continuation each semester following completion of the above coursework until graduation</i>

*\*Curricula Subject to Change*

## **Language Competency**

Ph.D. students must demonstrate proficiency in either a language other than English, or demonstrate computer literacy. Completion of the doctoral program requirements such as course work, written and oral components of the comprehensive examination and dissertation research provides students with the skills needed to be computer literate. Therefore, computer literacy may be demonstrated by completion of all Ph.D. program requirements.

If a student wishes to demonstrate competency in a foreign language, an examination or series of courses may be completed. The languages accepted include most classical or modern languages. Students who wish to fulfill the language requirement by taking an exam in Spanish, French, German or Russian should register for these examinations in the Office of Testing. Students who wish to meet this requirement by demonstrating competency in a foreign language should contact the Associate Dean of Student Services.

## **Experiential Training in Research & Teaching**

Research training is a core function of the Ph.D. program. In addition to coursework in research design, methods and statistical analysis, Ph.D. students are also expected to complete a variety of experiential research training activities and seminars. **Training in the responsible conduct of research** is met through participation in the required seminar (NURS 9810) and completion of online CITI training. Students are required to maintain CITI certification throughout their enrollment in the Ph.D. program. **Ph.D. student forums and CSON-wide and BC-wide research seminars** are offered on a variety of research-related topics (e.g., developing a research trajectory, components of a grant proposal, and preparing research abstracts, posters and presentations). **Collaborative research experiences** with research fellowship supervisors, individual faculty or research teams provide students with hands-on training in the various phases of a research project and often yield opportunities for collaborative publications and presentations. Ph.D. research fellowships are one type of collaborative research experience; part-time Ph.D. students and non-fellows should contact their advisor and/or the Ph.D. program director to arrange comparable hands-on research training experiences. There are also opportunities for Ph.D. students to participate in research projects with other faculty and experts from CSON, BC and collaborating organizations in the area. Finally, Ph.D. students are encouraged and assisted to prepare **NRSA applications or small grants** to fund pilot studies and/or dissertations.

### **RESEARCH RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS**

Beginning with students admitted in 2016, each Ph.D. student must successfully complete an experiential research training experience or residency as a requirement for graduation. Full-time Ph.D. students who are funded research fellows meet this requirement through their research fellowship activities. All Ph.D. students must complete this requirement prior to submission of the Ph.D. dissertation proposal. The

purpose of the research residency is to provide the student with an in-depth hands-on research experience and to enhance their socialization into the role of a Ph.D.-prepared nurse researcher. For students who are not funded by a university fellowship, the research residency must include a minimum of 150 hours of experiential research learning activities. Examples of appropriate activities include, but are not limited to, development of an IRB application, instrument design, data collection, data analysis, development and/or presentation of research results at a conference or in a publication. These types of experiential learning activities, when undertaken in the role of Research Fellow or Research Assistant, may be counted toward the research residency requirement. Prior research experiences may be counted toward the research residency requirement through portfolio review. Students, with the help of their advisor and/or research supervisor, will identify specific learning objectives, activities and timetable for completion of their research residencies. The advisor and/or research supervisor, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Faculty Development, and the Ph.D. program director must approve the student's plan prior to beginning any residency-related activities. A copy of the approved plan will be placed in the student's file. Students will be assigned to research fellowship supervisors who can provide appropriate research opportunities.

In addition to research and knowledge development, doctorally-prepared nurses will be responsible for training the next generation of nurses. Many Ph.D. students intend to pursue careers in academia after graduation. As such, it is important that Ph.D. students develop beginning skills in nursing education and teaching prior to graduation. Please see below for additional information.

#### TEACHING RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS

Beginning with students admitted in 2016, each Ph.D. student must successfully complete an experiential training experience or residency in teaching / nursing education as a requirement for graduation. For students funded by a university fellowship, the teaching residency will occur at any time during the three year fellowship. For students who are not supported by a university fellowship, the teaching residency may be scheduled at any time in the student's program but must be completed before the final dissertation defense is scheduled. Students are expected to work with their faculty advisor to identify a teaching supervisor and to schedule educational workshops as needed. Students who have extensive teaching experience or who are experienced faculty members will be exempt from the teaching residency and if supported by a university fellowship they can continue to work with their research supervisor during the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of fellowship.

The purpose of the one-semester teaching residency is to increase knowledge of and competencies in the role of the Ph.D. prepared nurse educator. Examples of appropriate activities include, but are not limited to, developing course syllabi, developing lecture objectives with corresponding evaluation criteria, developing test items and evaluating their effectiveness, preparing and demonstrating effective in-class presentations and lectures, demonstrating appropriate use of A/V and other materials to enhance classroom presentations and completion of course(s) at the Center for Teaching Excellence including the Apprenticeship in College Teaching (ACT). These types of activities, when undertaken in the role of Teaching Assistant, may be counted toward this requirement. Students, with the help of their advisor/teaching mentor, will identify the specific objectives, learning activities and timetable for completion of their teaching residencies. The advisor, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs & Faculty Development, and Ph.D. program director must approve the student's plan for the teaching residency prior to beginning any residency-related activities. A copy of the approved plan will be placed in the student's file.

### **Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination**

#### PURPOSE OF THE PH.D. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION (COMPS)

The purpose of the Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination is to demonstrate mastery of the five program objectives through written and oral responses to questions developed by the Ph.D. Comps Committee faculty. Topics include, but are not limited to, knowledge development, research methods, substantive knowledge, ethical judgment, and nursing/healthcare issues and health policy. In responding to exam questions, students should integrate content from these areas.

There are two parts to the Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination: a written component and an oral component. The written examination is completed first. Students answer written questions in essay form. Responses should be complete and concise, and include references to the work of key authors. The answers should be written (typed) using 12-point font, and double spaced with 1-inch margins. The page limit is a maximum of 12 pages per question. Citations and references should be included using APA format (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Students attest their adherence to principles of academic integrity by signing a prescribed statement that accompanies the exam.

The student's written responses help to give focus to the oral portion, but do not limit discussion. Other topics related to the program objectives may be addressed during the oral portion of the examination.

The general criteria for evaluation include demonstration of:

- a. clarity and succinctness in written and oral discussion
- b. ability to conceptualize, analyze, and synthesize
- c. capacity for organized thought
- d. substantive knowledge
- e. research methods expertise

### ELIGIBILITY AND REGISTRATION

A student in good academic standing who has no incompletes or failures in required coursework may take the comprehensive exam during or after the last semester of required coursework. Students who intend to take the comprehensive examination must register for NURS 9901 Doctoral Comprehensives in the semester in which they plan to take the exam.

In addition, students intending to sit for the comprehensive examination should notify their advisor and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs & Faculty Development in the first two weeks of the semester in which they wish to take the examination. If the student has special needs that require accommodation during the written exam, a letter explaining the needs and requesting reasonable accommodation should be submitted to the Associate Dean of Student Services along with the application form. If not registered for other courses during the semester when they take the comprehensive examination, students will need to pay a fee (1 credit).

### PROCEDURES, RULES, AND GRADING

#### COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION COMMITTEE

The comprehensive examination committee is comprised of 3-5 faculty, most of whom teach in the Ph.D. program and/or serve on the Ph.D. program committee. Whenever possible, the student's advisor, chair, and/or research supervisor are not included on the student's comprehensive examination committee.

#### SCHEDULING

Comprehensive examinations are offered twice per year, in the spring (usually in April) and fall (usually early September). All students take the written component at the same time; the oral examination is scheduled within 1 – 2 weeks after the written portion has been completed. Whenever possible, the individual oral examinations are all scheduled to occur within a two day period. The times and dates of

the examinations are scheduled by the graduate office at the beginning of the semester. The Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Faculty Development and the Ph.D. Program Director will hold an information session early in the semester with students who are registered for comprehensive examinations; detailed information will be provided prior to or during this meeting.

### WRITTEN EXAMINATION

The exam consists of 3 or 4 questions. The questions are developed by the comprehensive examination committee members. Areas to be examined reflect the doctoral program objectives. Topics include but are not limited to knowledge development, research methods, substantive knowledge, ethical judgment, and nursing/healthcare issues and health policy. In responding to exam questions, students should integrate content from across these areas.

The written component of the comprehensive examination is usually given in a “take-home” exam format. Students may use their own computers and resources or complete the exam at BC. Each student has the same period of time in which to write their exam. Students with English as a second language are granted an additional two hours in order to complete the examination. The Assistant Director of Graduate Student Services verifies receipt of the student’s examination and answers. Comprehensive examinations and answers are reviewed by the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs and distributed to examination committee members for in-depth review and scoring.

### ORAL EXAMINATION

Upon completion of the written portion of the comprehensive examination, the oral portion is scheduled with the committee members for a period of 1.5 to 2 hours. The student's written responses help to give focus to the oral portion, but do not limit discussion. Other topics related to the program objectives may be addressed during the oral portion of the examination.

### RULES AND GRADING

Written answers must be in essay form, be complete and concise, and include references to the work of key authors in these areas. The exam should be typed in 12-point font, double spaced with 1-inch margins on all sides. The page limit is a total of 25 pages. References should be included, using APA format. References are not included in the page limits.

**Time limits and page limits are strictly enforced; answers that exceed the page or time limits will be disqualified and the exam will be graded as “Fail.” Students will then have to re-register and retake the comprehensive examination the next time it is offered.**

Students attest their adherence to principles of academic integrity by signing a prescribed statement that will accompany the exam. **Under no circumstances should students ever discuss the content or questions on the comprehensive examination with other students. To do so is a violation of academic integrity.**

### EVALUATION CRITERIA

The criteria for evaluation of the comprehensive examination include demonstration of:

1. Clarity and succinctness in written and oral discussion
2. Ability to conceptualize, analyze, and synthesize
3. Capacity for organized thought
4. Substantive knowledge
5. Research methods expertise

The following grading system is used:

Pass with distinction	PWD
Pass	P
Fail	F

The chairperson of the examination committee submits an official ballot, graded and signed by each member of the committee, to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Faculty Development. The student receives a copy of the ballot.

### CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE

A student who fails the comprehensive examination may retake the exam no more than once and no sooner than the following semester. The student should consult with their advisor, the Ph.D. program director and the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Faculty Development regarding the best time to retake the examination. The chairperson of the comps committee and the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Faculty Development will provide the student with a summary of their performance and areas in which the student needs to improve. A new committee may or may not be convened. The student must re-register for Doctoral Comprehensive (NURS 9901) in the semester in which the student plans to retake the comprehensive examination. Students who have completed all coursework but have not passed the written and oral portions of the comprehensive examination are not eligible to be admitted to candidacy and therefore may not register for dissertation advisement.

### ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY

A student attains the status of a doctoral candidate by passing the doctoral comprehensive examination and by satisfying all degree requirements except the dissertation. Doctoral candidates are required to register each semester for either Dissertation Advisement (NURS 9902 / 9903) or Doctoral Continuation (NURS 9911) until completion of the dissertation and graduation. Students should contact the Graduate Programs Office for information on how to register for Dissertation Advisement and Doctoral Continuation.

## **Doctoral Dissertation**

Students enter the dissertation phase of the doctoral program after passing the comprehensive examination. The appropriate procedures are described below in order to facilitate a successful transition from student to doctoral candidate and from doctoral candidate to graduate of the Ph.D. program. In general, there are 10 steps to complete the dissertation phase successfully.

Student dissertation proposals and dissertation defenses must be held during the academic year (i.e., September - May). Students may not defend their work during the summer months.

### STEP 1 - REGISTERING FOR DISSERTATION ADVISEMENT

After admission to candidacy, the candidate registers with his/her dissertation chairperson for Dissertation Advisement (NURS 9902 in fall semester and NURS 9903 in spring semester). If a candidate has questions or problems registering, they should contact the Graduate Programs Office. Each of these courses is 3 credits but is considered a full-time course load for registration purposes. The Teacher of Record (TOR) for NURS 9902/9903 is the chairperson of the dissertation committee, or, until the chair is named, the TOR is the student's advisor. The Graduate Programs Office will create sections that correspond with each faculty member. After the two semesters of dissertation advisement, doctoral candidates must continue to register for NURS 9911 Doctoral Continuation each semester until the dissertation is successfully defended and all degree requirements are completed. All candidates are required to register and pay for Doctoral Continuation (1 credit) each semester until they graduate. Failure to register for Doctoral Continuation can affect access to BC resources such as e-mail, library, databases, and other support services and resources. The University may de-enroll candidates from the program for

failure to register. Payment of equivalent doctoral enrollment fees is required before a candidate can return after a lapse in enrollment.

## STEP 2 - SELECTING THE DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

The purpose of the dissertation committee is to guide the candidate through the dissertation phase of the program and enhance the candidate's ability to contribute new knowledge or add to existing knowledge through research.

### PROCESS

Within 6 months of successfully completing the Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam, the candidate chooses the chairperson and committee members for their dissertation committee. The candidate usually selects the chairperson first. The candidate and chairperson together identify potential committee members who can facilitate the candidate's project as described below. The chairperson should be in place at the time the candidate enrolls for the first semester of Dissertation Advisement (NURS 9902). The entire dissertation committee should be in place prior to writing the dissertation proposal. In the event of a change of candidate focus, or other circumstances that hinder the chairperson and candidate working together, a new chairperson should be selected by the candidate in consultation with the Ph.D. program director and Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Faculty Development.

The **Dissertation Committee Formation Form** is completed by the candidate and signed by each dissertation committee member. The candidate then submits the form to the Graduate Programs Office. The Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Faculty Development formally appoints the committee by signing the Dissertation Committee Formation Form. The form is placed in the candidate's file and a copy is provided to the candidate. Once the Dissertation Committee Formation Form has been approved and filed, any changes to the committee membership must be formally approved. The dissertation committee chairperson should approve all changes to the committee membership. The Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Faculty Development should approve requests to change the dissertation committee chairperson. If any changes in committee membership are made during the dissertation phase, a **Dissertation Committee Change Form** should be completed and filed with the Graduate Programs Office.

### DISSERTATION COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Candidates should select dissertation committee members who will be available for full participation on the dissertation committee. Collectively the committee should be comprised of members who complement one another and are collectively able to provide expertise in each of the following areas: (a) substantive content area; (b) research methods and / or analytic approach; and/or (c) philosophical or conceptual underpinnings of the proposed study. Additionally, committee members should be able to provide access to institutional, environmental and/or population-related resources needed to complete the study.

The dissertation committee consists of a minimum of three members, each of whom must possess a Ph.D. or similar research-intensive degree. Clinical or content experts without research-intensive doctoral degrees (e.g., MD, DNP, JD, DPT, PharmD) may serve as a fourth member of the committee. At least two committee members must be doctoral-prepared faculty members from Connell School of Nursing (CSON). Two members of the committee must hold graduate degrees in nursing. At least two committee members should be tenured or tenure-track faculty members at CSON, BC, or a comparable institution. The remaining committee members may be (but are not required to be) members of the faculty of another school within the university or appropriately prepared persons outside the university who are qualified to serve as graduate faculty. When selecting a committee member from outside of the CSON, the candidate submits the individual's two page biosketch or CV to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Faculty Development. The Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Faculty Development approves the outside appointment by signing the Dissertation Committee Formation Form.



Faculty members who leave the CSON may serve on a dissertation committee and be counted as a CSON member for up to 5 years, provided they have previously worked with the candidate and meet the criteria outlined in the preceding paragraph (were tenured or tenure track with a Ph.D. or equivalent research intensive terminal degree). Faculty members cannot be the dissertation committee chair after they leave CSON but may remain on the candidate's committee as a member.

#### DISSERTATION COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

The dissertation committee chairperson is a CSON faculty member who agrees to take major responsibility for dissertation guidance. The chair is responsible for guiding and encouraging the candidate's design and execution of an original, high quality, Ph.D. level research project. The end result of this effort is expected to be a rigorous dissertation that makes a substantive contribution to the discipline. Tenured and tenured-track faculty members in CSON are eligible to serve as dissertation committee chairpersons, provided they have previous experience serving as a dissertation committee member. Chairpersons who are recent retirees of CSON may continue in their chairperson role for students to which they commit their time. In general, it is recommended that untenured assistant professors should not chair dissertation committees.

The responsibilities of the dissertation chair include the following:

- Collaborate with the candidate regarding the selection of other committee members.
- Supervise the formulation/writing of the candidate's proposal. The candidate should consult with the committee members for advice on the dimensions of the study; however, it is the responsibility of the dissertation chair, in conjunction with the candidate, to submit to the committee members an approved proposal.
- Ensure that candidates adhere to CSON and university policies and processes related to timing and all other aspects of the dissertation.
- Direct the candidate in carrying out the approved study and closely supervise the writing of the dissertation.
- Inform the scheduling of the final dissertation defense to provide as public a forum as possible. The final defense should not be scheduled until:
  - - a) the dissertation has been completed;
    - b) the dissertation has been approved by the dissertation chair; in collaboration with the committee members i.e., it meets minimum standards (fidelity to the proposal, methodologically and analytically rigorous, conforms to APA (6<sup>th</sup> or latest edition) in terms of format, style, readability, and presentation); and,
    - c) the chair and committee members believe the candidate is prepared to defend the dissertation.

#### STEP 3 - PREPARING THE DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

Candidates should communicate frequently and work closely with members of the dissertation committee, especially the chairperson, to ensure progress in all areas of the proposal. The proposal should be written so that it will, in large part, comprise the initial chapters of the dissertation and provide the basis for application to the appropriate Institutional Review Board(s).

#### STEP 4 - NOTIFYING OF INTENT TO SUBMIT PROPOSAL

Candidates indicate their intent to submit a dissertation proposal by filing the **Intent to Submit Dissertation Proposal form** with the Graduate Programs Office. This form is signed by the student and the dissertation committee chairperson to indicate that the chairperson has approved that the proposal in its current form may be distributed to committee members and the Graduate Programs Office. The

dissertation proposal should be a format similar to the sample on page 83 and should also include a title page and an abstract. The abstract should include: title, significance of problem to be studied, research questions, and proposed method.

The dissertation proposal is distributed to committee members and the Graduate Programs Office and, at the same time, the Intent to Submit Dissertation Proposal form is filed with the Graduate Programs Office. The candidate works with the Graduate Programs Office staff to tentatively identify proposal hearing dates and times. The proposal hearing may be scheduled for any day and time at least two weeks (14 days) after the date when the form was filed and the dissertation proposal was distributed.

#### STEP 5 - HOLDING THE PROPOSAL HEARING

Prior to holding the dissertation proposal hearing, the dissertation committee members should be in contact with the chairperson and agree that the plan for research is ready for implementation and the proposal is acceptable. Any committee member who has serious reservations about the status of the proposal will advise the chairperson of the dissertation committee, who will then meet with the candidate and advise them to postpone the proposal hearing. The chairperson will also notify the Graduate Programs Office that the proposal hearing will be delayed. When the committee members all agree that the candidate is ready to proceed, they sign the **Dissertation Proposal Hearing Scheduling Form** and provide the candidate with their available days and times for the proposal hearing. The candidate files the signed Dissertation Proposal Hearing Scheduling Form with the Graduate Programs Office at least 3 days in advance of the desired hearing date(s). By signing, all committee members indicate their agreement that the candidate may proceed with the proposal hearing. The Graduate Programs Office will check for room availability and scheduling conflicts and notify the candidate and their chairperson of the schedule. Although this defense is informal, candidates may present slides and/or handouts as appropriate. The exact format and expectations should be established by the committee chairperson.

At the proposal defense hearing, the candidate will meet with members of their dissertation committee to discuss the dissertation proposal and to answer questions related to the proposal. The committee will make one of four decisions at the end of the hearing:

- The proposal is accepted.
- The proposal is accepted with stated qualifications and specific changes. Notation is also made as to who will review and approve the changes.
- The proposal is rejected in its present form, but may be revised and resubmitted at a later date; another proposal hearing will be scheduled when the committee agrees the proposal is ready.
- The proposal is rejected.

At the conclusion of the proposal hearing, committee members sign the **Dissertation Proposal Hearing Outcome Form** (provided by the dissertation chair at the time of the hearing). Committee members sign the form and indicate one of the four above outcomes. If minor revisions are required, the committee indicates whether the chairperson, a designated committee member or the entire committee must approve the revisions. The candidate submits the form to the Graduate Programs Office after the proposal defense hearing. Signatures indicate agreement with the outcome checked on the form. After the proposal defense hearing, the candidate makes revisions as recommended by the committee, submits copies of the revised proposal to committee members and to the Graduate Programs Office, and arranges for follow-up meetings with committee members as necessary to meet the candidate's needs.

#### STEP 6 - OBTAINING IRB APPROVALS

Human participants' protection is a critical step that precedes data collection. Therefore, data collection for the dissertation does not begin until after the dissertation committee and the relevant IRBs approve the

proposal in writing. The Boston College IRB will not approve a proposal until the committee has approved it at the proposal defense. Pilot studies may be conducted before the dissertation proposal defense with IRB approval. Faculty will guide candidates in obtaining the relevant IRB approvals for this pilot work. Any applications for grants or for IRB approval must have prior written approval by the chairperson of the dissertation committee.

As of July 1, 2015, the Boston College IRB protocol submission process has changed and the IRB has transitioned to an on-line system called CyberIRB. Investigators should submit initial protocols and complete amendments and continuing review applications online through CyberIRB. These policies and procedures are on the Vice Provost for Research website:

<https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/research/sites/vice-provost-for-research/research-protections/policies--procedures.html>

Plans for obtaining IRB approval at Boston College, and at other agencies as necessary, must be clearly identified in the dissertation proposal. Appropriate letters of approval must be submitted to the chair of the committee prior to initiating data collection.

Candidates are expected to utilize principles of responsible conduct of research, and to implement any specifications or conditions imposed by IRBs. The dissertation committee and the IRB must approve any deviation from the approved dissertation proposal related to human subjects participation. Candidates must submit yearly or periodic reports and/or applications for continuing approval to the IRB(s) as specified by each IRB.

The final dissertation should include a copy of the IRB approval in the appendix (Institutional identifiers may be redacted as necessary at the discretion of the committee). The text should also state that IRB approval was obtained.

## STEP 7 - CONDUCTING THE RESEARCH AND WRITING THE DISSERTATION

### CONDUCTING THE DISSERTATION RESEARCH

The completion of a dissertation is a major requirement for the doctoral degree. It is an independent research study and scholarly work that must be approved by a committee of readers. The dissertation research is conducted in keeping with the dissertation proposal that was approved by the candidate's committee. Any changes in the plan, procedures, sample or any other aspect of the study must be submitted and approved by the committee, in writing, and the records in the Graduate Programs Office must be updated. All IRB approvals must be obtained before any participant recruitment or data collection may occur. The candidate must have completed training in the responsible conduct of research (through NURS 9810 or similar) prior to data collection. The candidate and any research assistants must also hold current CITI certification at the time of data collection.

### WRITING THE DISSERTATION

The final dissertation is developed and written under the supervision of the committee chair and the other committee members. The process for development and review shall be at the discretion of the chair in concert with the other committee members and the candidate. The dissertation should be written in accordance with APA format (6<sup>th</sup> edition). Grammar, syntax, writing style, etc. should be scholarly and consistent with doctoral standards. It is to be expected that candidates will submit multiple drafts and complete numerous revisions while writing the dissertation.

### CHANGES IN DISSERTATION COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

If changes occur in committee membership at any time during the dissertation phase, a **Dissertation Committee Change Form** should be filed in the Graduate Programs Office. The Associate Dean for

Graduate Programs must approve all changes. New committee members must agree with the approved proposal or a new proposal hearing may be required.

#### MANDATORY ATTENDANCE AT O'NEILL LIBRARY WORKSHOP – eTD@BC

All candidates who are completing doctoral dissertations must attend a library workshop on how to prepare and upload the dissertation. The workshops are called “eTD@BC” and are held throughout the academic year in the fall and spring semesters. Students must provide documentation of attendance at these workshops to the Graduate Programs Office. Information about the workshops is located at [Home - Electronic Theses and Dissertations - Libraries at Boston College \(bc.edu\)](#).

#### STEP 8 - DEFENDING THE DISSERTATION

Candidates who have successfully completed the proposal hearing and written the dissertation are required to defend their dissertation research in a public hearing. The public oral defense of the dissertation followed by uploading the final dissertation into ProQuest are the last milestones in completion of the Ph.D. degree. Dissertation defenses should be open to the public; as such, dissertation defenses may only be scheduled during the academic year (i.e., between September 1 and June 1 and not during spring or winter breaks when classes are not in session).

When the candidate completes a final version of the dissertation and all of its associated components, they submit the final version to all members of the committee with a copy to the Graduate Programs Office. Committee members should be allowed a minimum of 21 days to review the final dissertation. The candidate becomes eligible to schedule an oral defense when all members of the committee have reviewed the complete dissertation with all components (including face page, dissertation committee signature page, copyright page, abstract, acknowledgements, table of contents, appendices), and agreed that the dissertation is complete and ready for presentation. All members of the committee must sign the **Intent to Defend Doctoral Dissertation Form** indicating that they have read the final draft, that it is complete, and that they agree that the candidate is ready to proceed with the defense. The dissertation defense cannot be scheduled until this signed form is submitted to the Graduate Programs Office. Committee members' signatures indicate that no substantive changes need to be made prior to the defense (other than correcting a minimum number of typographical errors).

At least three weeks prior to the desired date of the defense, the candidate submits the signed **Intent to Defend the Doctoral Dissertation Form** to the Graduate Programs Office and identifies potential dates and times for the defense. The candidate verifies that the copy of the dissertation that the Graduate Programs Office has is the final pre-defense version, and includes all of the components identified above. Then, the Graduate Programs Office works with the candidate to schedule a room for the defense and arrange for any needed equipment.

The final pre-defense version of the dissertation that is submitted to the committee and the Graduate Programs Office should be considered a final product pending any minor changes or editorial corrections made by the committee as a result of the defense. Note that if any copyrighted materials (e.g., instruments) have been used, the candidate must have obtained written permission from the copyright holder both for permission to use the material in the research, and for inclusion and publication in the dissertation. If the copyright holder does not give permission to include the printed material in the dissertation, then the candidate cannot include copies of such material in the final version of the dissertation. Documentation of permissions for use, confirmation of purchase, and relevant correspondence are included in the appropriate appendix in the dissertation.

#### CONDUCT OF THE DEFENSE

The dissertation defense is an open hearing. As such, dissertation defenses may only be held during the academic year and should not be held at times when most faculty are unavailable (e.g., summers, semester

breaks, during faculty assembly). Posting of public notices of the defense is the responsibility of the Graduate Programs Office. The candidate is required to bring copies of the dissertation abstract to the defense for audience distribution.

The dissertation defense is a formal occasion for the candidate to defend their scholarly work publicly. At the defense, the candidate presents a summary of the completed research and responds to questions from the committee and other attendees. The dissertation committee chairperson runs the meeting and specifies the format and timeline with the candidate in advance. The dissertation defense is to be based on the final dissertation that was submitted to and reviewed by the committee. No new findings or interpretations are to be presented by the student. Except in unusual circumstances, dissertation defenses will not exceed two hours. When the committee has been satisfied and has indicated its desire to vote, the members will meet privately and will reach a decision on the outcome of the dissertation and defense.

The committee will deliberate and vote for Pass or Fail. The committee will provide a list of recommendations for changes and revisions to the dissertation. In general, major changes, or any changes substantive enough to require more than two weeks to complete should be the basis for a failure. All members of the committee must sign the ballot before the dissertation can be considered accepted. The outcome of the pass / fail vote and any necessary revisions or changes will be recorded on the **Dissertation Defense Outcome form** and submitted to the Graduate Programs Office after the defense is completed. The candidate's committee determines the outcome after the defense. Because the outcome is not decided until after the committee meets in private, celebrations prior to the announcement of the outcome are not appropriate.

The candidate will be informed of the committee's decision as soon as the committee has finished its deliberation and voting. **If the committee is satisfied with the dissertation, original signatures should be obtained on the Dissertation Signatures Title Page at the conclusion of the defense.** The candidate should prepare the Dissertation Signatures Title Page in advance of the dissertation defense and bring them with him/her to the defense. If substantive changes are required, signatures should be delayed until these changes are completed to the satisfaction of the committee.

**The signed Dissertation Signatures Title Page is submitted to the Graduate Programs Office when all revisions have been completed and the final version of the dissertation has been approved by the chairperson and dissertation committee.** The Graduate Programs Office sends one copy to the eTD coordinator / digital preservation manager at the O'Neill Library and the original form is retained in the candidate's file. The Graduate Programs Office will also email the eTD coordinator and notify them that the candidate is cleared to upload the dissertation.

Although not required, doctoral graduates are expected to publish the results of their dissertation research in a peer-reviewed journal or other appropriate publication outlet and/or to present their results at a scholarly conference. Faculty members who have made substantive contributions to the study sometimes collaborate on writing the paper for publication. In all cases, however, the author of the dissertation is the first author listed on any paper based on the dissertation submitted for publication and ethical guidelines related to authorship should be followed. Candidates whose work is accepted for publication are asked to send a copy of the article to the Graduate Programs Office.

#### STEP 9 - UPLOADING THE FINAL APPROVED DISSERTATION INTO PROQUEST

Completion, defense, and upload of the final version of the dissertation must occur within 8 years of initial enrollment into the Ph.D. program, or 10 years for the MS/Ph.D. program. This period includes any leaves of absence (LOA). LOA forms and procedural information are available from the Graduate

Programs Office. It is the candidate's responsibility to be aware of the deadline for submission of the final version of the dissertation.

#### UPLOADING THE FINAL DISSERTATION IN THE eTD SYSTEM (aka DEPOSITING)

After final revisions have been reviewed and approved by the dissertation committee members and chairperson, and the 3 signed copies of the Dissertation Signatures Title Page have been submitted to the Graduate Programs Office, students will be able to upload the final approved version of their dissertations into ProQuest through the eTD system of the O'Neill Library. The eTD uploading process is explained during the library's mandatory "eTD@BC" Workshop. Additional questions should be directed to the Scholarly Communication Librarian at the O'Neill Library.

After the dissertation has been uploaded to the eTD system, the Graduate Programs Office and Associate Dean of Student Services will receive notification of the upload, review and approve it. Dissertations that are not in compliance with the above requirements will not receive approval. All must be done before the graduation deadline.

**Please note: Digital images of signatures should never be included in the electronic version of the dissertation (e.g., IRB forms, copyright permissions, etc.) Please remove all signature pages before uploading the final dissertation.**

#### COPYRIGHT PAGE

Regardless of which option (open access or traditional publishing) you select with UMI Dissertation Publishing (ProQuest), this page is required and must conform to sample; otherwise, the Graduate Programs Office reserves the right to require the page to be redone. The copyright year should match the date of defense.

#### DISSERTATION EMBARGO POLICY

Upon completion of a doctoral dissertation in the Connell School of Nursing, the graduate may request an embargo for not more than two years without special permission. To request an extension beyond two years, but for no more than five years, the graduate must submit a written request with rationale to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Faculty Development. Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Faculty Development and the dissertation committee chair (and co-chair, if any) must approve any request for an extension beyond two years. Permission will only be granted for specific and extraordinary reasons, such as the graduate's intention to publish work from the dissertation in a journal or book with a publisher that restricts consideration of manuscripts derived from dissertations that have been made available online. It is the graduate's responsibility to request an extension of the dissertation embargo. Permission is not guaranteed.

Students who propose to conduct dissertation research that utilizes existing data or specimens that are not solely owned by the student should anticipate and discuss any data use or publication restrictions with the owner(s) of the data prior to the dissertation proposal hearing. Any such restrictions should be addressed at the dissertation proposal hearing and approved by the dissertation committee and chair. If data use restrictions or agreements may result in a subsequent request for an embargo extension beyond two years, it is preferred that the request be submitted to the dissertation chair(s), Ph.D. program director and the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Faculty Development at the time of the dissertation proposal hearing.

#### STEP 10 - SCHEDULING GRADUATION

Candidates who wish to earn their degree by a specific graduation date need to meet the deadlines published in the academic calendar by the registrar's office for completing all degree requirements including uploading or depositing the final dissertation. The BC academic calendar is located at [Current](#)

[Academic Calendar - Office of Student Services - Boston College \(bc.edu\)](#). Candidates need to plan well in advance to complete the dissertation and the defense, and any necessary revisions, before the specified deadlines. It is not unusual for committees to require revisions or modifications in the dissertation report following the defense. Candidates should reserve time and resources for making these changes after the defense and before the deadline for uploading / depositing the final version of the dissertation. Candidates should refer to the university calendar or contact the Graduate Programs Office for specific dates. Three original signed and approved dissertation title pages must also be filed in the Graduate Programs Office before the university deadline.

Students must sign up for graduation online via Agora portal by the date specified for each semester. This procedure involves verifying personal information and specifying the name to be written on the diploma. Students also need to notify the Graduate Programs Office in writing of their plans to graduate.

The University awards degrees three times a year: May, August 30, and December 30; a commencement ceremony is held only in May. Graduates who have been awarded degrees the previous August and December are invited to participate in the May graduation. The dissertation must be uploaded into ProQuest through the eTD system at the library by the deadlines posted in the academic calendar (usually early April) in order to officially participate in the May commencement and receive a degree at that time. Ph.D. candidates who complete all degree requirements by the deadlines for August 30 or December 30 graduations are eligible to receive their degree as of those dates. Since there are no commencement exercises in December or August, the names of those receiving degrees will be included in the program of the following May commencement. Graduates who would like to participate in the commencement ceremonies the following May are invited to do so. They must notify the graduate office by January 15<sup>th</sup>. Graduates should contact the Graduate Programs Office with any questions.

**Only those Ph.D. candidates who have completed all degree requirements and uploaded their final dissertation into ProQuest through the library eTD system by the posted deadline for May graduation will be able to walk in the May graduation ceremony. Those who are not able to meet the May graduation deadlines will receive their degree at the next graduation date and will be eligible to participate in the commencement ceremony the following May.**

## **Dissertation Formats**

### **TYPES OF DISSERTATIONS**

There are two types of PhD Dissertations possible at the Boston College School of Nursing:

1) Manuscript Option Dissertation and 2) Traditional Dissertation.

The Manuscript Option Dissertation advances the student's publication record to strongly position the student for post-doctoral fellowships and faculty positions. The Manuscript Option Dissertation includes at least three manuscripts (at least one of which is data-based) anchored by introductory and conclusion chapters.

A Traditional Dissertation also has introductory and conclusion chapters, but in lieu of manuscripts includes three additional chapters covering review of the literature, methods and results.

Students, in consultation with their Dissertation Chair, should make the decision regarding what type of Dissertation to complete as early as possible as the requirement for one manuscript to be published (or accepted for publication) prior to Final Dissertation Defense may delay the student's time to degree completion.

**Several factors should be considered in the decision - making process:**

- Some Dissertation Chairs require students to complete a manuscript option– students should have a conversation with their Chairs around Dissertation expectations as early as possible.
- Some international students are required by their sponsoring government to complete a Traditional Dissertation– it is the student’s responsibility to know the requirements of the sponsoring agency and to communicate that to the Chair early in the program.
- The Manuscript Option Dissertation is a different way of completing the competencies of the program and making an important contribution to the advancement of science in a way that maximizes timely publication of that research. Both types of dissertations are required to meet the standard of publishable and impactful research with comparable scope.
- Given the publication requirement of the Manuscript Option Dissertation, it is strongly advised that students who choose this option submit their first manuscript for publication no later than the second year of their program of study.
- Dissertation Chairs may consider additional factors in their decision to advise the student to choose one option over another.

CSON PH.D. MANUSCRIPT DISSERTATION OPTION

PROCEDURE

The decision regarding which type of dissertation to pursue should be made as early in the program as possible and in collaboration with the Dissertation Chair. This requires the selection of a Dissertation Chair and approval by the Dissertation Chair. Specifically, this decision must be made prior to the proposal defense. In the rare case that a student successfully defends a Dissertation Proposal for one type of Defense (e.g., Manuscript Option Dissertation) and then decides to change to a Traditional Dissertation, a new Proposal Defense must be conducted.

The Proposal Defense and Final Dissertation Defense procedures are similar for both types of Dissertations; but the content and layout of the Proposal and Dissertation differs by type. The Manuscript Option Dissertation is described below. Details regarding the Traditional Dissertation are outlined in the PhD handbook

POLICY

A **minimum of three 1st- authored manuscripts**, at least one of which must be data-based, is required, and all manuscripts must represent work completed during the student’s PhD study at Boston College. As faculty chairs are directly involved with the student in the preparation of the dissertation manuscripts, they are included as authors on the final manuscripts. This process is well supported by the International Journal of Medical Education (IJME).

Prior to the Dissertation Defense, **at least one manuscript** must be accepted for publication or published in an indexed, peer-reviewed professional journal that publishes original research. The Dissertation must be first-authored by the student and represent research primarily conducted by the student.

MANUSCRIPT DISSERTATION OPTION DEFENSE

The following documents are required for the Proposal Defense of the Manuscript Option Dissertation.

1. **Introduction** (Chapter 1)

Chapter 1 of a Manuscript Dissertation Option is a little longer than a Traditional Dissertation

Chapter 1 (approximately 15-20 pages) includes the:

- a. significance of the research proposed
- b. brief review of the literature



- c. overall purpose of the body of work to be represented by the proposed set of manuscripts
- d. table that outlines each chapter and associated aims
- e. aims associated with each individual manuscript
- f. overarching theoretical framework or conceptual basis for the entire body of proposed research
- g. implications of the research for nursing science

In particular, careful attention should be given to the overall goal and purpose of the Manuscript Option Dissertation and how the set of manuscripts work together to achieve this purpose, separate from how each manuscript addresses a specific aim of the Dissertation. This is often the most challenging part of Chapter 1 to write, but is a necessary expectation of the Manuscript Option Dissertation and the successful defense of a particular set of manuscripts.

**2. Manuscript Chapters** (minimum of 3) or one chapter for each manuscript.

Each manuscript chapter (and its preceding page) should stand alone as a significant contribution that is comparable in scope to a chapter in a traditional dissertation.

- a. Each proposed manuscript chapter (and any manuscript that has already been published or accepted) should be included in the Dissertation Proposal Defense document. No more than two manuscripts to be submitted for the dissertation may be published or accepted for publication prior to the proposal defense. (Students are not limited in the number of other manuscripts they publish as 1st or co-author during their program).
- b. Manuscripts that are already published (or accepted for publication) should be included in their entirety using the required formatting guidelines for dissertations. The manuscript should include an introductory page with title of the manuscript, authorship, name of journal, brief description of the journal and the journal's impact factor.
- c. Manuscripts that are being proposed should include an introductory page with proposed title of the manuscript, proposed authorship, name of proposed target journal (including brief description of the journal audience, purpose and impact factor), and expected stage of submission at the time the dissertation will be defended (e.g., submitted, in review, published).

The manuscript, itself, should contain an appropriate (for the target journal) introduction, literature review (including theoretical/conceptual framework and purpose/aims), proposed method section (including description of relevant human subjects protections) and analytic plan.

The introductory page for all manuscript chapters should also include the following statement **“This manuscript represents a significant contribution to the dissertation work.”**

**Examples of manuscripts**

Examples of data-based papers include quantitative or qualitative analyses, meta-analysis, psychometric testing of a measurement instrument, literature review or meta-analysis that includes analysis (not just description) of a body of literature.

Examples of other appropriate papers include, but are not limited to systematic review of literature, concept analysis, methods papers, or theory application.

**3. Final Chapter** (two sections)

- a. Discussion: This section presents interpretation of the results of the Dissertation as a whole and should include a discussion of the theoretical and practical implications of the

findings across all manuscripts included in the Dissertation. In addition to the methodological, theoretical, and clinical importance of the research, the relationship between the student's findings and previous research, and prior literature should be discussed.

- b. Summary and implications: In this section, students should succinctly integrate the set of manuscripts, and summarize the relationships among the problem(s) addressed by the dissertation, the review of the literature, the methods, the findings and the salient themes presented in the discussion section. In particular, students should refer back to the overall goal and purpose of the work represented by the set of manuscripts that was put forth in Chapter 1. This section should conclude with implications for nursing and other disciplines, strengths and weaknesses of the research, and suggestions for future research. This important section should be concise and complete.

#### **4. References and Appendices**

- a. References to the literature should be confined to sources actually cited in the prior chapters.
- b. The appendices should include a copy of the consent form for human subjects research, pertinent communications, copies of the interview guides used for data collection, secondary tables, protocols, etc.

#### **COPYRIGHT AND PERMISSION TO REPRINT**

When previously published copyrighted materials are presented in a Dissertation, the student must obtain a signed waiver from the copyright owner (usually the publisher or journal) and include it as an appendix in the final Dissertation. Generally, journals that own the copyright of the manuscript usually grant permission for the manuscript to be reprinted as part of the final, submitted Dissertation. Some publishers do not allow the inclusion of previously published manuscripts to be incorporated into the Dissertation, but do allow pre-proof galleys to be included; some journals impose time restraints (e.g., when the Dissertation can be available on ProQuest). Students must contact the publisher/journal about the intent to include the paper in a Dissertation prior to submitting the final version to the library to ensure there is no violation of the copyright agreement with the journal. Boston College library guidelines related to Dissertations, including copyright, can be found at <https://libguides.bc.edu/graduate-etd/home>

Students should be aware that “permission to reprint” previously published work is separate from the decision to copyright the Dissertation. Manuscript Option Dissertations are much more challenging to copyright and students should consult their Dissertation Chair regarding the advantages and disadvantages of copyrighting a Manuscript Option Dissertation.

#### **ELECTRONIC PUBLICATION OF DISSERTATION (ALL DISSERTATIONS)**

All doctoral candidates who are completing Dissertations must attend a library workshop on how to prepare and upload the dissertation prior to uploading / depositing the Final Dissertation. The workshops, “eTD@BC”, are held twice per year in October and February. Information about the workshops is located at [Home - Electronic Theses and Dissertations - Libraries at Boston College \(bc.edu\)](#).

The Scholarly Communication Librarian at O’Neill Library is also available to answer questions ([etd-support@bc.edu](mailto:etd-support@bc.edu)).

The library has options related to embargoing open access publications, and students should consider those options as related to future publications from the Dissertation. The Library requires students to submit an electronic copy of their Doctoral Dissertation, which will be accessible in the Student Scholar

Archive. Students should submit their electronic copy in PDF format. The document is published as "Open Access" and is made available for worldwide access immediately. This is the recommended option, particularly for Manuscript Option Dissertations where chapters may already be published. The document may be published on "delayed" or "secured" release. The maximum period for this delay is three years. At the end of this time, the Dissertation will be released for worldwide access. Students should consult with their Dissertation Chair regarding the decision to delay/embargo the Dissertation.

### SAMPLE DISSERTATION PROPOSAL FORMAT

Ph.D. dissertations and dissertation proposals should follow APA format (6<sup>th</sup> edition). A suggested content outline for the dissertation proposal is provided below. The actual content outline and any additional information that should be included in the proposal will be determined by the dissertation committee chairperson and members. The content outline will be modified for qualitative and/or mixed methods proposals. The methods section of a dissertation proposal is usually written in the present or future tense as the study has not yet been conducted (e.g., the study sample will include. . .; participants will be...). Literature reviews are usually written in the past tense (please see APA 6<sup>th</sup> edition [2010]). In general, 1 inch margins on all sides are appropriate; however, if the student intends to have the dissertation bound, the left margin may be increased to 1 ¼ - 1 ½ inches. Tables should be included in the text.

### **ABSTRACT**

#### **CHAPTER ONE: STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

- Statement of Problem
- Significance of Problem
- Purpose of the Study
- Definitions and Assumptions Based on Existing Knowledge
- Aims, Research Questions and/or Hypotheses
- Overview of theoretical framework (sometimes included here)

#### **CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

- Theoretical framework (unless qualitative methods requiring inductive theory development after data analysis are proposed)
- Background / Synthesized Review of Literature
- Relevant Findings from Preliminary Studies
- Other information deemed relevant by the committee

#### **CHAPTER THREE: DESIGN & METHODS**

- Study design / Methodology
- Site and Sampling
- Procedures
- Measures / Instruments
- Data Analysis Plan
- Timeline for Completion
- Plans for IRB Approval at Boston College and other agencies.

### **APPENDICES**

- Instruments / Consent forms / Letters of support or approvals from agencies and/or IRBs.

### SAMPLE FINAL DISSERTATION FORMAT

The style and formatting for all aspects of the dissertation should adhere to APA manual 6<sup>th</sup> edition (2010) (e.g., tables, figures, page numbering, spacing, use of headings and subheadings, citations, references,

etc.). The methods and results of the final dissertation are usually written in the past tense in the final dissertation because the study has been completed. (e.g., the final study sample included; the participants were. . .). The content outline will be modified for dissertations that employ qualitative approaches or mixed methods and may include other sections as deemed appropriate by the committee chairperson. In general, 1 inch margins on all sides are appropriate; however, if the student intends to have the dissertation bound, the left margin may be increased to 1 ¼ - 1 ½ inches. Tables should be included in the text.

## **TITLE PAGE**

## **ABSTRACT**

### **CHAPTER ONE: STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Statement of Problem  
Significance of Problem  
Purpose of the Study  
Definitions and Assumptions Based on Existing Knowledge,  
Aims, Research Questions and/or Hypotheses

### **CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

Theoretical basis (unless qualitative methods requiring inductive theory development after data analysis are proposed)  
Background / Synthesized Review of Literature  
Relevant Findings from Preliminary Studies  
Other information deemed relevant by the committee

### **CHAPTER THREE: DESIGN & METHODS**

Study design / Methodology  
Site and Sampling  
Procedures  
Measures / Instruments  
Data Analysis Plan

## **CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS**

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION**

## **APPENDICES**

Instruments / Consent forms / Letters of support or approvals from agencies and/or IRBs.

## **Dissertation and Graduation Completion Checklist**

### **After successful completion of the Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam**

- Enroll in Dissertation Advisement course with your advisor during the two semesters after comps:
  - NURS9902 (Fall)
  - NURS9903 (Spring)
- Each semester after, enroll in Doctoral Continuation (NURS9911) with your advisor until you have successfully defended your dissertation.
- Select dissertation committee members; if a committee member is from outside of Boston College, submit a copy of their CV to the Graduate Programs Office.

### **Form to be completed:**

- **Dissertation Committee Formation Form**

- If you add or remove a dissertation committee member during your dissertation research, submit the **Dissertation Committee Change Form** to the Graduate Programs Office.
- If your advisor/chair changes during your dissertation research, submit the **Doctoral Change of Advisor Form** to the Graduate Programs Office.
- Prepare the dissertation proposal. When complete, schedule your dissertation proposal defense.

### **Form to be completed:**

- **Intent to Submit Dissertation Proposal Form**
- **Dissertation Proposal Hearing Scheduling Form**

- Once you have successfully defended your dissertation proposal, submit a copy of the approved proposal to the Graduate Programs Office to be filed.

### **Form to be completed:**

- **Dissertation Proposal Hearing Outcome Form**

- Obtain IRB approval(s) from Boston College and other agencies before beginning research.
- When you know which semester you plan to defend, notify the Graduate Programs Office to ensure your graduation term in the university system is correct.
- Prior to when you plan to defend your dissertation, you must attend an eTD@BC workshop held by the library to learn the process for submitting your dissertation at Boston College. These workshops are generally held each October and February. Please contact the ETD Administrator ([etd-support@bc.edu](mailto:etd-support@bc.edu)) with any additional questions.

### **At least 5 weeks before your planned dissertation defense date:**

- Submit the final draft of your dissertation, including abstract, title pages, and appendices, to your dissertation committee for review.
- Once your dissertation committee has approved your dissertation, you can begin scheduling your defense. The Graduate Programs Office must be informed of the defense date. They will assist you in scheduling a room for your defense.

Form to be completed:

- **Intent to Defend Doctoral Dissertation Form**

- Upon successful defense of your dissertation, obtain signatures from your committee confirming that your dissertation is ready for publication.

Forms to be completed:

- **Dissertation Defense Outcome Form**
- **Dissertation eSignatures Title Page Form**

- Submit the final dissertation to eTD for publication and the completed Dissertation eSignatures Title Page Form to the Graduate Programs Office.

Both your final dissertation and the completed Dissertation eSignatures Title Page Form must be submitted by the university deadline for theses and dissertations in order to graduate that semester. This date can be found on the Boston College Academic Calendar. **Please check with the Graduate Programs Office if you are unsure of this date.**

#### Opportunities to Develop in the Role of Nurse Educator

The Ph.D. is widely recognized as a research focused doctoral degree (AACN, 2001, 2010); as such the primary focus in the Ph.D. program is on research, scholarship and the generation and dissemination of knowledge. However, because many Ph.D.-prepared nurse scientists plan to pursue careers in academic settings, CSON provides a number of opportunities for Ph.D. students to gain training and experience in the role of the nurse educator.

Current opportunities within the CSON and across the Boston College campus, include:

- Funded teaching fellowships in lieu of research fellowships, usually in the third fellowship year for full-time funded Ph.D. fellows with mentorship by expert teachers
- Teaching residency experiences for all Ph.D. students with mentorship by expert teachers
- Center for Teaching Excellence Apprenticeship in College Teaching (ACT) program  
[Apprenticeship In College Teaching - Graduate Student Programs - Programs & Events - The Center for Teaching Excellence - Boston College \(bc.edu\)](#)
- Free online Coursera course “*How to Teach Online*” ([www.coursera.org](http://www.coursera.org))
- Teaching assistant (TA) positions in CSON in both undergraduate and graduate nursing courses
- Lab and clinical assistant positions (per diem TA positions)
- Biology Dept. TA positions in Microbiology and A&P courses
- Guest lecturing in both undergraduate and graduate nursing courses
- Enrollment in NURS 8580 *Foundations in Teaching and Learning in Nursing*

Students should also feel free to contact the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs with suggestions or questions regarding these options.

## **Ph.D. Program Forms**

Available in the Graduate Programs Office and on the web at:  
<https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/cson/sites/students.html#doctoral>

- Ph.D. Plan of Study
- Course Transfer Request Form
- Comprehensive Examination Application Form
- Doctoral Change of Advisor Form
- Dissertation Committee Formation Form
- Dissertation Committee Change Form
- Intent to Submit Dissertation Proposal Form
- Dissertation Proposal Hearing Scheduling Form
- Dissertation Proposal Hearing Outcome Form
- Intent to Defend Doctoral Dissertation Form
- Dissertation Defense Outcome Form
- Dissertation Signatures Title Pages
- Dissertation Guidelines
- Dissertation Title Page
- Dissertation Copyright Page
- Dissertation Submission Checklist
- Graduate Student Grievance Procedure

## University Forms

Available in the Office of Student Services or on the web at:  
[https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/offices/student-services/registrar/academic-forms.html#graduate\\_forms](https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/offices/student-services/registrar/academic-forms.html#graduate_forms)

- Leave of Absence/Program Withdrawal Form

