

WVU Board of Governors

**PROGRAM OF  
EXCELLENCE**



**PhD in Nursing  
Program Handbook  
2022-2023**



West Virginia University

School of Nursing

Robert C. Byrd Health Sciences center

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The [West Virginia University Graduate Catalog](#) is the official reference for all program information

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## Welcome from the Dean

We are excited to be involved with our colleagues in the Robert C. Byrd Health Sciences Center in implementing a vision for health care in the 21st century, founded in WVU's history of excellence and service, with true social responsibility. We continue to be guided by our Vision: "West Virginia University School of Nursing envisions optimal health, enhanced quality of life, and excellent health care for the people of West Virginia and the global community." Nursing faculty and students are bringing nurses, nursing education and research, and advanced practice health care to serve the public in both urban and rural areas. The WVU School of Nursing remains committed to providing the highest levels of undergraduate professional nursing education, while expanding opportunities for graduate education. Our MSN program continues to prepare nurse practitioners for WV with faculty who are experts in using technology with "high touch" skills. We have approved a dual degree option for nurse executives to earn dual MSN/MBA degrees. Additionally, we offer two doctoral programs, the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) - the highest level of nursing practice, and the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) - for nurses desiring a teaching and research career. Our programs are committed to building access with success throughout the state - regional campus support for undergraduates, online MSN and DNP programs, and a summer option for the PhD. I look forward to "meeting" you all - virtually or in person.

Dean Hulseley

### Mission

The mission of the West Virginia University (WVU) School of Nursing (SON) is to lead in improving health in West Virginia and the broader society through excellence in student-centered educational programs, research and scholarship, the compassionate practice of nursing, and service to the public and the profession.

## Overview of WVU School of Nursing

The [West Virginia University School of Nursing](#) offers innovative baccalaureate through doctoral educational programs. Students are prepared at the WVU School of Nursing for the roles of skilled practitioner, educator, and researcher in a rich scholarly environment. These roles are aimed at facilitating learning, providing health services, and generating new knowledge to directly benefit the residents of West Virginia and advance the discipline of nursing.

[WVU School of Nursing research](#) focuses on improving health and reducing disparities among rural populations, in order to reach the overarching goal of improving the lives of West Virginians. It is consistent with the WVU Health Sciences Center strategic plan and the West Virginia Clinical and Translational Science Institute. The Office of Nursing Research at the WVU School of Nursing provides resources and support for the conduct and dissemination of research, including scholarly activities conducted by PhD students.

## Vision, Mission, and Values of the School of Nursing

It is expected that the research conducted at the School of Nursing will be congruent with the [vision, mission, and values](#) of the WVU School of Nursing.

### Vision

The West Virginia University School of Nursing envisions optimal health, enhanced quality of life, and excellent health care for the people of West Virginia and the global community.

### Mission

The mission of the WVU School of Nursing is to lead in improving health in West Virginia and the broader society through excellence in student-centered educational programs, research and scholarship, the compassionate practice of nursing, and service to the public and the profession.

### Values

At the West Virginia University School of Nursing, we are committed to the values of **integrity**, **excellence**, and **inclusiveness**. We want to create and foster a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect and inclusion. By embracing new ideas and broadening our perspectives, we will enhance our ability to address the diverse needs of the patients we serve. These values, together with vision, transparency and strategic leadership, enable us to create an organization in which teaching, learning, scholarship, service, and practice can flourish.

## PhD Program Overview, Description, and Goals

The [PhD in Nursing Program](#) at WVU offers both part-time and full-time progression plans. The program is a hybrid program. Currently, Fall and Spring coursework is delivered online and the first summer courses are offered in a seminar style face to face format that requires a maximum of 6 days on campus for each course. Course times and days do vary throughout the program. After completing required coursework, students must complete a qualifying examination prior to advancing to dissertation phase. Once students defend a dissertation proposal, they advance to become doctoral candidates. Students then complete the research and dissertation phase, which culminates in a written and oral dissertation defense.

### Program Description

The purpose of the PhD program is to educate nurse scholar-scientists for roles in research, teaching, and service. The program prepares graduates who will contribute to the body of nursing knowledge; educate the next generation; and assume collaborative leadership roles in shaping health policy, improving health, and reducing disparity.

### Program Learning Outcomes

The expected learning outcomes of the program are that each graduate will be able to

1. Rigorously test, generate, and extend knowledge to inform nursing science, practice and policy.
2. Contribute to the development of knowledge and interventions to address health disparity and promote or improve health.
3. Assume collaborative leadership roles in academia, healthcare organizations, research teams, and scholarly networks.
4. Demonstrate expertise within an area of study that incorporates nursing and transdisciplinary perspectives.

### PhD Degree Requirements

The PhD program requires students to take **at a minimum**: 19 credits of core nursing core, 30 credits of research methods and research mentorship, and a minimum of 6 credits of cognate courses, comprising a total of **55 credits** of post-master's coursework. The PhD coursework provides content in scholarly processes, nursing science, and an area of concentration that supports the student's chosen area of research. Students work with faculty advisors to determine any additional coursework and experience that may be needed to support dissertation research.

## **Admissions Policies for the PhD in Nursing**

The PhD Program takes applications on a rolling basis and processes them accordingly. The regular admission cycle begins in the fall semester. Class size and progression plans may be limited based on available faculty resources and space. Applicants should plan to submit an application and all official documents that accompany the application by June 30<sup>th</sup> of the year of the desired admission cohort.

### **Qualifications for admission to the PhD in Nursing Program**

1. Submission of formal transcript of a nursing degree at the baccalaureate level or higher from a nationally accredited nursing program or equivalent.
2. Provide evidence of current license to practice nursing.
3. Official transcripts confirm an earned Master's degree in nursing from a regionally accredited college or university. A Master's degree in a health-related discipline will be considered.
4. Official transcripts reflects a grade of “B” or higher in graduate statistics and research methods courses.
5. Official transcripts indicate a cumulative GPA of 3.25 in Master's degree work.
6. Transfer students must provide a statement of good standing from the program in which currently enrolled.

*Note: Any student who has been dismissed from the West Virginia University School of Nursing or any other nursing program will not be readmitted or considered for admission to the PhD program.*

To be considered, applicants will be required to meet all WVU admission requirements in addition to program-specific admission criteria.

### **Application Process for the PhD Program**

1. Application for Admission to Graduate Studies (available at: [https://westvirginia.force.com/wvugrad/TX\\_SiteLogin?startURL=%2Fwvugrad%2FTargetX\\_Portal\\_PB](https://westvirginia.force.com/wvugrad/TX_SiteLogin?startURL=%2Fwvugrad%2FTargetX_Portal_PB))
2. Request an official transcript of records from each college or university attended.
  - a. It is preferred that official transcripts be sent via an online, secure service such as [eScrip-Safe](#), [National Student Clearinghouse](#), or [Parchment](mailto:graduateadmissions@mail.wvu.edu) to [graduateadmissions@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:graduateadmissions@mail.wvu.edu).
  - b. Alternatively, sealed, untampered, physical official transcripts can be sent directly to WVU Graduate Admissions, P.O. Box 6510, Morgantown, WV 26506-6510.
  - c. Applicants who completed prior education outside of the U.S. must have their transcripts evaluated by [World Education Services \(WES\)](#). Please request a “course-by-course” International Credential Advantage Package (ICAP).
3. Submit a current curriculum vitae or resume.



4. Provide an example of graduate work (if available).
5. Essay: Read about the [research](#) focus of our faculty. Select one or two faculty with whom you are interested in working based on their research focus and explain how your interest aligns with the faculty members' area of research, referring to their relevant publications. Essay should be submitted in APA format and cover the following areas: preparation for doctoral work (background), why do you want a PhD (how does a PhD fit in your career plan), personal/academic strengths and weaknesses, research area of interest, and current/long term goals.
6. Interview to determine congruence between the applicant's career goals and program objectives and between the applicants research interests and those of the faculty.
7. Applicants must also provide three letters of reference addressing the applicant's likelihood for success in graduate work.

Once completed, the applicant will receive an email confirmation. It is essential that the applicant return to the site to track documents and ensure that all documents have been submitted. Qualified applicants will be invited for an interview. An invitation for an interview does not guarantee admission. Once the WVU application has been completed, complete and submit the [Application Checklist](#), a tool designed to ensure all required information application is complete. In addition, the applicant must complete all supplemental application materials as instructed and request official transcripts from all Colleges and Universities ever attended. Questions about admission to WVU graduate programs can be addressed to either of the following addresses:

WVU Office of Graduate Admissions and Recruitment  
P.O. Box 6510  
Morgantown, WV 26506-6510

or

WVU Office of Graduate Admissions and Recruitment  
1 Waterfront Place  
2nd Floor  
Morgantown, WV 26505

### **Acceptance to the PhD Program**

Acceptance decisions for the PhD Program are made by the Graduate Admissions Committee. The Graduate Admissions Committee meets on a regular periodic basis to review applications within 30 days of receipt of the completed application. Candidates for admission are evaluated on the entire admission packet including references and interview scores. The WVU School of Nursing accepts new PhD students annually and acceptance is dependent upon space available in the program with the most qualified applicants being accepted

Students admitted to the program will receive an acceptance letter within 45 days of receipt of the completed application. The acceptance letter will provide information regarding orientation, course registration, and qualifications for tuition waivers.

## **Progression and Graduation Standards**

### **Preliminary Activities to Prepare for Doctoral Study**

Prior to the first semester in the program, all accepted and registered PhD students will complete the following.

#### *Orientation*

There is a mandatory online orientation program for doctoral students in the School of Nursing. Information will be emailed to the student's WVU mix email address about the online orientation session.

#### *CITI Training in Human Subjects Research*

It is the student's responsibility to complete **Citiprogram Training** and provide the certificate of completion for the basic course for responsible conduct of research to the PhD Program Director and program specialist **prior to the start of classes**. All PhD students are required to keep the CITI training certifications current for the duration of the program. Based on the type of research that the student engages in with faculty, additional Citi program training courses may be required for participation.

#### *Individualized Plan of Study*

PhD students will establish a **Plan of Study** based on the WVU Health Sciences Center Plan of Study Guidelines. The individualized study plan **fillable pdf form** will be used to enhance student learning and facilitate the student developing expertise in a research topic of interest. Students will refine research interests throughout the program by attending to coursework, participation in online and/or in person journal clubs, attendance at West Virginia University events (virtually and/or in person), attendance at scholarly events at other universities, regular interaction with research faculty and peers, and the guidance of the PhD Program Director.

## Required Coursework for Degree Completion

All students in the PhD Program will take required nursing courses as stated in Table 1 *unless* they have worked with the Program Director and Program specialist to transfer in previously accomplished equivalent coursework. Credits for all courses in the list of required courses will be accounted for in each student’s individualized plan of study and in DegreeWorks at the WVU Office of the University Registrar.

<b>Table 1. PhD Program of Study</b>	
<b>Nursing Core</b>	<b>Credits</b>
NSG 727: Contemporary Nursing Science	3
NSG 728: Nursing Science Theory/Philosophy	4
NSG 732: Seminar in Nursing Scholarship	3
NSG 735: Principles: Nursing Education	3
NSG 736: Advanced Health Policy and Ethics	3
NSG 737: Leadership	3
<b>Research Core</b>	
NSG 724: Health Research Statistics 1	3
NSG 725: Health Research Statistics 2	3
NSG 729: Quantitative Research Methods	3
NSG 731: Qualitative Research Methods	3
NSG 733: Research Grant Development	3
NSG 734: Use of Data	3
NSG 781: Research Mentorship	1
NSG 783: Dissertation Seminar	2
NSG 785: Qualifying Examination	1
NSG 797: Dissertation Research	8
Cognates*	6
<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>55</b>

\*Cognates must include one advanced methodology course (3 credits) and at least one of two courses (3 credits) taken outside the School of Nursing.

## Full-Time Progression Plan for PhD in Nursing Students

	Fall		Spring		Summer	
Year 1	NSG 724 Health Research Statistics 1 NSG 735 Principles: Nursing Education NSG 727 Contemporary Nursing Science	3 3 3	NSG 725 Health Research Statistics 2 NSG 732 Seminar in Nursing Scholarship Cognate	3 3 3	NSG 728 Nursing Science Theory/Philosophy NSG 729 Quantitative Research Methods	4 3
	Total Credits	9	Total Credits	9	Total Credits	7
Year 2	NSG 731 Qualitative Research Methods Cognate NSG 795 (if 9 hours needed)	3 3 3	NSG 737 Leadership NSG 734 Use of Data NSG 795 (if 9 hour needed)	3 3 3	NSG 733 Research Grant Development NSG 736 Advanced Health Policy and Ethics	3 3
	Total Credits	6	Total Credits	6	Total Credits	6
Year 3	NSG 785 Qualifying Exam	1	NSG 783 Dissertation Seminar NSG 781 Research Mentorship	2 1	NSG 797	1-8
	Total Credits	1	Total Credits	3	Total Credits	1-3

The PhD program requires students to take at a minimum: 19 credits of core nursing core, 22 credits of research methods and mentorship courses, 8 credits of dissertation research, and a minimum of 6 credits of cognate courses, comprising a total of **55** credits of post-master's coursework.

## Part-Time Progression Plan for PhD in Nursing Students

	Fall		Spring		Summer	
Year 1	NSG 724 Health Research Statistics 1	3	NSG 725 Health Research Statistics 2	3	NSG 728 Nursing Science Theory/Philosophy	4
	NSG 727 Contemporary Nursing Science	3	NSG 732 Seminar in Nursing Scholarship	3	NSG 729 Quantitative Research Methods	3
	<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>7</b>
Year 2	NSG 731 Qualitative Research Methods	3	NSG 737 Leadership	3	NSG 736 Advanced Health Policy & Ethics	3
	NSG 735 Principles: Nursing Education	3	NSG 734 Use of Data	3	NSG 733 Research Grant Development	3
	<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>6</b>
Year 3	NSG 785 Qualifying Exam	1	NSG 783 Dissertation Seminar	2	NSG 797	1-3
	Cognate	3	NSG 781 Research Mentorship Cognate	3		
	<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>1-3</b>
Year 4	NSG 797	1-3	NSG 797	1-3	NSG 797	1-3
	<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>1-3</b>	<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>1-3</b>	<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>1-3</b>

The PhD program requires students to take at a minimum: 19 credits of core nursing core, 22 credits of research methods and mentorship courses, 8 credits of dissertation research, and a minimum of 6 credits of cognate courses, comprising a total of **55** credits of post-master's coursework.

## Extended Part-Time Progression Plan for PhD in Nursing Students

	Fall		Spring		Summer	
Year 1	NSG 724 Health Research Statistics 1	3	NSG 725 Health Research Statistics 2	3	NSG 728 Nursing Science Theory/Philosophy	4
	NSG 727 Contemporary Nursing Science	3	NSG 732 Seminar in Nursing Scholarship	3	NSG 729 Quantitative Research Methods	3
	Total Credits	6	Total Credits	6	Total Credits	7
Year 2	NSG 731 Qualitative Research Methods	3	NSG 734 Use of Data	3	NSG 736 Advanced Health Policy & Ethics Cognate	3 3
	Total Credits	3	Total Credits	3	Total Credits	6
Year 3	NSG 735 Principles: Nursing Education	3	NSG 737 Leadership	3	NSG 733 Research Grant Development Cognate	3 3
	Total Credits	3	Total Credits	3	Total Credits	6
Year 4	NSG 785 Qualifying Exam	1	NSG 783 Dissertation Seminar NSG 781 Research Mentorship	2 1	NSG 797	1-3
	Total Credits	3	Total Credits	3	Total Credits	3
Year 5	NSG 797	1-3	NSG 797	1-3	NSG 797	1-3
	Total Credits	1-3	Total Credits	1-3	Total Credits	1-3

The PhD program requires students to take at a minimum: 19 credits of core nursing core, 22 credits of research methods and mentorship courses, 8 credits of dissertation research, and a minimum of 6 credits of cognate courses, comprising a total of **55** credits of post-master's coursework.

## Course Description and Information

- NSG 724. **Health Research Statistics 1.** 3 Hrs. (Fall only). This course provides development of statistical knowledge and skills needed for quantitative health research using SPSS. Topics include descriptive statistics, probability, hypothesis testing, analysis of variance, chi-square testing, linear regression, and logistic regression.
- NSG 725. **Health Research Statistics 2.** 3 Hrs. (Spring only). This course continues the development of statistical knowledge and skills needed for quantitative health research using SPSS, including nonparametric testing, advanced regression topics and diagnostics, ANCOVA, SPSS syntax, classification, and factor, survival, and power analyses.
- NSG 727. **Contemporary Nursing Science.** 3 Hrs. (Fall only). Focus is on an analysis of the state of the science for a phenomenon for study. Emphasis is placed on the application of the particular phenomenon to a population of interest.
- NSG 728. **Nursing Science Theory/Philosophy.** 4 Hrs. (Summer only). This course builds on the philosophical basis of nursing. Discovery and verification of scientific knowledge are addressed by focusing on theory development. Methodologies include concept analysis and evaluation of middle range theories of nursing and related sciences.
- NSG 729. **Quantitative Research Methods.** 3 Hrs. (PR: NSG 724 and NSG 725, Summer only). Quantitative methods and measurement relevant to conducting research in nursing are studied.
- NSG 731. **Qualitative Research Methods.** 3 Hrs. (PR: NSG 728, Fall only). An exploration of the philosophical foundations and methods of qualitative inquiry. Research designs, ethical issues, rigor, integrity, data collection, interpretation, and representation are studied.
- NSG 732. **Seminar in Nursing Scholarship.** 3 Hrs. (PR: Admission to the PhD Program, Spring only). Exploration of the dimensions of scholarship in preparation for future roles as nurse scholars/scientists.
- NSG 733. **Research Grant Development.** 3 Hrs. (PR: NSG 729 and NSG 731, Summer only) Analysis of the grant-writing process, including project goals and objectives, description, methodology, design, personnel, budget, and evaluation. In addition, current federal application formats will provide students with the background to complete a submittable grant proposal in their own area of research.
- NSG 734. **Use of Data.** 3 Hrs. (PR: NSG 724, NSG 725, NSG 729, Spring only). This course focuses on the use of the following data bases: clinical, financial, health services, nursing, local, state and national. The uses of existing data in clinical and policy decisions and in research will be explored.
- NSG 735. **Principles: Nursing Education.** 3 Hrs. (Fall only). This course examines the research base of educational strategies in nursing education in classroom and clinical settings. The course also examines external determinants on nursing curriculum, accreditation issues, and evaluation of nursing programs.
- NSG 736. **Advanced Health Policy and Ethics.** 3 Hrs. (PR: NSG 732, Fall only). Examination of ethical issues of research and current health policy.
- NSG 737. **Leadership.** 3 Hrs. (PR: NSG 732, Spring only) Through exploration of contemporary leadership paradigms, this course enables the student to explore leadership principles applicable to academic and research settings.
- NSG 781. **Research Mentorship.** 1 Hr. In this guided practicum, the student's research skills are

developed and cultivated through participation in the mentorship process with an experienced researcher (the chairperson or his/her designee).

NSG 783. **Dissertation Seminar.** 2 Hr. (PR: All core courses, one cognate, and 1 credit of NSG 795 for Qualifying Examination). This seminar provides an opportunity for discussion of the dissertation process. Students will participate in proposal presentation and critique.

NSG 785. **Qualifying Exam.** 1 Hr. Students must complete all courses except one cognate and NSG 781 and submit a first-authored manuscript relevant to the student's focused area of research to a peer-reviewed journal for publication prior to taking NSG 785. The Qualifying Exam (QE) allows students to demonstrate the ability to synthesize knowledge gained in coursework in order to be able to progress to dissertation. It is comprised of written and oral components. All elements of the QE must be successfully completed no later than the first semester of the fifth year.

NSG 795. **Independent Study.** 1-9 Hrs. Faculty supervised study of topics not available through regular course offerings.

NSG 797. **Research.** 1-8 Hrs. Research activities leading to thesis, problem report, research paper, or equivalent scholarly project, or a dissertation.

### Prerequisites

All prerequisites from preceding semesters must be completed prior to registration for new courses unless a student has obtained permission from the PhD Program Director and the course instructor.

### Timeliness of Course Completions

Courses are only applicable for graduation credit if they have been taken within the last eight years.

### Syllabi for NSG 795 and NSG 797

A detailed syllabus and specific course learning outcomes will be developed each time an independent study course (NSG 795) and/or a research course (NSG 797) is taken with the chair or faculty member. Before the course is released for enrollment, the syllabus must be signed by both the chair and student and a copy provided to the PhD Program Director and the graduate program specialist.

### Application of Transfer of Graduate Credit to West Virginia University

Graduate courses may be transferred to the WVU School of Nursing from accredited institutions. In consultation with the academic advisor, the PhD Program Director will evaluate all requests to transfer a graduate course and will make the final determination about whether the course meets the requirements of the PhD program. A maximum of 12 transfer credits may be counted toward the degree. Cognate courses not taken at WVU must be taken at accredited institutions and must be graduate level. The student must obtain the signature of the PhD Program Director on the Application for the Graduate Credit Transfer Form *prior to* registering for the cognate. Upon completion of the course, the student is responsible for having an official transcript sent to the Office of Admissions and Records.



## Grade Information

### WVU School of Nursing Grading Scale

The grading scale for nursing as posted in each course syllabus is:

A = 93-100, B = 85-92, C = 77-84, F = 76 and below.

Grades are calculated to two decimal places (hundredths), and are rounded at the 0.5 level. Rounding will occur on final grades only and not on individual assignments or in grading categories.

The following grading scale illustrates incorporation of rounding procedures. Percentage ranges are strictly enforced, and no additional rounding will occur.

A= 92.50-100, B=84.50-92.49, C=76.50-84.49, F= 76.49 and below.

### Grade Criteria for Progression

Achieve an overall academic GPA of 3.0 in all course work and maintain a 3.0 cumulative GPA. The following guidelines apply to all grades in the PhD Program:

- Grades of C. Students may carry forward one C grade in any course. However, a second C will result in dismissal from the program.
- Grades of F. Students with a grade of F in any course will be dismissed from the program.
- Withdrawals. Students can only have one “W” (class withdraw) while in the PhD program.
- Unsatisfactory Grade. If students earn an unsatisfactory or “U” in NSG 797 Research, the chair and student must devise a plan to rectify deficiencies in the next semester. If another “U” is received, the student will be dismissed from the program.
- Incomplete Grades. The PhD program follows the West Virginia University Policy for grades of Incomplete (I). The policy states that a grade of I (Incomplete) is a temporary grade assignment used when unforeseen, non-academic circumstances arise that prohibit students from completing the last course assignments or examinations at the end of the semester. The grade of Incomplete is typically assigned because of an excused absence from the final examination, or because assignments are unavoidably incomplete, as determined by the instructor. Generally, the student will have been active in the course up until the last day of the 13th week of classes and earned at least a D- to be eligible to request an incomplete.
- An instructor may not assign a grade of I without the student’s agreement and an **Incomplete Contract**. If a student has not requested an Incomplete, or the request for an incomplete grade has been denied, the instructor should assign the grade earned in the course.

- Within the Incomplete Contract, the instructor is required to indicate a grade earned for the course assuming no additional work will be completed. Should the signed contract not be fulfilled, the instructor must either submit a grade of F or the grade indicated in the contract.
- If the student is unable to complete the work during the following term for non-academic reasons, the term of the contract may be extended with permission of the Dean. Additionally, the term of the contract can be extended if the instructor is not available for a portion of the course, for some legitimate reason, and the course cannot be completed within the original time frame.
- An Incomplete grade not changed by the end of the next regular term, (fall and spring semesters) will be replaced with a grade of IF, and the class must be retaken to satisfy degree requirements as necessary. Under legitimate, extraordinary circumstances, with supporting documentation and the approval of the Dean, an instructor can submit a grade change for an IF within five years of when the course was taken.
- All grades of I must either be resolved or replaced with an IF in order to graduate from West Virginia University.

### **Extra Credit and Bonus Point Policy**

No bonus points or extra credit will be offered in nursing courses (courses with the prefix NSG). Bonus points are defined as any points (or percentages) added to the student's score that do not also add the same number of points (or percentages) to the total possible for the course. No academic points will be awarded for survey completion, research participation, or other non-academic, non-clinical activities.

## **Leave of Absence and Withdrawal**

### **Leave of Absence and Withdrawal Policies**

#### **Withdrawal Policy**

Students must be continuously enrolled in School of Nursing programs in order to maintain active status. Summer term enrollment is only required if the student's program of study/progression plan is dependent on it for an on-time graduation. A withdrawal is defined as withdrawing from the program, withdrawing from all required courses in a semester, or failing to enroll in any given semester of the progression plan (see summer exception above).

Students who withdraw must follow up with the advisor, who will gather information about the reason for leaving and discuss associated policies. Students who wish to return must follow the

LOA policy in order to be eligible for continuation in the program. Students who do not follow this process will not be eligible for continuation or readmission at a later date.

### **LOA Policy**

Students may request a leave of absence (LOA) for extenuating circumstances, such as family emergencies, military duty, parental leave, or significant changes in health status. The student is required to submit the rationale and the time period for the LOA request in writing to the program director. Additional documentation may be required to clarify the circumstances for the request. If approved by the program director and Associate Dean of Academics, the student and advisor will complete the LOA and Withdrawal Form provided by the program director or advisor upon request. The student will then be required to withdraw from all nursing courses in the current semester, if applicable.

Students are encouraged to evaluate the [WVU Withdrawal Policies](#), the financial implications of the decision, the effects of the LOA on program progression, and [International Student Policies](#) as applicable.

An LOA is not equivalent to a withdrawal or a dismissal, and there are specific limitations. Students are not permitted to have more than one LOA, and each LOA is limited to one semester. If unforeseen circumstances prevent the student's return to a program following a one-semester LOA, the student may request a one-semester extension. Additional LOAs and extensions are only granted in extreme circumstances.

If a student is on an approved LOA, it is the student's responsibility to notify the advisor to schedule classes for the semester following the LOA and to seek a review of the revised progression plan. If the LOA was due to a significant change in health status, the student may be required to provide documentation from a healthcare provider that he or she is able to return to the nursing program and perform all aspects of the student role.

If a student does not return to the program during the contracted semester, it will be considered a withdrawal, and the student will not be eligible for readmission. Exceptions will be granted if required courses are not offered the semester in which the student is expected to return. Retrospective LOA requests will not be accepted.

## **Additional Expectations for Progression**

### **Student Participation in Online Courses**

Students in online courses have the professional responsibility to devote their full attention to the class while it is in session, just as they would in a traditional classroom setting. Students may not attend an online class session while responsible for patient care in the workplace. If a student is permitted by an employer to participate in an online course during working hours, he or she must do so away from the clinical setting and only after being completely relieved from patient responsibilities. Students will not be permitted to make up course work or testing that is missed if called back to the workplace.

### **Residency Requirement for PhD Education at WVU**

The WVU School of Nursing adheres to the residency and graduation requirements of the university. West Virginia University has a residency policy for students in doctoral education. Meeting the requirements outlined in this policy is required for graduation. The WVU [Residency Policy for Doctoral Students](#) states: Doctoral education involves many learning experiences that take place outside the formal setting. These involve observing and participating in activities conducted by the graduate faculty, using departmental and University libraries, attending lectures presented by visiting scholars, informally debating other students, and similar activities. To ensure that graduate students experience this kind of informal learning, doctoral programs at WVU generally require at least two semesters in residence campus. However, an individual student of graduate committee may propose an alternative plan by which the student can gain equivalent educational experience. This plan must be submitted in writing, approved by the college or school dean or designee and placed in the student's program file.

The School of Nursing PhD program requires that each student submit a written plan for meeting the university residency requirements to both the Program Director and the Program Specialist. This plan must be related to the student's dissertation focus, cannot be a product of a previous course/funding program/grant. Failure to meet the university residency requirements can result in a delayed graduation until these requirements are met or dismissal from the PhD program if requirements are not met within the time limits of the University for Enrollment in the program.

### **Expectations for Advisor Meetings**

Students are expected to meet with his or her advisor at least once and preferably twice annually to review and submit documentation of progression and/or evaluation.

### **Selection of a Dissertation Chair**

The Dissertation Chair serves as a member of the Qualifying Examination Committee and therefore, must be chosen prior to the qualifying examination. During the second semester of the second year, the student and PhD Program Director work together to identify a dissertation chair, who when assumes the role of academic advisor. To be a dissertation chair, a faculty member must be a Regular member of the Graduate Faculty. A current list of graduate faculty is maintained and should be reviewed for member status prior to selection of dissertation chair and committee members.

## Qualifying Examination (QE) Information

### Qualifying Exam Description and Requirements for Progression

Successful completion of the QE is required prior to beginning the dissertation. The QE may be repeated one time. *All elements of the QE, both written and oral, must be successfully completed no later than the first semester of the fifth year.* If students pass the 5-year limit without successfully completing the QE, they will be removed from the PhD program and their status will be changed to non-degree at the university level.

### Eligibility for and Completion of Qualifying Examination

The Qualifying Exam (QE) allows students to demonstrate the ability to synthesize knowledge gained in coursework in order to be able to progress in dissertation. The QE is comprised of two parts, written and oral. The student is *eligible* to take the Qualifying Exam (QE) when two conditions are met. First, all courses, except **one** cognate and NSG 781 Research Mentorship, must be completed. Second, the student must have submitted a first-authored manuscript that is relevant to the student's focused area of research study to a peer-reviewed journal for publication.

### Qualifying Examination Committee Structure

The PhD Program Director will appoint a three-member QE Committee for each student and designate the committee chair. One member of this committee will be the student's dissertation committee chair but that member cannot be the QE Committee Chair. The student's QE committee chair will apprise the student of the QE expectations and evaluation criteria. During the semester in which the QE will be taken, the student must register for one credit of NSG 785 Qualifying Exam with the QE Committee Chair. A three-week period during this semester (weeks 8-10) is designated for the written and oral components of the exam.

### Written Component of the QE

The written component is the first part of the QE. The student writes a paper in response to questions provided by the QE Committee Chair. The written QE document provides evidence of the student's breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding gained during the program. It is expected that the paper be prepared in American Psychological Association (APA) format and be no more than 15 pages, double spaced. The page limit will be strictly adhered to and only required documents are to be posted as appendices.

Each QE committee member will review the exam and score the written exam separately. Within one week of receipt of the exam, the committee will meet to discuss the outcome. If the written exam scores meet the requirements to proceed to the oral examination, the student is notified. If the written exam scores do not meet the requirements, the student will be immediately notified by the QE Committee Chair and a time will be scheduled to meet with her/his dissertation chair and PhD Program Director to identify the next course of action. The

student may repeat the written QE once within one year of the initial date of the QE. The student cannot progress to the oral exam until the written QE is successfully completed.

### Oral Component of the QE

The oral component of the QE requires that all QE Committee members and the student are physically present in the same location for the face-to-face examination. In rare circumstances, with the prior approval of the PhD Program Director, and at most, one committee member may attend by telephone. For the oral exam, members of the QE Committee will develop targeted questions to address knowledge expressed in the paper that need to be clarified, amplified, and/or verified in the oral examination.

During the oral examination, the QE Committee members independently score responses to the predetermined questions and may ask additional questions as necessary. The oral examination is limited to 60 minutes. The committee meets immediately following the oral component, and the results of the QE are communicated immediately to the student. If a student does not pass the oral exam, he/she will be instructed to meet with his/her dissertation chair and PhD Program Director to identify the next course of action. Students who passed the written examination but not the oral examination may retake the oral exam within 6 months of the date of the original oral exam.

### Scoring of the Doctoral QE

When the QE is finished, the QE Committee Chair obtains signatures from the QE committee members and on the [Doctoral Qualifying Preliminary Examination Form](#). The completed form must be submitted to the PhD Program Director for submission to the Health Sciences Office of Research and Graduate Education.

### Schedule for the Doctoral Qualifying Examination

The schedule for the QE is as follows:

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| Week 1 | QE Committee Chair sets a date for the oral examination during Week 10   |
| Week 8 | Student receives by email from the QE Committee Chair the questions for the written component of the examination.  |
| Week 9 | Student electronically submits a paper with responses to the questions on the written component of the examination to the chair of the QE Committee by 9 am on Monday. The QE Committee meets within that week to discuss the outcomes of the paper and to identify questions for the oral exam. The student will be notified by the QE Committee Chair if he/she has passed the written portion of the QE immediately following this meeting. |

- Week 10      On the date specified in Week 1 and if the student successfully passes the written QE, the QE Committee meets with the student for an oral examination. The student is informed of the oral examination results immediately following that meeting.
- Week 11      When the student passes each part of the QE, he or she meets with his or her dissertation chair within 5 working days of the oral examination to discuss his/her next steps in the program. If the student fails either part of the QE exam, he or she meets with his or her advisor and the PhD Program Director within one week of the notification of failure to make an appropriate action plan.



## Dissertation Research

### Selection of Dissertation Committee

Once the QE is passed, the student works with the dissertation chair to establish a dissertation committee that meets the criteria established by the WVU Health Sciences Center Office of Research and Graduate Education and complete the Dissertation Committee Approval Form.

The committee must be composed of a minimum of four members but may include five members. Three or more members must be regular members of graduate faculty at West Virginia University. The dissertation chair and a majority of members must be from nursing. One member must be from a graduate program in a discipline that is different from Nursing. All signed forms must be submitted to the PhD Program Director for student files and submission to the Health Science Office of Research and Graduation Education.

### Responsibilities of Dissertation Committee Members

All members of the dissertation committee, to include the student, the chair, and the committee members have specific responsibilities. Each member is expected to do the following:

Student:

1. Be prepared and knowledgeable in a specific area of interest.
2. Formally select a dissertation chair by end of 2<sup>nd</sup> year, spring semester.
3. Identify committee members by 3<sup>rd</sup> year, spring semester.
4. Define and carry out the research protocol approved by the dissertation committee.
5. Actively request feedback/ask questions from the chair and committee members before, during, and after completion of research and as the thesis is written.
6. Respond to and act on feedback from the chair and committee within established time limits.
7. Apply and maintain ethical standards in the conduct of research and the completion of the dissertation.
8. Develop research protocol in WVU Quali Coeus system with chair oversight.
9. Disseminate knowledge/expertise/research via podium/poster presentations and articles in peer-reviewed journals.

Chair:

1. Determine feasibility of the student's research proposal/dissertation plan.
2. With student assistance, identify potential committee members. It is the student's responsibility to meet with potential members and to secure their involvement.
3. Clearly define, to the student and committee members, expectations for the protocol defense, IRB submission, conduct of research, and writing of the thesis.
4. Maintain documentation of the student's plan of study,
5. Confirm no conflicts of interest in research with committee/chair concerning student's area of study and department/research responsibilities.

6. Be available to the student by establishing a time schedule that will include the committee meeting for each semester the student is engages in dissertation related work.
7. Chair all meetings of the dissertation committee and thesis defense.
8. Review/approve/submit the student's research protocol to the IRB.
9. Facilitate networking, funding, and publishing/presentation opportunities for the student to promote development of their expertise in their area of study.
10. Follow Guidelines for Authorship as noted in the handbook.
11. Provide constructive feedback to the student and committee members as needed.
12. Complete all paperwork within deadlines as required by the graduate office. Review in PhD handbook under "Dissertation Committee Char Responsibilities" what specific program forms need to be completed and when they are due.
13. Guide the student in the research/dissertation writing process.
14. Review proposal defense and thesis prior to sending out to committee members.
15. Oversee dissertation revisions as requested by the committee.
16. Resolve faculty conflict without involving the student in a timely manner so as not to impede the student's research progression.
17. If a committee member needs to be replaced, the chair will notify the PhD Program Director as soon as possible. It is the chair and the student's responsibility to identify a replacement and notify the PhD director the name of the replacement with a confirmatory email from the new member. The Change of Thesis/Dissertation Committee Membership form with be completed by the PhD Program Director at that time.

Committee Member:

1. Determine feasibility of the topic/proposal/dissertation plan.
2. Critically read/comment on the student's proposal defense and thesis.
3. Identify learning opportunities for the student to assist them in developing expertise in their research area.
4. Identify learning opportunities for the student to assist them in developing expertise in their research area.
5. Be available and respond to the student in person, by email, or by phone throughout the dissertation process.
6. Work directly with chair to resolve any conflicts in a timely manner, without involving the student.
7. Notify the chair of need to be replaced in a timely manner and assist in identifying the new member.
8. Sign all documents related to the doctoral program as required by HSC graduate office/PhD Program Director/ Committee Chair.

*Change of Dissertation Committee Members*

Should it be necessary to change a member of the dissertation committee, the student must complete the [Change of Thesis/ Dissertation Committer Membership Form](#). Requirements for faculty substitutions are stipulated that the faculty substitute must be the same graduate faculty

status or higher, and in the same expertise; or in the case of replacing the member from outside the program, the new member must also be from outside the program. The change of membership form must be signed by the dissertation chair, the PhD Program Director and a representative from the WVU Health Sciences Office of Research and Graduate Education.

### *Dissertation Proposal Defense and Advancement to Candidacy*

The student, with the assistance of the chair and committee members, writes and orally defends a dissertation proposal. Once the defense is completed, the dissertation chair obtains signatures from the dissertation committee on the [Doctoral Candidacy Examination Form](#). This form is then submitted to the PhD Program Director and subsequently submitted to the Health Sciences Office of Research and Graduate Education.

The dissertation proposal defense is a 20-minute presentation of the student's proposed research followed by questions of clarification from the dissertation committee. In consultation with the dissertation committee, the student writes a dissertation proposal that adheres to APA format and contains the following components:

1. Describes a problem of significance to nursing and health care.
2. Clearly delineates measurable study aims.
3. Clearly states feasibly research questions and/or hypotheses.
4. Addresses the suitability of a theoretical/conceptual framework to the problem of significance, the study aims, and approach.
5. Synthesizes relevant literature or state of the science supporting the study, including evaluation of the level of existing knowledge, identification of gaps, and rationale for the study.
6. Selects a research design that fits the proposed research aims and hypotheses.
7. Specifies the type of design, the advantages and limitations of the design, rationale for choice of design, and sampling methods appropriate to the design.
8. Conceptually and operationally defines all study variables.
9. Clearly articulates the procedures for data collection, including rationale, strengths, limitations, and logical progression.
10. Specifically describes an appropriate analysis plan.
11. Details the ethical considerations related to study implementation.
12. Describe the feasibility of the proposed research, provides a study timeline, and documents written approval from the study site.
13. Describes expected outcomes, including future clinical, educational, research, administrative, and policy implications (as appropriate).

The process of developing/reviewing the dissertation proposal by the dissertation committee is as follows:

- Under the guidance of the dissertation chair and members of the dissertation committee, the student develops the written proposal. Many drafts are often required until a workable proposal is developed.
- At least 3 weeks prior to the desired proposal defense date, the dissertation chair sends the written proposal to all dissertation committee members for review.
- With the assistance of the PhD Program Director, the dissertation committee chair coordinates a time for the oral dissertation proposal defense and communicates it to the student in committee members.
- All dissertation committee members are to be present for the proposal defense. One committee member (but not the chair) may attend by audio or video conference but should be available electronically during the entire time of the proposal defense. Immediately following the proposal defense, the committee meets privately to determine whether the student has passed the proposal defense and then immediately informs the student.
- If the student passes the proposal defense with no revisions required or if the student fails the defense, the dissertation chair obtains signatures from the dissertation committee on the Doctoral Candidacy Examination Form and submits it to the PhD Program Director.
- If the student passes the proposal defense but the proposal requires revisions, the dissertation committee has two options: 1) Sign the Doctoral Candidacy Examination Form that day and authorize the dissertation committee chair to oversee the revisions, or 2) Wait to sign the form and instruct the student to revise their written proposal and send the revised proposal to the entire committee for approval. Each committee member signs the Doctoral Candidacy Examination Form after individually approving the revisions.
- Written notification of the completion of required revisions or, in the case of revisions requiring more than 30 days to complete, an action plan for the completion of the revisions must be provided to the PhD Program Director by the dissertation committee chair within 30 days of the proposal defense state.

#### Approval by the IRB for Dissertation Research

To be able to conduct the research outlined in the defended proposal, the dissertation chair (PI) and the student (Co-I) must work together to write/submit a protocol to the WVU Institutional Review Board (IRB) via the WVU Quali Coeus dashboard system (kc.wvu.edu). *It is the responsibility of the dissertation chair to be listed as principal investigator on the IRB protocol for a student dissertation and the dissertation chair must review the protocol prior to IRB submission.*

In some cases, the student may be required to obtain additional written approval from specific clinical/research sites to be able to conduct human subject research. Once an IRB approval letter to conduct research has been obtained, the student can begin the dissertation research. While doing the research, the student must be enrolled in NSG 797, Research.

Under the guidance of the dissertation committee, the student carries out the research and writes the dissertation.

Distribution of the dissertation to the dissertation committee is scheduled by the dissertation chair, but must be at least two weeks prior to the oral dissertation defense. Students are encouraged to meet with committee members to discuss comments, questions, and

recommend revisions regarding the final version of the dissertation before the oral dissertation defense.

### Requirements for Dissertation Defense

It is a requirement of the university that dissertation defenses be announced on the university calendar.

1. Student must be within five years of advancing to candidacy.
2. Student must maintain active student enrollment status.
3. Student must have completed all courses in the Study Plan.
4. student must have met the requirements for residency.
5. student must have produced one first-authored, peer-reviewed journal publication (published or in press) that is directly related to the student's area of research.
6. Have the dissertation defense date finalized three weeks prior to the defense to allow processing of paperwork through the WVU HSC Office of Research and Graduate Education.
7. Provide the following information three weeks prior to the defense state; Student full name including credentials, dissertation title, dissertation abstract, and list of committee members to the PhD program specialist for the production of the dissertation defense announcement flyer.
8. Complete the [Request to Schedule Final Defense/Presentation Form \(Shuttle Sheet Request\) form](#) three weeks prior to the defense state and submit the form to the PhD Program Specialist. All committee members must sign the shuttle sheet request form and it must be submitted to the PhD Program Director.
9. Three weeks prior to the defense, the dissertation chair/committee must have an approved dissertation draft.

### **Dissertation Defense, Submission, and Graduation**

The oral dissertation defense is a public event to which the scholarly community is invited. All dissertation community members are to be present for the oral dissertation defense. One committee member (but not the chair) may attend by audio or videoconference but should be available electronically during the entire time of the defense. During the dissertation defense, the student presents the research to the dissertation committee and scholarly community and responds to questions. The defense is limited to the PhD candidate's research subject and relevant areas and should not exceed two hours.

Immediately after the defense, the candidate and the public are excused from the room, and the dissertation committee discusses whether the student has passed the dissertation defense. After the discussion, a vote is taken. To be recommended for the award of the doctoral degree,

candidates must receive a vote with no more than one dissenting member of the total dissertation committee. The committee then informs the candidate of their result.

### *Electronic Submission of Dissertation*

After successful completion of the dissertation defense, the student must complete [Electronic Submission of Dissertation](#) to the West Virginia University Libraries. The ETD submission deadline each semester is strictly enforced by the WVU Office of Graduate Education. The dissertation chair is responsible for ensuring the inclusion of appropriate modifications and required revisions, if any, in the final version of the dissertation.

### **Applying for Graduation**

The student must complete the graduate application form located at Application for Graduation at the beginning of the semester in which he or she intends to defend the dissertation.

## **Advising and Course Registration**

### **Academic Advising**

The PhD Program Director will serve as academic faculty advisor to all new students for their first year and/or until a dissertation chair is identified. Program specialist works with program director as advisor to facilitate maintenance of student's academic records, and compliance with Health Sciences center graduate office in West Virginia University regulations for progression and graduation. The program director will complete yearly evaluations of student progression.

### **Registering for Courses**

To maintain active status, graduate students must register every term during which coursework is required in the progression plan (summer, fall, and spring).

Students receiving financial aid from the University or other agencies, international students with certain types of visas, and students who wish to use various university services and facilities may have specific registration requirements. These students are responsible for obtaining information about such requirements from the appropriate offices.

Students receiving financial aid from the University or other agencies, international students with certain types of visas, and students who wish to use these various university services and facilities may have specific registration requirements. These students are responsible for obtaining information about such requirements from the appropriate offices. The PhD program maintains a SOLE site that shares information about scholarship and research funding opportunities for PhD students.

## **Additional Program and University Expectations**

### **HIPPA Requirements**

All students are required to provide verification of Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) training prior to collecting data in any clinical site or health record system. If you have not had HIPAA training, you must complete the training prior to the first week of nursing classes (training is offered to students in the HSC programs free of cost; information about how to access the course will be provided in the admission letter). All students enrolled in the WVU SON Graduate Program are required to provide verification or complete training on HIPPA to the Program Specialist.

### **Student Health Insurance and Responsibility for Medical Expenses**

Students must have health insurance while they are enrolled in the WVU SON. Health insurance is available through the Student Health for students who are enrolled in 6 or more credits. Students who have private health insurance can apply for a waiver of insurance coverage through WVU. The [insurance waiver application](#) to show proof of insurance and opt-out of the WVU sponsored health insurance plan may be required.

### **Social Media**

Students are personally responsible for the content they publish on blogs, wikis, social networks, forum boards, or any other form of user-generated media. Failure to maintain these responsibilities may result in dismissal from the program and infringements may be reportable to the State Board of Nursing, and may result in disciplinary action from the WVU SON.

Remember that all content contributed on all platforms becomes immediately searchable and it can be immediately shared. This content immediately leaves the contributing individual's control forever and may be traced back to the individual after long periods of time.

Students enrolled in the WVU SON are required to follow the guidelines of the University, HSC, and the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) regarding social media and online social networking throughout their entire program study until graduating or leaving the program and must:

1. Be cognizant of the potential impact of each post made, with the understanding that patients, classmates, instructors, employers, and other personal and or professional contacts may view an individual's online activity as a reflection of the individual's career as well as the nursing profession in general.
2. stay informed about the privacy settings of the social media sites they utilized, as privacy settings often change.
3. Utilized social networking sites by actively maintaining an awareness of how their professionalism may be affected by friends' and peers' so are usage of the same sites.
4. If elected/appointed to an office within the student government or School of Nursing students should restrict their personal activity to family and friends, and maintain a second option for their "public face" for colleagues, classmates, and peers while in office.

This is also recommended for graduate nurses who want to maintain a separation of their personal lives from their professional lives.

5. Not share, post, or otherwise disseminate any information, that can identify patient, or in any way violate a patients' rights or privacy limiting access through privacy settings is not sufficient to ensure privacy of patients.
6. Never refer to anyone in in a disparaging manner, even if the person cannot be identified with the information stated.
7. Never make threatening, harassing, sexually explicit, or derogatory statements regarding any person's race, ethnicity, gender, age, citizenship, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, religious beliefs, political views, or educational choices.
8. Never make disparaging remarks about any college, university, or school of nursing, including the students, faculty members and staff with the WVU School of Nursing or university in general.
9. Not post content or otherwise speak on behalf of any college, university, School of Nursing, or other student nurses' association unless authorized to do so.
10. Remember that standards of professionalism are the same online as in any other circumstance.
11. Not share or post information or photos gained through the nurse-patient relationship.
12. Maintain professional boundaries in the use of electronic media. Online contact with patients blurs this boundary.
13. Never take, or post from others, any photos or videos of patients on personal devices, including cell phones.
14. Only report a breach of confidentiality or privacy to faculty as soon as discovered.

### [WVU Social Media Guidelines](#)

### [HSC Information Technology Social Networking Site, Blogs, and Instant Messaging Policies](#)

#### **Technology Requirements for the PhD Program**

The graduate programs at WVU make use of the latest in technological advances you will need to have access to appropriate hardware, software, in systems to be successful. The following is a guide and recommendations for technology.

#### *WVU Login*

All students are assigned a WVUID number, username, and account. You must obtain your WVUID prior to claiming your account. If you previously attended WVU, your WVUID and username will be the same, but you will still need to reclaim your account if it has not recently been active. Please follow the steps below to find your WVUID and claim your username and account:

#### ***Find your WVU Login***

1. Go to <https://login.wvu.edu/self-service>
2. Under Alternate WVUID Lookup, enter your date of birth, then select "Social Security



Number” from the ID Type drop down box and enter your SS#.

3. Click Look Up.
4. Write down your WVUID number and memorize it! (Or at least keep it where you will be able to easily find it again.)

#### ***Claim Your Account***

1. Go to <https://login.wvu.edu> and click the Claim Account button
2. Enter your name and date of birth
3. In the ID Type drop-down field, select WVUID and enter your 9-digit WVU ID number found on your admission letter
4. Answer the validation question
5. Read and accept the Annual Security Responsibility Statement
6. Choose if you would like to extend your password from 90 to 180 days and complete the instructions listed
7. Select three different security questions
8. Create a password
9. Write down and memorize your username and password. You will use this for all WVU logins unless otherwise instructed.

#### ***WVU Student MIX Email System***

All students in the University have access to email through the Mountaineer Information Express (MIX) system. You must use this email system for all graduate program coursework and any related communication. No other email addresses will be used by faculty or administrators to contact you or to notify you of course related or program related information. You can access MIX from any computer or mobile phone with internet access at [portal.wvu.edu](http://portal.wvu.edu). You will need your WVU username and password.

You should access MIX as soon as possible. The WVU SoN and faculty will send you important information through this account, and request that you check your account daily. You will be accountable for any information found in your MIX email. The MIX homepage has a great tutorial that you should complete before your classes begin. Use MIX to your best advantage during your program!

#### ***Distance Course Delivery***

The courses you will take in the graduate program will be delivered via distance education technologies using the SOLE (Study, Observe, Learn, Engage) platform for course deliveries. Technologies used within SOLE include Collaborate and Panopto webcast.

#### ***SOLE (Study, Observe, Learn, Engage) Online Platform***

SOLE is the WVU Health Sciences Center's (HSC) portal for online education and information. It is a web-based tool for students to access courses and for instructors to build and maintain those courses. SOLE was developed by HSC Information Technology Services as an open-ended system for online course development and management with a single-login and user-friendly environment. Login to SOLE using your WVU Login username and password. You are expected to check your SOLE courses and mix e-mail on at least a daily basis. If you need assistance with SOLE, please do not hesitate to contact SOLE Support.

### Panopto Webcast

Webcast technology is used for many of the asynchronous lectures that you will be watching in your home, place of employment (when off-duty), or local library. Webcast uses web-based streaming video and synchronized multimedia presentation. The West Virginia University School of Nursing has adopted webcast technology to deliver some core graduate nursing content.

### Blackboard Collaborate Ultra

Collaborate Ultra delivers synchronous real-time online classes. When you log into SOLE, on the home page of each course you will see links to the Collaborate Ultra sessions. You will be an active participant in the Collaborate Ultra sessions, discussing issues using your microphone or answering live poll questions. Because exchange of ideas is an important function of University education, you are required to be present for these real-time Collaborate Ultra sessions, unless otherwise instructed by faculty. Prior to your first live class in Collaborate Ultra, you need to be sure your computer meets the following requirements:

You must complete the audio wizard as soon as possible to be sure that your computer supports Collaborate Ultra. You should complete the wizard on every computer that you will use to access coursework. You may need to repeat the audio wizard each time you access Collaborate Ultra. You will need to have high speed internet access through a cable modem, DSL, or satellite.

### Computer Specifications

- Microsoft Office (includes Word, Excel, Power Point, and Outlook) is required for all WVU SON coursework and may be obtained free at [Download Microsoft Office for Free](#)
- Microphone and speakers; headsets are preferable.
- Webcam, if your PC or MAC is not video enabled.
- Supported browsers and operating system for SOLE and Collaborate are available at [Supported Browsers for SOLE](#)
- OIT has extensive [Student Resources](#) including tech recommendations, information about logins and passwords, how to setup Two-Factor authentication, and much more.

High speed internet connectivity is essential. Please be advised that when you purchase your high speed internet access there is usually an additional cost for the fastest connectivity. The recommended minimum speed for online coursework is 10 mbps. Consult your internet service providers regarding your connection speed for your membership. Or, students may check his/her speed by an Internet Speed Test (search in Google). DSL and high-speed cable are not available in some rural areas and students must resort to high-speed satellite internet service. Dial-up connections do not work with online classroom technology. If dial-up is the only access available, looking for alternate sites to attend class where high speed connection is available, is recommended.

A wireless internet connection is not recommended. The platforms for live classes work best with a wired internet connection.

### Computer skills

It is an expectation that students be familiar with operating and using electronic technology. The skills of word processing on Microsoft Word, database utilization, internet competence, and email use, including the use of attachments, are essential to course work in the graduate program. It is an expectation that you are proficient with these computer skills. We recommend you visit the [Microsoft Training Site](#) for online tutorials to help with Microsoft Office product use.

### **WVU Student Identification Card**

Students who wish to obtain a WVU Student Identification (ID) Card must have paid the special fees included in their tuition and fees invoice. To get the ID card, take a copy of the paid invoice to the Student ID Office in the Mountainair or to the Student Services Office in Charleston. The personnel there will validate the invoice and take a picture. The cards are usually ready in five to seven working days. Students must have a valid photo ID when picking up the card. For information on obtaining a photo ID call 304-293-2273. For a non-photo student ID email [wwucard@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:wwucard@mail.wvu.edu).

### **Maintenance of Licensure as a Registered Nurse**

All PhD students are required to maintain continuous RN licensure during enrollment in the PhD program. Annual renewal of RN licensure must be submitted to the Program Specialist. If the student's RN license lapses or becomes encumbered due to a disciplinary action, the student will be dismissed from the PhD program.

### **Tuition and Other Costs**

Students pay tuition and fees shown in the WVU Graduate Catalog, plus special fees and deposits as required based on the ([Tuition and Fee Schedule](#)). Fees are subject to change without notice. Students' expenses vary widely according to their individual course of study.

### **Exceptions for Scholarship and Graduate Education**

A major purpose of graduate education at West Virginia University is to cultivate an understanding of and capacity for scholarship, independent judgment, academic rigor, and intellectual honesty.

Graduate education is a socialization process exposing the student to professional scholarship. Thus, graduate research and learning experiences offer opportunities to foster relationships that encourage freedom of inquiry, demonstrate personal and professional integrity, and foster mutual respect. This shared responsibility between students and faculty extends to all of the endeavors of graduate students as students, employees, and members of the larger academic community. Faculty and graduate students have complementary responsibilities in the maintenance of academic standards and the creation of high quality graduate programs. Excellence in graduate education is achieved when both faculty and students are highly motivated, possess the academic and professional backgrounds necessary to perform at the highest level, and are sincere in their

desire to see each other succeed. The following principles illustrate what students should expect from the program and what the program should expect from students:

1. The PhD program provides coursework and other learning experiences that are structured to socialize students to the creative and independent scientist role and to prepare students to compete for leadership positions in academic, government, industry, and health care settings.
2. The PhD curriculum consists of rigorous coursework in: nursing science and theory; research methodology; and education, leadership, ethics, and health policy.
3. Students are selected for admission into the program based on evidence for academic success and the research match between each student's interest and the faculty expertise.
4. The WVU School of Nursing Graduate Faculty are fully engaged as mentors with students throughout their program of study.
5. The PhD curriculum includes opportunities for interprofessional learning and research collaboration.
6. The PhD program is sufficiently flexible so that coursework can be tailored to students' research interests and needs.

While enrolled in the WVU SON PhD program, students are **expected** to present posters and papers at regional, national, and international meetings each year and record scholarly activities on the WVU SON website. Instructions on how to submit this data is available from the PhD Director or the SON Office of Nursing Research.

### **Integrity in Research, Scholarship, and Education**

The School of Nursing follows the WVU Campus Student Code, including the ownership of ideas and protection of intellectual property. Students must consistently submit their own work, cite others when appropriate, acknowledge funding as appropriate, cite themselves as appropriate, and obtain written permission when using copyrighted materials.

### **School of Nursing appeal of Academic Penalties or Sanctions**

#### General Information about the Student Appeals Process

The primary purpose of the appeal procedure is to allow review of a penalty or sanction in cases in which a student believes that due process was not followed or that the penalty or sanction was imposed unfairly or inconsistently with regard to course requirements and policies or with program and university standards and regulations. Students have the right to appeal a final grade, charge of academic dishonesty, or academic penalty that they believe reflects a capricious, arbitrary, or prejudiced academic evaluation or reflects discrimination based on race, gender, age, handicap, veteran status, religion or creed, sexual orientation, color, or national origin. Additional grounds for appeal may include: unreasonable severity of the penalty, demonstrable prejudice in the decision-making process, a belief that the evidence does not support the finding

of responsibility (in the case of academic dishonesty) or the choice of penalty, or additional evidence or new information that was not considered in determining the penalty.

If a student does not appeal an academic penalty or fails to follow the appeal procedures described below, the academic penalty will be upheld. The complete policy and general procedures concerning academic standards and appeals is available in both the Undergraduate Catalog and Graduate/Professional Catalog.

### **Appeals of a Final Grade**

For the School of Nursing, the Level 1 appeal should be submitted through WVU email to the associate dean of academics, and Level 2 appeals are submitted to the dean. Please refer to the WVU Policy for Appealing a Final Grade for more information.

### **Appeals of an Academic Penalty (Other Than a Final Grade and Not Based on Academic Dishonesty) (includes appeal of admission decisions)**

Students may also appeal academic penalties other than a final grade, such as program dismissals, probation, or progression policy penalties. This type of appeal is not used for academic dishonesty cases. Please refer to the WVU Policy for Appeal of an Academic Penalty for additional information.

In the School of Nursing, the Academic and Professional Standards Committee presides over the first level of this type of appeal. The letter of appeal should be submitted through WVU email to the associate dean of academics, who will forward the appeal to the committee chairperson. Level 2 appeals of this type are submitted through WVU email to the dean, and Level 3 appeals are submitted through WVU email to the appropriate associate provost.

### **Academic Integrity Statement**

It is the desire of the SON faculty to create and foster a positive learning environment that promotes professionalism, integrity, and mutual trust. The WVU SON follows the WVU Policy on Student Academic Integrity. In addition, students can find detailed information about the SON procedures for academic dishonesty charges, outcomes, sanctions, and appeals in the appeal policy in the program's student handbook.

It is important that instructors and students adhere to rigorous standards of academic integrity in all aspects and on all assignments and coursework to maintain the integrity of the education provided and ensure the validity of student assessment. In addition, RN licensure and safe nursing practice require that students exhibit characteristics of good moral character, including honesty and integrity. Studies have suggested that students who are dishonest in the academic setting are more likely to engage in those behaviors in the work environment (LaDuke, 2013) and the clinical setting (Kreuger, 2014).

**All forms of academic dishonesty are prohibited.** Nursing students are expected to act with integrity and honesty in all didactic and clinical settings, regardless of the nature of the assignment or activity or percentage weight toward course grade. For example, the SON places

as high an expectation on academic integrity for quizzes and short discussion board writing submissions as it does for exams or end-of-semester papers.

WVU defines academic dishonesty in its policy referenced above and includes any dishonest act during didactic or clinical activities that violates professional nursing standards. Such standards can be found in the American Nurses Association (ANA) Code of Ethics (2015) and the ANA Scope and Standards of Practice (2015). Specific examples of academic dishonesty in nursing programs include, but are not limited to:

- Engaging in any act which may give an unearned advantage in a student's evaluation or performance
- Manipulating, altering, or destroying another student's academic work or faculty material
- Using the ideas, language, or work of another without permission and acknowledgement
- Allowing someone to or paying someone to complete an assignment or portion of an assignment to be submitted as your own
- Facilitating academic dishonesty
- Asking someone to commit dishonest acts
- Altering or misrepresenting data
- Lying or committing fraud or forgery
- Adjusting or falsifying clinical or service hours
- Entering assessment data not observed or falsifying medical records or clinical documents
- Using unauthorized resources to complete assigned work
- Engaging in unauthorized collaboration
- Accessing potential test questions by any means or discussing tested or evaluated materials with other students
- Committing plagiarism (copying and pasting someone else's words, omitting sources or quotation marks, reusing your own work for multiple assignments or courses without authorization, and replacing another person's key words with synonyms while maintaining the original structure)

Students are strongly encouraged to ask a faculty member or administrator if they are unsure if a practice would be considered academic dishonesty prior to engaging in that practice. Students and faculty are expected to model the highest professional standards and to report possible instances of academic dishonesty.

Academic dishonesty in a nursing program may result in course failure and/or program dismissal. A list of possible sanctions can be found in the WVU Policy on Student Academic Integrity, and sanctions range from a change in course grade to university expulsion.

Any questions about professional standards or policies may be directed to the instructor, program director, or associate dean of academics.

Kreuger, L. (2014). Academic dishonesty among nursing students. *Journal of Nursing Education*, 53(2), 77-87.

LaDuke, RD. 2013. Academic dishonesty today; unethical practices tomorrow? *Journal of Professional Nursing*, 29, 402-6

## **Responsible Conduct of Research**

PhD Students must adhere to all policies set forth by the [WVU Office of Research Integrity & Compliance](#). According to these policies, students are required to obtain written approval from the IRB to conduct research with human subjects PRIOR TO conducting ANY research throughout the program, including pilot studies and course-related projects using human subject data. Advisors are responsible for facilitating this process. In addition, students are accountable for declaring conflicts of interest; respecting the culture and heritage of research subjects; honoring research subjects' confidentiality; and safeguarding and ensuring the accuracy of all research data.

### **Policies for Authorship for Presentations and Publications**

PhD students are accountable for their professional publications, presentations, and posters. As such, scholarly products must be based on sound scientific principles and conform to ethical best practice guidelines that include transparency on sources of funding, attribution of proper authorship, acknowledgement of mentorship, and limited redundancy in publications. The PhD program has adopted the [ICJME Reporting and Authorship Guidelines](#) for the conduct, reporting, editing, and publication of scholarly work in Medical Journals established by the ICJME in December 2019.

## Standards of Professional Practice and Violation Procedures

All students in the WVU School of Nursing are expected to uphold and demonstrate professional and personal moral standards as defined and described in the following documents:

- West Virginia Code and Legislative Rules; Section 30-7 and Title 19
- West Virginia University Board of Governors Student Conduct Code
- West Virginia University Board of Governors Student Rights and Responsibilities
- American Nurses Association Standards of Practice
- American Nurses Association Code for Professional Nurses
- American Nurses Associate Code of Ethics

Students are expected to, (1) abide by federal, state, and local statutes and ordinances, both on and off campus; (2) refrain from behavior that is incompatible with the responsibilities and values of the nursing profession; and (3) follow the specific rules of conduct established in the above documents and in SON policies and procedures, such as admission and onboarding, attendance, dress code, drug and alcohol, PreCheck/SentryMD documentation, social media, and HIPAA policies.

Students who engage in illegal or immoral acts, violate policy or professional standards, or exhibit unprofessional conduct that directly or indirectly endangers the health or well-being of another individual or themselves will be subject to action pursuant to this policy and guidelines outlined in the Procedures for Proceedings Related to SON Policy and Standards Violations. Incidents for which a sanction could potentially lead to significant delay in graduation, program dismissal, University suspension, and/or or expulsion will be referred to the WVU Student Conduct process.

The West Virginia Board of Examiners for Registered Professional Nurses (WVBOERPN) requires that the program report misdemeanors or felonies and that applicants for licensure undergo a criminal background check and provide an explanation of any criminal incident. Depending on the Board's action, applicants for licensure may be barred from taking the NCLEX-RN, disciplinary action may be applied, and/or the nursing license may be restricted. An active, unencumbered nursing license is required to remain in some WVU SON programs.

### **Standards of Professional Practice**

The student is expected to practice with responsibility and accountability as a professional nursing student. The ultimate goal of nursing practice is to promote health while preventing harm to others. The School of Nursing believes that this goal will be attained if the student's daily nursing practice is guided by the Standards of Professional Practice. These standards reflect minimum acceptable professional conduct.

- The role of the professional nurse involves demonstrating attitudes, values, and behaviors consistent with professional nursing practice. Behavior in conflict with professional nursing practice is inconsistent with professionalism and will not be tolerated.
- Unprofessional behaviors consist of actions that do not demonstrate the minimum behaviors described as acceptable nursing practice. Incidents may be a single event or a pattern of behaviors. Professional Standards include, but are not limited to:
  1. Maintain professional integrity.



2. Practice within boundaries of the nursing student role.
  3. Comply with the policies and procedures of the School of Nursing, course syllabi, the clinical agency, and the West Virginia Board of Nurse Examiners for Registered Professional Nurses.
  4. Demonstrate behaviors consistent with expectations outlined by the 5 core competencies (Critical Thinking, Nursing Interventions, Professionalism, Caring, and Communication).
  5. Maintain patient privacy at all times.
- Prohibited behaviors in class, in clinical, and outside the classroom or clinical area include, but are not limited to:

**Major Violations (may result in program dismissal upon first offense)**

- Disorderly conduct
- Theft or damage of property
- Disruption of the learning environment
- Hazing
- Unlawful discrimination or harassment
- Behavior or conduct that demonstrates a lack of personal qualities necessary for the practice of nursing, including incivility and unprofessional communication
- Behavior or conduct adversely reflecting upon the nursing profession or the School of Nursing
- Posting on social media, any content that negatively reflects upon the nursing profession or the School of Nursing.
- Alcohol or drug-related offenses
- Violation of HIPAA and patient privacy standards (also referred to Risk Management)
- Failure to maintain professional boundaries
- Abandonment of patients by terminating responsibility for nursing care without properly notifying appropriate personnel and ensuring the safety of patients
- Practicing beyond the scope of the student role or the student's ability/level
- Refusal to follow appropriate directives or instructions from faculty or nursing personnel
- Dishonest behavior, including but not limited to giving false reports, falsifying documentation, theft, academic dishonesty (handled through a separate academic dishonesty charge process and referred to the Office of Academic Integrity).
- Practicing nursing while the ability to safely and effectively practice is compromised by physical or mental disability, medication, or lack of sleep
- Violation of policies and procedures (dependent on severity)

**Minor Violations (more severe sanctions, including program dismissal, may occur with repeated offenses)**

- Noncompliance with requirements outlined in the PreCheck/SentryMD Documentation Policy
- Unauthorized clinical absences, tardiness, or call-offs (also refer to program's Clinical Attendance Policy, if applicable)
- Inappropriate use of cell phones
- Inadequate preparation for clinical experiences
- Violation of policies and procedures (dependent upon severity)

Disciplinary action by the School of Nursing will be commensurate with the severity of the infraction. SON personnel will complete a Professional Role Violation Referral Form to indicate a student has failed to uphold professionalism standards. Refer to the Procedures for Proceedings Related to SON Policy and Standards Violations for cases referred to the SON disciplinary process and the WVU Campus Student Code for those referred to the WVU Student Conduct Process.

Students are responsible for reading SON publications, such as the program student handbook, WVU and SON websites, and course syllabi. As part of the PreCheck/SentryMD Documentation Policy, students are required to submit a signature page indicating they read the student handbook. These publications, orientations, and other notifications serve as a verbal warning regarding expectations and potential consequences. First and subsequent offenses and additional warnings shall be documented using the Professional Role Violation Referral Form and through the appropriate disciplinary process (SON or WVU).

### **Procedure for Violation of Professional Practice**

SON personnel complete a Professional Role Violation Referral Form when a breach of professionalism or behavior standards has occurred and send it via email to the program director. The complainant (reporter) may or may not notify the student of the infraction prior to submitting the violation referral form to the program director but should submit the form within three (3) calendar days of the infraction or of becoming aware that it occurred. If the form is submitted beyond the three-day timeframe, rationale for the delay should be included in the comments.

The program director will forward the Professional Role Violation Referral Form to the student and request an email acknowledgment of receipt and response via WVU email. The referral form and the student's response will be forwarded to the Associate Dean of Academics. Should the student refuse to respond to the referral form, or if efforts to reach the student are unsuccessful, a notation should be made on the referral form or forwarding email regarding the circumstances surrounding the missing student response.

The Associate Dean of Academics will consult with all parties involved. If it is determined that the student is not responsible of the violation or when warnings or educational sanctions are applied, the Associate Dean of Academics, or a designee, will send a formal letter to the student outlining the decision. Any role violation for which a sanction other than a warning or educational assignment is possible will be referred to the SON disciplinary process and the Procedures for Proceedings Related to SON Policy and Standards Violations. A role violation warning or educational assignment is not appealable. The Office of Student Services will maintain a log regarding role violations issued, including warnings.

A faculty member witnessing a violation that interferes with the ability to meet immediate classroom, clinical, or safety outcomes of the accused student or other involved parties has the discretion to dismiss the student from the experience. In this instance, the program director must be notified that the student was dismissed, and a notation of the dismissal and rationale should be included on the Professional Role Violation Referral Form. The Associate Dean of Academics must be notified if SON

personnel believe it is necessary to suspend student participation of certain activities until resolution of the violation or adequate remediation has been completed and documented.

## PROFESSIONAL ROLE VIOLATION REFERRAL FORM

### To be completed by Reporter (Complainant):

Student Name:

Student ID:

Enrolled courses (if applicable):

//

Brief Description of the Violation:

Other Comments or Notations (see Standards of Professional Practice and Violation Procedures for required notations regarding reporting delays, the need for immediate suspension of activities, and/or a missing student response):

Complainant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Procedures for Proceedings Related to SON Policy and Standards Violations

The nursing profession requires an emphasis on safety, integrity, and professionalism. This document outlines procedures regarding investigations and sanctions resulting from alleged breaches in professionalism and behavioral policies. This may include, but is not limited to, violations of HIPAA guidelines, drug and alcohol screening policies, professional role standards, PreCheck/Sentry documentation policies, and nursing safety and professionalism standards. Academic dishonesty cases are investigated through the Office of Academic Integrity and are not covered within these procedures.

### Procedural Administration

The Associate Dean of Academics will serve as the School of Nursing procedural administrator to assist any student, student organization, staff member, faculty member, or administrator in understanding and applying these procedures.

All documents related to the proceedings will be housed within the SON Office of Student Services, and formal student notifications will also be stored in the student's SON file.

The procedural administrator will:

- 1) advise any group or individual within the SON wishing to report professional role violations against one or more students;
- 2) investigate the credibility of reports brought forward and gather evidence related to the charge;
- 3) inform any student against whom a report has been submitted of substantive rights, due process rights, and procedures forthcoming, including the right of appeal and referrals to entities outside the School of Nursing;
- 4) refer cases to WVU Student Contact and/or Risk Management, when applicable;
- 5) appoint a PRV Review Committee sergeant of arms;
- 6) randomly select PRV Review Committee members and identify conflicts of interest;
- 7) provide and/or coordinate necessary training opportunities;
- 8) assist the sergeant of arms in setting up hearings, when applicable;
- 9) conduct PRV review conferences, when applicable and appropriate.

The PRV Review Committee sergeant of arms will:

- 1) prepare all papers necessary for the PRV review conference and outcome from the conference for appropriate dispensation and signature;
- 2) assist the procedural administrator in the appointment of the PRV Review Committee members;
- 3) oversee and facilitate hearings and manage questions asked of witnesses
- 4) participate in PRV review conferences

The sergeant of arms may ask questions of witnesses for clarification and data collection, however, will not vote on responsibility or sanctions except to break a tie.

The PRV Review Committee will be randomly selected for each PRV review conference and will consist of seven members, including at least one staff and at least 4 faculty. The student's home campus will be represented by at least two faculty or staff members. Conflicts of interest would preclude a member from participating.

## **Jurisdiction**

Conduct from the time of application for admission through the actual awarding of a degree, even if conduct occurs before classes begin or after classes end, as well as during the academic year and during periods between terms of actual enrollment is subject to SON and course policies. Policies shall apply to a student's conduct even if the student withdraws from school while a disciplinary matter is pending, and even if the student's conduct is not discovered until after a degree is awarded.

This document shall apply to all students enrolled in SON undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs and to all SON student organizations.

## **Breach of Procedures**

Students will be found in violation of procedures in the following circumstances, which may result in additional sanctions.

1. Failure to comply with the notice from the procedural administrator or PRV Review Committee to appear for a meeting or PRV review conference concerning violations of SON policies.
2. Falsification, distortion, or misrepresentation of information at any point in the process.
3. Disruption or interference with the orderly conduct of a PRV review proceeding.
4. Initiating a report in bad faith.
5. Attempting to discourage or discouraging an individual's proper participation in, or use of, proceedings.
6. Retaliating against an individual because of the individual's participation in, or use of, proceedings.
7. Attempting to influence or influencing the impartiality of a member of the hearing council prior to, and/or during, a proceeding.
8. Harassment (verbal or physical) and/or intimidation of a member of the PRV review committee or procedural administrator prior to, during, and/or after any proceeding (reportable to WVU conduct office).
9. Influencing or attempting to influence another person to commit an abuse or violation of the SON policies or WVU student code of conduct.
10. Failing to comply with one or more sanctions imposed.
11. Failure to comply with a University or SON directive.
12. Knowingly violating the terms of a disciplinary sanction imposed in accordance with the procedural outcome.

## **Sanctions**

It is expected that the SON will impose or seek a sanction that is fair under the circumstances. To that end, a student found responsible for a violation or violations of SON policies and/or the Standards of Professional Practice shall be subject to sanctions commensurate with the offense with consideration given to any aggravating and mitigating circumstances, including the student's conduct record. Any incident that could lead to sanctions that include or lead to significant delay in graduation (greater than one year), program dismissal, University suspension, and/or expulsion will be referred to the WVU Student Conduct Process (<https://studentconduct.wvu.edu/student-conduct/process>). Sanctions available for violations include any of the following:

a) Program Dismissal: Permanent separation of the student from the School of Nursing programs. This is reserved for persistent violations of the SON policies or a single violation of marked severity.

b) Course Failure: When an offense relates directly to the clinical or professionalism outcomes of a specific course, course failure is an available sanction. Additional results of a course failure would fall under the jurisdiction of the program's progression policies. Course failures resulting from misconduct and resulting in program dismissal will be referred to the WVU Student Conduct Process. Course failures related to academic performance and course evaluation expectations are considered academic in nature and do not fall under the purview of this policy.

c) Probation: A written reprimand for prohibited conduct that specifies a designated period of time and includes the probability of more severe disciplinary sanctions if, during the designated probationary period, the student violates additional WVU or SON policies. Additional conditions may be stipulated based on the nature of the offense.

d) Warning: A notice in writing to the student that the student is violating or has violated policy and that any further prohibited conduct may result in more severe disciplinary action.

e) Revocation: Admission to the nursing program may be revoked for a violation committed before the student arrives on campus or related to conditions or criteria for admission.

f) Other Sanctions: Other sanctions may be imposed instead of or in addition to those specified. For example, community service, educational classes, and other work or research projects may also be assigned.

Attempts to commit acts may be punished to the same extent as completed violations.

### **Interim Suspension or Leave of Absence**

Imposition of Interim or Supportive Measures: When the alleged actions of a student threaten the operations or safety of the SON or patients or when the SON must take action to assist students pending the outcome of a matter, interim or supportive measures may be put into place. These measures are administrative directives that are intended to ensure the safety of all parties and prevent a situation from escalating. Interim or supportive measures may be made at any point after a referral is received and may include, but are not limited to:

- i. Administrative directives for no contact;
- ii. Temporary or permanent removal from the clinical setting; and/or
- iii. Immediate leave of absence.

The Dean of Nursing will make decisions on these measures after appropriate consultation. All measures described above will be documented in writing and will be made on an individualized basis. The notice will state the facts and circumstances warranting the interim leave of absence, the conditions of the interim leave of absence, and the student's review rights. The procedural administrator will notify the WVU Office of Student Conduct when interim suspension or a leave of absence is required.

Within three (3) calendar days of the imposition of the interim leave of absence, the student may petition the Dean of Nursing to review the reliability of the information concerning the alleged harm or ongoing threat. The petition for review must be in writing and may include evidence supporting the student's position that the student does not pose or no longer poses a significant risk of substantial harm to the individual, others, or property or an ongoing threat of disrupting the normal operations of the University.

### **Investigation**

The procedural administrator shall investigate each report of student misconduct from a credible source. The administrator may require meetings for the purposes of investigating and/or discussing allegations of prohibited conduct, whether such allegations have been formally submitted or have otherwise been made known. Failure to comply with the investigation may result in additional sanctions.

### **Notice of Charge**

If, after an investigation, the procedural administrator finds that it is reasonable to believe that the student violated SON policy, then a formal and written notification of charge will be sent via the student's WVU email or by other means to ensure that the student receives it. The Notice of Charge shall be provided to any student suspected of prohibited conduct as soon as possible after the investigation is concluded.

The Notice of Charge shall include a brief outline of the facts upon which the charge is based and potential sanctions should the respondent be found responsible. When applicable, a copy of the Notice of Charge will be provided to the complainant. The Notice of Charge shall identify a date and time for the respondent to meet with the procedural administrator, or other appropriate personnel, to discuss the SON policy, hearing procedures, remedial options available to the respondent, and information regarding referrals outside the School of Nursing.

If, after investigating the complaint or allegation of student misconduct, the procedural administrator does not find that it is reasonable to believe that the student violated the SON policies and/or the Standards for Professional Practice, then the complaint or allegation will be dismissed. In the event the complaint or allegation is dismissed, the administrator shall indicate the reason for the dismissal and notify the student (respondent) and complainant, when applicable, in writing.

### **Agreed Resolution**

At any point prior to assignment of sanctions, SON administration and the respondent may reach an agreement on a decision regarding responsibility and sanctions. The Agreed Resolution shall be written, dated, and signed. It shall include the agreed upon facts, conditions, and sanctions.

An Agreed Resolution shall be final and not subject to any subsequent proceedings. If the student submits a written objection to cancel the agreement within 24 hours of signing it, the Agreed Resolution would be null and void.

## **PRV Review Procedures**

Complaints not seeking program dismissal or any other action that would lead to dismissal or a significant delay in graduation can be handled through a PRV review conference between the respondent, the procedural administrator, the program director or track coordinator, and the PRV Review Committee sergeant of arms.

In situations where a Notice of Charge has been distributed, an Agreed Resolution cannot be reached, and referral to the WVU Student Conduct Process is not necessary, the case may be referred to the SON PRV Review Committee for review.

If the case is referred for a SON conference, the procedural administrator or designee will schedule the conference within ten (10) calendar days. Maximum time limits for scheduling may be extended at the discretion of the procedural administrator. The student will be notified regarding the date, time, location of the scheduled conference, reports or materials considered, and anticipated witnesses.

If a respondent, after receiving a Notice of Charge and conference date, does not appear for a conference, the conference will proceed without the respondent. However, no inference may be drawn against a respondent for failing to attend, and no decision shall be based solely on the failure of the respondent to attend the conference.

During conferences, the respondent will be given the opportunity to present evidence and to respond to all details regarding the current allegation and any other offenses considered in the assignment of sanctions. A list of witnesses and any documentation to be considered in the meeting should be submitted by the respondent prior to the conference.

Prospective witnesses, other than the complainant(s) or respondent may be sequestered during other witnesses' testimony. Cell phones and other electronic devices may be secured by reasonable means determined by the sergeant of arms prior to the conference in order to eliminate texting or e-mailing information to other witnesses. The devices will be returned to each witness after they have been excused from the conference.

PRV review conferences shall be conducted according to the following:

- a) Conferences shall be conducted in private.
- b) The procedural administrator will present the facts and information obtained from the investigation to the PRV Review Committee.
- c) The respondent, and, when applicable, the complainant may make statements and ask questions of witnesses.
- d) All procedural questions are subject to the final decision of the sergeant of arms.
- e) Formal rules of evidence shall not apply, nor shall deviations from prescribed procedures necessarily invalidate a decision or proceeding, unless significant prejudice to a student or the SON results. Rather, the sergeant of arms shall have the authority to decide any issues regarding relevancy or admissibility that may arise during the hearing.
- f) The sergeant of arms shall have the authority to discharge or to remove any person whose presence is deemed unnecessary or obstructive to the proceedings.
- g) The sergeant of arms may ask questions of a witness.



All conferences will be recorded. The SON will maintain the audio recordings which remain the property of the University. Participants are prohibited from making their own recordings. Upon written request, a respondent, and complainant, when applicable, shall be provided access only in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. § 1232g (2020)) and pursuant to any other conditions for access as may be deemed necessary by the Dean of Nursing or designee.

After the portion of the conference concludes in which all pertinent information has been received, the sergeant of arms shall privately deliberate with the PRV Review Committee whether the respondent is responsible as charged. The PRV Review Committee's determination of responsibility shall be based on a preponderance of the evidence. "Preponderance of the evidence" means evidence which is of greater weight or more convincing than the evidence which is offered in opposition to it; that is, evidence which, as a whole, shows that the fact sought to be proved is more probable than not.

In the event that a respondent has been found "responsible" on any charge, the PRV Review Committee may receive additional information regarding the student's academic transcript and student conduct history, request proposed sanctions from the respondent, and hear impact statements by both the respondent and complainant, when applicable. After receiving the aforementioned information, the PRV Review Committee shall deliberate on the sanction(s) in private. The sergeant of arms may submit written recommendations for specific sanctions or a range of sanctions and rationale for those recommendations on behalf of the committee to the procedural administrator.

### **Notice of Outcome**

After the evidence is considered and a decision is made, the procedural administrator will send a written Notice of Outcome to the respondent. The Notice of Outcome shall plainly state the decision and the rationale for the decision. In the event that the student is found responsible for any part of the charge, the Notice of Outcome will include a brief statement of the facts relied upon, the assigned sanction, and an explanation of appeal rights. A copy of the Notice of Outcome will be provided to the complainant, when applicable.

### **Appeal**

The outcome that is issued may be appealed by both the complainant (when applicable) and respondent within five (5) calendar days from the date that the Notice of Outcome is sent. If the student does not submit an appeal within the prescribed time, the sanction(s) will be applied, no appeal will be considered, and the matter will be concluded.

A written appeal and supporting documents, if any, shall be submitted to the Dean of Nursing with a copy to the procedural administrator.

Sanctions are stayed pending the appeal outcome. However, if there is a perceived danger, interim sanctions may remain in place until the appeal process is complete.

The Dean of Nursing shall review the record and supporting documents to consider only the following:

- a) To determine whether jurisdiction was properly asserted

- b) To determine whether the underlying proceeding was conducted fairly in light of the charges and evidence presented, and in conformity with prescribed procedures, such that no significant prejudice resulted;
- c) To determine whether the decision reached was clearly unreasonable based on the information presented; and
- d) To determine whether the sanction(s) imposed were appropriate.

The Dean of Nursing shall consider the appeal and deliver a decision within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of such appeal, except where adherence to such time period would be impracticable, in which case such time period shall be extended as warranted by the particular circumstances.

The Dean of Nursing may decide to:

- a) Deny the appeal
- b) Modify, reduce, or otherwise limit the sanction(s) imposed (more severe sanctions may not be imposed on appeal);
- c) Refer the case to the University Student Conduct process; or
- d) Remand the matter to the original decision maker with specific instructions that shall be carried out.

If an appeal is not upheld by the Dean of Nursing, the matter shall be considered final and binding upon all involved.

**Appendix 1. Memorandum of Understanding Related to course Progression during Appeal Process after the Dean has rendered an Academic Decision**

Students are allowed to continue progression within the undergraduate or graduate program (continue enrollment in the following semester courses) during the time that a course final grade or program dismissal appeal is being processed and a final decision made. However, students who are unsuccessful in their appeal must withdraw from current classes within the School of Nursing consistent with University deadlines and policies. In addition, the refund of tuition and fees depends on the student’s particular situation, the semester, the date of the withdrawal from a course or courses, etc. In order to determine what, if any, refund of tuition, you may be eligible to receive, you will be asked to review the WVU website that illustrates the Reduction (Refund) Schedule: <https://studentaccounts.wvu.edu/refunds>

I \_\_\_\_\_ have elected to maintain enrollment and progression in the School of \_\_\_\_\_ according to my originally planned program progression plan for the upcoming \_\_\_\_\_ (term) while a decision related to my appeal of \_\_\_\_\_ is being finalized. I acknowledge that if my appeal is denied, I will not be able to continue my progression as planned. I agree to withdraw from the course(s) in which I am not able to progress, and I will immediately stop participating in these courses after the final decision to deny the appeal is made.

I also acknowledge that upon withdrawal from the course(s) in which I am enrolled, my tuition and fees as well as documentation of withdrawals will be consistent with the current University deadlines and policies in place at the time.

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Student Signature

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Student Services representatives

## Appendix 2. Writing Rubric

Criteria	Evaluation Standard/comments				
	Unacceptable	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Paragraph structure (logic): Development Coherence Clarity	There is no clear topic sentence. The paragraph does not build upon and support a single coherent idea. Sentences have no clear relationship. Transition words are inappropriate or absent.	The topic sentence is not the first sentence in the paragraph. The order in which ideas in the paragraph are presented is not coherent. Transition from sentence to sentence, or paragraph to paragraph is abrupt.	The topic sentence is the first in the paragraph but the relationship of topic sentence to paragraph development is difficult to discern. Transition words are limited.	One idea in each paragraph topic sentence (first sentence) but not adequately developed in the paragraph. Transition words are used inconsistently.	The topic sentence is the final sentence in each paragraph. One idea is stated in the paragraph topic sentence and developed logically in the paragraph. Transition words are used consistently to maintain the flow of thought.
Sentence structure (syntax): Parallel construction Subject verb agreement Noun pronoun agreement Precision Economy of expression	Most sentences are flawed by errors in parallel construction, subject verb agreement, noun pronoun agreement, precision, and economy of expression.	Sentence structure is adversely affected by many errors in parallel construction, subject verb agreement, noun pronoun agreement, precision, and economy of expression.	Sentence structure is weakened by more than a few errors in parallel construction, subject verb agreement, noun pronoun agreement, precision, and economy of expression.	Sentence structure meets criteria except for occasional errors in parallel construction, subject verb agreement, noun pronoun agreement, precision, and economy of expression.	Sentence structure demonstrates correct use of parallel construction, subject verb agreement, noun pronoun agreement, precision and economy of expression.
Word Choice: Appropriate word choice for topic and audience Appropriate verb tense Avoidance of Jargon Avoidance of anthropomorphism Avoidance of gender bias Avoidance of errors with referents Avoidance of pretentious words	Poor word choice is very frequent and may include incorrect use for topic, audience and verb tense. There are many errors in jargon, anthropomorphism, gender bias, referent error, and use of	Poor word choice is frequent and may include incorrect use for topic, audience and verb tense. There are many errors in jargon, anthropomorphism, gender bias, referent error, and use of pretentious words.	Word choice does not meet criteria and may include incorrect use for topic, audience and verb tense. There are more than a few errors in jargon, anthropomorphism, gender bias, referent error, and use of pretentious words.	Word choice meets criteria except for occasional errors in correct use for topic, audience and verb tense. There are few errors in jargon, anthropomorphism, gender bias, referent error, and use of pretentious words.	Word choice demonstrates correct use for topic, audience and verb tense. There is avoidance of error in jargon, anthropomorphism, gender bias, referent error and use of pretentious words.
Mechanics: Spelling Punctuation  <i>APA (Faculty should delete this from rubric if APA style is not appropriate for a given assignment)</i>	Errors in spelling and punctuation are very frequent.  There is little to no evidence of an understanding of the APA style for citation in text, reference list headings, or paragraph length.	Writing is adversely affected by errors in spelling and punctuation.  There is little evidence of an understanding of the APA style for citation in text, reference list headings, or paragraph length.	Writing is weakened by occurrence of errors in spelling and punctuation.  There are more than a few violations in APA style for citation in text, reference list, headings, and paragraph length.	Writing demonstrates meeting the criteria except for minor errors in spelling and punctuation.  There are few violations in APA style for citation in text, reference list, headings, and paragraph length.	Writing demonstrates correct use of spelling and punctuation.  APA Style for citations in text, reference list, headings, and paragraph length are followed.

## Writing Rubric Definitions and Resources

- **Paragraph development**
  - Definition: A process resulting in the clear statement of a main idea and supporting details in multiple sentences.
  - Resource: <https://owl.purdue.edu/>
- **Paragraph coherence**
  - Definition: Singularity of focus in a paragraph. Ideas are linked through logical or verbal bridges.
  - Resource: <https://owl.purdue.edu/>
- **Paragraph clarity**
  - Definition: Each idea presented relates directly to the paragraph's topic sentence.
  - Resource: <https://owl.purdue.edu/>
- **Parallel construction**
  - Definition: Using similar patterns of words to show that 2 or more words have the same importance.
  - Resource: <https://owl.purdue.edu/>
- **Subject verb agreement**
  - Definition: A singular subject takes a singular verb, while a plural subject takes a plural verb.
  - Resource: <https://owl.purdue.edu/>
- **Noun pronoun agreement**
  - Definition: Pronoun should be consistent with the noun it replaces.
  - Resource: <https://owl.purdue.edu/>
- **Precision**
  - Definition: Using the exact words needed and eliminating extraneous words.
  - Resource: <https://owl.purdue.edu/>
- **Economy of expression**
  - Definition: Limiting word usage to a clean, direct style that is most effective in expressing the idea.
  - Resource: <https://owl.purdue.edu/>
- **Word choice for topic and audience**
  - Definition: Selecting words that are appropriate for the age, culture, and education of the reader.
  - Resource: <https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/word-choice/>
- **Verb tense**
  - Definition: Consistency of verb tense within the paragraph and paper.
  - Resource: <https://owl.purdue.edu/>
- **Jargon**
  - Definition: Language specific to one group or profession that might not be understandable to everyone.
  - Resource: <https://owl.purdue.edu/>
- **Anthropomorphism/personification**
  - Definition: Attributing human characteristics to anything other than a human being.
  - Resource: <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/anthropomorphism-vs-personification#what-is-personification>

- **Gender bias**
  - Definition: The use of gender-specific pronouns when referring to nouns that include both genders.
  - Resource: <https://owl.purdue.edu/>
- **Referent**
  - Definition: A clear connection between the pronoun and the noun that precedes it.
  - Reference: <http://www.towson.edu/ows/proref.htm>
- **Pretentious or flowery words**
  - Definition: Dramatic, flamboyant words that do not necessarily convey the desired meaning.
- **Punctuation**
  - Definition: Proper use of symbols to indicate structure and organization of thought, including commas, quotation marks, apostrophes, and hyphens.
  - Resource: <https://owl.purdue.edu/>
- **Spelling:**
  - Definition: The forming of words with letters in the correct sequence.

### **Appendix 3. West Virginia University School of Nursing PhD Handbook Signature Page**

I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to read and clarify my understanding of the contents of the WVU PhD in Nursing Student and Advisor Handbook and to access my WVU email account at least weekly while I am a student at WVU. The PhD Handbook is updated regularly, and emails are distributed regularly by the PhD Program Office. These documents represent formal means of communication between PhD students and the University/School of Nursing. Receiving information distributed to students through these mechanisms is the responsibility of the student.

I have received and read the 2022-2023 PhD in Nursing Student and Advisor Handbook.

*Please sign, date, and submit to the PhD Program Director within the first week of courses.*

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_