

PhD in Nursing

The PhD in Nursing (<https://www.apu.edu/nursing/programs/phd-in-nursing/>) program is designed for nurses who hold a master's degree in nursing or a related field and wish to pursue a doctoral degree in nursing. Graduates of this program, in roles as academicians, contribute to the body of nursing knowledge to improve the health of society and prepare the next generation of nurses.

Program Details

Through scholarly exchange and engagement with faculty, students are socialized to discover, examine critically, preserve, and transmit knowledge. The program prepares scholars with knowledge and expertise to assume independent roles in the development, evaluation, and dissemination of nursing knowledge through systematic inquiry.

Screening of Applicants

Graduate and Professional Admissions (<https://www.apu.edu/graduateprofessional/apply/>) and the School of Nursing handle screening of applicants for admission into the nursing PhD program. Screening of applicants' portfolios is conducted by Graduate and Professional Admissions and is evaluated according to the admission criteria. The school reviews completed applications for admission to the doctoral program to discern an applicant's academic qualifications and preparation for advanced graduate study. Upon completion of the screening and review process, the School of Nursing Graduate Recruitment and Admissions Committee forwards a list of qualified/alternate applicants to Graduate and Professional Admissions, which officially notifies applicants of admission decisions.

DNP to PhD Pathway

The DNP to PhD Pathway enables professionals who have a DNP, or transferable doctoral-level units, to further utilize the DNP program's evidence for improving patient and population outcomes, and expand their research skills to further nursing science and clinical practice, as they earn a PhD. The PhD in Nursing program is a 55-unit-plus-dissertation program. The School of Nursing may accept for transfer up to 15 units of coursework completed in an accredited DNP program, thereby requiring the student to complete 40 units of doctoral coursework in residence, and complete the dissertation, to earn the PhD in Nursing degree.

The proposed plan of study can be completed either on a full-time (6 semesters) or part-time basis. Upon application to the PhD program, a transfer evaluation/gap analysis of the DNP coursework will be conducted by the Nursing Graduate Recruitment and Admission Committee.

Curriculum

The curriculum is designed to provide students with discipline-specific and interdisciplinary, theoretical, and empirical knowledge that is essential for the conduct of original research, and for the advancement of the profession's knowledge for both practice and education.

The core courses in nursing science, theory construction, research methodology, statistical analysis, ethics, and spirituality are designed to prepare students in the process of scientific inquiry, enabling them to articulate, conceptualize, critique, and test theory, and use methods of scientific inquiry in researching questions in their substantive area of interest. Coursework in the substantive area of interest enables students to identify and formulate a research focus and to create and conduct original research toward the development of a program of scientific inquiry. The core courses are offered sequentially and are designed to:

- Provide students with the scientific and theoretical foundations of the discipline.
- Enable students to use frameworks for understanding sources of knowledge in nursing, modes of inquiry, and models of scholarship.
- Enable students to critique, articulate, test, use, and develop theories.
- Enable students to articulate how the nursing profession is informed by the Christian faith.
- Empower students with the knowledge base and ethical framework to promote social change.

The overarching rubric of the curriculum is wellness promotion and health maintenance within specific areas of concentration:

- Health of the Family and the Community
- International Health
- Nursing Historical Research

A subspecialization in nursing education is also available.¹

These areas of concentration and the subspecialization reflect the changing trends in health care and accommodate the diverse research interests of students.

Coursework consists of 46 units with an additional 9 units allocated for dissertation research. The 46 units of required and elective courses include an area of concentration. A total of 46 units are allocated to core courses in nursing science, theory development, research methodologies, and statistical analysis.

Based on the student's area of interest and chosen method of inquiry, a 3-unit core course is required in one of the following research methods:

- Advanced Quantitative Methods
- Advanced Qualitative Research Methods
- Advanced Evaluation Research

A maximum of 9 doctoral-level semester units may be transferred from another regionally accredited university with approval of the program chair.

¹ The Nursing Education Certificate program (<http://catalog.apu.edu/academics/college-nursing-health-sciences/school-nursing/graduate-nursing-programs/nursing-education/nursing-education-certificate/>) comprises 21 units consisting of seven required courses.

Requirements

Code	Title	Units
Knowledge/Theory		
GNRS 700	Philosophy of Science	3
GNRS 701	Nursing Knowledge Development	3
GNRS 702	Nursing Theory	3
GNRS 703	Spirituality and Health	3
GNRS 705	Social Ethics and Health Policy	3
Statistical Analysis		
GNRS 713	Advanced Statistical Analysis I	3
Research		
GNRS 706	Methods of Inquiry	3
GNRS 707	Quantitative Nursing Research Design I	3
GNRS 708	Qualitative Nursing Research Design I	3
GNRS 724	Quantitative Nursing Research Design II: Psychometrics	3
GNRS 725	Research Practicum	1
Method of Inquiry		
Select one of the following:		3
GNRS 709	Advanced Statistical Analysis II	
GNRS 710	Advanced Qualitative Research Methods	
GNRS 711	Advanced Research Methods in the Humanities	
GNRS 712	Healthcare Quality Improvement, Program Planning, and Evaluation	
Concentration		6
Select one of the following:		
Health of the Family and Community		
Select two of the following:		
GNRS 720	Wellness Promotion and Health Maintenance	
GNRS 721	Health Disparities and Vulnerable Populations	
GNRS 722	Research in Nursing and Health	
International Health		
GNRS 722	Research in Nursing and Health	
GNRS 730	Comparative Health Care Systems	
Nursing Historical Research		
Select two of the following:		
GNRS 650	History of Professional Nursing: From Origins to Nursing in Transition	
GNRS 651	History of Professional Nursing: From Colonial Times to Present Day	
GNRS 799	Independent Study (permission required)	
Electives (selected from two areas)		6
Dissertation Research		

Select three of the following four:		9
GNRS 780	Doctoral Seminar I: Elements of a Proposal and IRB Application	
GNRS 781	Doctoral Seminar II: Developing a Grant Proposal	
GNRS 782	Doctoral Seminar III: Writing for Publication	
GNRS 783	Doctoral Seminar IV: Developing Professional Presentations	
Optional Course		
GNRS 798	Continuous Doctoral Study	

Total Units**55**

Study Progression and Graduation Requirements

Progression in the program requires active enrollment status and maintaining a minimum cumulative 3.0 GPA. Graduation requirements include a minimum cumulative 3.0 GPA and successful completion of the qualifying exam, proposal defense, and dissertation defense. See the Graduate Academic Policies and Procedures (<http://catalog.apu.edu/policies-procedures/graduate/>) section of this catalog for more information.

Leaves of Absence

Students in good standing and making satisfactory progress toward their degrees who must interrupt their studies for a compelling reason (e.g., illness, study abroad, family conditions, or crises) may petition for a leave of absence for a stated period of time not to exceed two years. Requests for a leave must be in writing and state both the reasons for the leave and the semester in which the student will reenroll. Leaves of absence must be approved by the director of doctoral studies program in nursing and the dean of the School of Nursing in advance of the semester for which the leave is requested.

The petition for return to enrolled status should be filed one full term before the intended date of reenrollment. If the student went on leave with conditions for reenrollment, these must be fulfilled before re-enrollment may occur. If a student is on leave for two years, the Doctoral Admissions Committee, as well as the student's advisor, the doctoral studies director, and the dean will review her/his reenrollment petition. Depending upon the amount of time elapsed, the student's stage of study in the program, and the student's academic activity during the leave, readmission may be contingent.

Qualifying Examination

The qualifying examination is taken upon the completion of 12-24 units of doctoral work, including:

Code	Title	Units
GNRS 700	Philosophy of Science	3
GNRS 701	Nursing Knowledge Development	3
GNRS 702	Nursing Theory	3
GNRS 706	Methods of Inquiry	3

(The student must petition for exceptions.) The examination is composed of a paper (25-30 pages) and a review by a committee of faculty. The purpose of the paper is to encourage the synthesis of first-year coursework as it relates to the student's current research interest area. The paper incorporates relevant aspects of the philosophical foundations of applicable scientific theories and nursing knowledge, and addresses the philosophical foundations and linkages among relevant conceptual models, theories, and research designs.

Dissertation Proposal Defense

Successful completion of the dissertation proposal signifies competence to pursue independent research with the advice and guidance of the dissertation committee. The dissertation proposal defense allows the student to demonstrate familiarity with the state of the science in a particular area, awareness of currently active topics of investigation in the area, theoretical dimensions and design issues related to potential questions, and recognition of potential practical and ethical challenges arising at the intersection of research questions, population, and instruments.

Dissertation Defense

The dissertation reports the results of original, independent research of substantial but circumscribed scope, undertaken in consultation with the student's dissertation committee. The student presents a prospectus or proposal specifying the question, method, design, data collection instruments or strategy, projected data analysis, plan for access to subjects/participants/data, and projected timeline for data collection, analysis, and dissertation completion.

The dissertation committee serves in an advisory capacity to the student and ensures that the dissertation research and the written dissertation demonstrate the student's competence to conduct independent research in the discipline. Committee members work with the student throughout the process of data collection, analysis, and writing, with primary support provided by the chair/sponsor. When the student has substantially finished the work to the satisfaction of each committee member, the committee meets to hear the student's defense of the overall work and the decisions it entailed, and to discuss the student's plans for publication and post degree program of research.

Students may not participate in commencement or have the degree posted to their transcript until the document has been accepted by the University Libraries (<https://www.apu.edu/library/>). Any exceptions are by petition only.

Admission

University graduate admission and program-specific requirements must be met before an application is complete (see Admission to the University (<http://catalog.apu.edu/admissions/>)). **Program-specific application requirements are available online (<https://www.apu.edu/graduateprofessional/apply/>).**

International students should contact Graduate and Professional Admissions (<https://www.apu.edu/graduateprofessional/apply/>) for application procedures.

Program Learning Outcomes

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Students who successfully complete this program shall be able to:

1. Develop, test, and use theoretical knowledge to advance nursing science and improve health outcomes.
2. Pursue systematic intellectual inquiry relevant to the discipline of nursing and health care.
3. Use frameworks for understanding sources of knowledge in nursing, modes of inquiry, and models of scholarship.
4. Develop ethical, social, and health policies for the advancement of nursing education, research, and the health of those whom nursing serves.
5. Articulate the intersection of the Christian tradition with the nursing profession.