

**Kent State University  
College of Nursing**



**PhD Student Handbook  
AY 2025-2026**

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## WELCOME TO THE PHD IN NURSING PROGRAM

Welcome to the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Nursing program at Kent State University (KSU) College of Nursing. We are thrilled that you have chosen to pursue your doctoral education with us. As a member of our scholarly community, you are joining a vibrant network of nurse scientists, educators, and leaders who are committed to advancing the science and practice of nursing for the betterment of health and healthcare systems.

This handbook is designed to support your journey by providing important information specific to the PhD in Nursing program. It supplements the official policies and procedures outlined in the Kent State University Catalog, the University Policy Register, and materials from the Graduate College. As a PhD student, you are responsible for being familiar with and adhering to the policies and academic regulations of both the College and the University.

To guide you, the Graduate College provides the [Guide to Graduate Education](#), a comprehensive resource outlining university-wide policies, procedures, and support services for graduate students. We also encourage you to review the [Expectations for Graduate Education](#), which clearly articulates the mutual expectations among graduate students, faculty, and administrators.

As you embark on this important phase of your academic and professional development, we encourage you to make the most of the opportunities for intellectual engagement, mentorship, research collaboration, and leadership that our program offers. We are here to support your growth as a scholar and nurse leader.

Welcome to the next step in your journey toward making a lasting contribution to the nursing discipline.

## IMPORTANT RESOURCES

### Academic Tools

- [Canvas LMS Support](#): Access help and resources for using Kent State's learning management system.
- Teams Link Support: <https://www.kent.edu/canvas/microsoft-teams>

### Key Dates & Academic Policies

- [Academic Calendar](#): View term start/end dates, holidays, and deadlines for registration and withdrawals.
- [Registrar's Calendars & Deadlines](#): Find deadlines for course registration, graduation applications, and more.
- [KSU Catalog](#): Official descriptions of all academic programs, courses, and university-wide policies.
- [University Policy Register](#): Full listing of official university policies, including academic and student conduct policies.

### University Services & Graduation

- [Graduate College](#): Central hub for graduate student resources, policies, funding, and professional development.
- [Commencement](#): Information about graduation ceremonies, including registration and event details.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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## **PROGRAMS' MISSIONS, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES**

**College of Nursing Mission:** The College of Nursing is dedicated to transforming lives by producing compassionate nurses who advance health locally, nationally, and globally.

### **College of Nursing Values:**

- Graduates will become competent, compassionate nurses who care for patients, families and the community.
- Our graduates will exhibit behaviors of lifelong motivated learners to address the complexity of health care.
- Graduates will become competent, compassionate nurses who care for all patients, families and the community.
- We exhibit innovative nursing education models that build on integrity and critical thinking.
- We cultivate inquisitive minds that innovate and develop new nursing science.

### **Program Learning Outcomes**

Graduates of this program will be able to:

- Generate new knowledge that contributes to the advancement of health, healthcare and nursing science.
- Disseminate advances in scientific knowledge.
- Use collaborative, interdisciplinary and innovative approaches to advance nursing science.
- Assume leadership roles in healthcare and education as researchers, educators and advanced clinicians.
- Synthesize and translate evidence for implementation and dissemination for evidence-based quality healthcare outcomes to all populations.

## **ADMISSION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **Admission Requirements**

Requirements for admission to graduate programs are outlined in the KSU catalog <https://catalog.kent.edu/colleges/nu/nursing-phd/#admissiontext>.

The general guidelines for determination of admission from KSU Graduate College found at <https://catalog.kent.edu/academic-policies/admission-graduate-students/>.

### **Licensure**

Students enrolled in the PhD program must have an active unrestricted United States RN license, or for international students, proof of legal ability to practice as a RN in country of origin. Proof of the appropriate licensure must be obtained prior to registering for courses. Students' licensure is verified by the Office of Academic Advising and Student Services via the state's board of nursing during the admission process. Renewals are also verified at the appropriate intervals to verify continuing licensure according to the CON Clinical Compliance Policy, which can be found at <http://catalog.kent.edu/colleges/nu/#CCP>. Graduate students must notify the CON of any change in status regarding their license.

The CON is not licensed to conduct business in all states. In order to be compliant with federal and state laws related to online education and consumer protection, KSU may not be able to offer online programs to students residing in certain states. In addition, some state laws may impose limitations that could affect a program of study, including the inability to offer practicum courses. Since these regulations undergo continuous updates, non-Ohio residents interested in pursuing any CON online program or practicum placement are advised to consult official KSU information on state authorization before applying to this program by contacting the Office of Academic Advising and Student Services at 330-672-7911. Also, any student who plans to move to a different state after being admitted to the PhD program must immediately inform the Office of Academic Advising and Student Services at 330-672-7911 to determine whether he/she can continue in the program.

### **Transfer Credits**

The KSU catalog policy for transfer of graduate credits allows transfer of up to 12 semester credits hours towards a master's or doctoral degree. The CON will evaluate applications for transfer credit according to the KSU catalog policy, which can be accessed at <http://catalog.kent.edu/academic-policies/transfer-graduate-credit/>

To request transfer of credits from another institution, students must complete the Transfer of Graduate Credit form and submit it to the Office of Academic Advising and Student Services. A course syllabus for each transfer course requested must accompany the form. The director of the PhD program will evaluate requests for transfer.

Review will be based on equivalence of the essential learning outcomes between the CON and transfer course(s). The transfer course must demonstrate through course content, student activities, and assessments that it meets or exceeds 70% of the content for the learning outcomes identified in the CON course. Recommendations for transfer must be approved by the Associate Dean, Academic Affairs. Once the transfer credit has been approved, the Office of Academic Advising and Student Services will update the student's academic plan.

### **ADVISING**

Student advising is a shared responsibility between the Office of Academic Advising and Student Services, the PhD Program Director, the PhD Faculty Advisor or dissertation/scholarly project chair.

#### **PhD Faculty Advisor**

Students are assigned a faculty advisor upon admission. The director of the PhD program will serve as the students advisor until a match can be made between the students interest and faculty availability. The role of the Faculty Advisor is to socialize the student to doctoral studies and mentor the student's development as a nurse scientist. The Faculty Advisor will become the student's Dissertation Chair. For more information see the section below concerning [Dissertation Chair](#).

#### **The Office of Academic Advising and Student Services**

The Office of Academic Advising and Student Services assists students with enrollment, development of GPS plans, provision of registration overrides as needed, completion of required University forms (e.g., leave of absence, re-enrollment, transfer credits, extension of time limits, change of program), and in some cases provision of supporting documentation for

financial aid. Alterations of students' program plans in the GPS are carried out by the Office of Academic Advising and Student Services in collaboration with concentration coordinators and program directors. The Office of Academic Advising and Student Services is also responsible for admissions processing, graduation clearance, and monitoring student adherence to the [Clinical Compliance Policy](#). To Schedule an appointment with the graduate advisor, visit [KSU Navigate 360](#).

## **GRADING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Grading policies and procedures are described in the University Catalog, which can be accessed at <http://catalog.kent.edu/academic-policies/grading-policies-procedures/>

### **Grading Scale**

A	93% - 100%
A-	90% - 92.99%
B+	87% - 89.99%
B	83% - 86.99%
B-	80% - 82.99%
C+	77% - 79.99%
C	73% - 76.99%
C-	70% - 72.99%
D+	67% - 69.99%
D	65% - 66.99%
F	Less than 65%

Grades below B are not counted toward completion of requirements for any doctoral degree, but are counted in the graduate GPA. If a graduate student fails a course (i.e., receives a grade lower than B), he/she must repeat the course. The link to this policy is <http://catalog.kent.edu/academic-policies/academic-standing-graduate-student/>

An incomplete mark (IN) may be given to students who – due to extenuating circumstances – are not able to complete the required coursework between the course withdrawal deadline and the end of classes.

### **Academic Integrity**

All narrative/written assignments will be uploaded to the current university-approved plagiarism software and any necessary revisions completed prior to the assignment due date. Faculty will be using the same software to verify that all submissions have been screened for plagiarism.

### **AI Use**

Students must consult with course faculty before using any AI tools for permissible uses and ensure the technology aligns with ethical principles. Generative AI can be useful; however, you should be aware of its limitations:

- Errors: AI generators make mistakes. Assume the output is incorrect unless you check the claims with reliable sources.
- Bias: Their output may reflect bias because the data they are trained on may reflect bias or may not include sufficient data from certain groups.
- Citation: These tools use existing sources without citation. Therefore, using their outputs puts you at risk of plagiarism. Students must disclose and cite the use of generative AI tools when used for assignments as directed by faculty.



## PROGRESSION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### Academic Progress

Good academic standing indicates that students are meeting university and program requirements and are making satisfactory progress towards their degree. PhD students are expected to progress at a rate that will be conducive to successful completion of all milestones towards their degree in a timely manner. This requires clear communication of goals between the advisor and student.

In the first two weeks of the semester in which a student is enrolled in Dissertation, the student is required to meet with their advisor to develop specific goals for the upcoming semester and estimate completion of future milestones. In subsequent semesters, the student and advisor will review prior goals and progression and amend goals as needed.

To ensure transparency and mutually clear communication from the advisor and student, the Dissertation Progress Worksheet must be submitted for approval to the PhD program director within two weeks of the beginning of the semester. The purpose is to ensure students make satisfactory academic progress. If the advisor or PhD program director determines the student is not making adequate progress towards goals, the student may be recommended to the PhD Admissions and Progressions Committee for an academic progress notification: Semester Warning, Academic Probation, or Academic Dismissal. The associate dean of academics must approve any notifications by signing the Worksheet.

An Academic Warning (see below) will be issued if the student has not made progress for two consecutive semesters, or if the student consistently fails to meet stated goals and was previously issued an Academic Warning. The advisor should consider extenuating circumstances outside the student's control, including roadblocks from the student's agency or data collection problems. Students with personal issues or concerns should be encouraged to apply for a Leave of Absence (see Leave of Absence below).

### Academic Standing

The University Catalog policy on Academic Standing-Graduate Students can be found at <http://catalog.kent.edu/academic-policies/academic-standing-graduate-student/>. **All CON graduate students should review this policy thoroughly.** The PhD program requires a student to earn a minimum grade of B (3.0) for a course to satisfy prerequisite and graduation requirements. Grades below B are not counted toward completion of requirements for any doctoral degree, but are counted in the graduate GPA. If a graduate student fails a course (i.e., receives a grade lower than B) a B, he/she must repeat the course. If a PhD student retakes the course and does not earn a B or higher, he/she may be dismissed from the program.

Enforcement of the Academic Standing policy in the CON is carried out at the conclusion of each academic term (i.e., Fall, Spring, and Summer) by the Office of Academic Advising and Student Services. Each student's academic record is reviewed for progression towards degree completion, compliance with degree completion time limits, and achievement of grade requirements. Students with noted deficiencies may be issued a semester warning, placed on academic probation, or subject to academic dismissal. The Office of Academic Advising and Student Services will make recommendations to the Associate Dean for a semester warning, academic probation, or academic dismissal based upon the criteria stated below.

### ***Semester Warning***

A Semester Warning is a warning from the College to the student that their academic standing is in jeopardy. A Semester Warning shall be issued in the following instances:

- receives a course grade less than B (3.0) in a single semester
- is in danger of exceeding their time limit to degree.
- A student who receives a semester warning will be required to meet with an advisor in the Office of Academic Advising and Student Services and concentration coordinator prior to registering for courses for the subsequent term.

### ***Academic Warning***

For dissertation students, who have not made progress for two consecutive semesters. Subsequent warnings will be issued if the student consistently fails to meet stated goals. (see Academic Progress Policy above).

### ***Academic Probation***

A student is placed on Academic Probation as a result of a cumulative GPA is less than 3.0

### ***Dismissal***

Doctoral students are expected to maintain a minimum 3.000 grade point average (GPA). A graduate student who receives more than 8 credit hours of grades less than B (3.000); receives more than 4 credit hours of grades lower than C (2.000); or fails to earn a grade of B or higher on a second attempt at a single course is subject to dismissal.

Students who fail to pass their candidacy exam, dissertation proposal defense, dissertation defense, or have failed to make adequate progress may also be dismissed. See relevant sections below.

A dismissed student has the right to appeal the dismissal. Information about the appeal process can be accessed in the university catalog at: <http://catalog.kent.edu/academic-policies/dismissal-appeal-graduate/>. Appeals should be addressed to the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs.

### **Extension of Time Limits**

Graduate students must complete their programs in the time specified in the University Catalog Policy (<http://catalog.kent.edu/academic-policies/time-limits-graduate-degrees/>).

It is expected that doctoral degree students entering KSU will complete the degree in no more than 10 years. A doctoral candidate is expected to satisfactorily complete the dissertation and pass the final oral examination within 5 calendar years after having passed the candidacy examination. This policy can be accessed at <https://catalog.kent.edu/academic-policies/time-limits-graduate-programs/>. Students may petition the CON Graduate Curriculum Committee to extend time limits. The Application for Extension of Time Limits form [can](#) be obtained from the Office of Academic Advising and Student Services.

The request will be reviewed by concentration coordinator or program director, and then the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.

Extensions of longer than one year must be approved by the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. The student, advisor, and concentration coordinator or director are advised of the decision in writing.

### **Leave of Absence**

A leave of absence is granted for degree-seeking graduate students in active status who must

be away from their studies for one or more semesters for personal, family, financial or other compelling reasons. There are several exceptions and exclusions to a Leave of Absence. Students should consult the University Catalog policy “Leave of Absence for Graduate Students” for a full description of the policy

<http://catalog.kent.edu/academic-policies/leave-absence-graduate-students/>

Students eligible for a leave of absence must complete the Request for Graduate Leave of Absence form found on Flashline. At the conclusion of the leave of absence, the student is required to complete the Application for Graduate Re-Enrollment before he/she can register for classes. Contact the Office of Academic Advising and Student Services for access to this form.

### **ACADEMIC COMPLAINTS**

The University policy for academic complaints is outlined in the University Policy Register, Section 4-02.3 (<https://www.kent.edu/policyreg/administrative-policy-and-procedure-student-academic-complaints>). As described in the policy, the student should first attempt to resolve the issue with the course faculty. If this attempt is not successful, the student should contact the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. It is also recommended that the student reach out to the ombudsman for assistance; information about this can be accessed at <https://www.kent.edu/studentlife/student-ombuds-message> student wishes to lodge a formal complaint after discussing the matter with the Associate Dean, a written formal complaint can be filed according to the procedures and timelines outlined in the university policy.

### **CANDIDACY INFORMATION**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of the candidacy examination is to evaluate the student’s knowledge of the breadth and depth of all course content and ability to synthesize this knowledge through a focused area of research. The examination provides the basis to evaluate the student’s readiness to enter the next phase of doctoral studies, the dissertation.

#### **Eligibility for Examination**

Students are eligible to take the candidacy examination when they have completed all required coursework. Completion of the last electives may be concurrent with the candidacy examination (i.e., taken in the same semester).

The candidacy examination is a two-part process involving written and oral portions. Advisors develop examination questions in consultation with the other committee members. Advisors are also responsible for scheduling and discussing the process of the examination with students, and grading of the examination.

#### **Preparation for the Written Examination**

The written exam is developed in NURS 70744 standing as a good draft of the first three chapters of the dissertation and the written candidacy exam. Please see below under “written Examination.” Preparation for the Oral Examination

With oversight by the student’s advisor, if needed, the student reviews all course content in preparation for the oral examination, including a focused area of research. The student’s advisor works with the PhD program directors to appoint two other CON PhD-prepared faculty to the exam committee. Consideration by all involved in the committee selection should include the fact that the written exam, i.e., the first three chapters of the dissertation, ideally will transition the student to proposal defense. Thus, committee selection should be mindful of the best fit for

the dissertation committee, which only requires a total of two CON Phd-prepared faculty. The advisor works with the student and exam committee to select the exam dates (i.e., written and oral).

### **Application for Scheduling Candidacy Exam**

Students should consult with their advisors during NURS 70744 about planning the dates for the examination. Advisors then notify the PhD program director no later than two weeks after the beginning of the semester in which the examination will be taken. The PhD program director will confirm students' completion of necessary coursework and in consultation with the advisor, appoints the remaining committee members.

### **The Written Examination**

The written exam is considered the first three chapters of the student's dissertation. This is completed in NURS 70744 with supervision and direction from the student's advisor/chair. Once the chapters are ready for distribution to the candidacy committee, copies of the student's first three chapters are distributed to the members of the candidacy committee. The candidacy committee advisor/chair arranges for committee members to review and provide feedback of the student's written work and prepares a summary of the committee's evaluation of the student's performance. After the committee members achieve consensus on the summary, it is then shared in writing with the student no later than two weeks following completion of the written examination.

### **Oral Examination**

The second part of the examination is a 2-hour, face-to-face closed oral examination session that is presided over by the candidacy advisor. The oral examination is scheduled for at least two weeks, but no more than four weeks, following the student's receipt of feedback on the written examination. The student, but not the committee, may elect to schedule the oral examination for a shorter interval than two weeks following the student's receipt of feedback. The purpose of the oral examination is to give the student the opportunity to respond to the committee's feedback regarding areas of strength and areas of concern in the students' responses to questions in the written examination.

### ***Examination Outcomes***

At the completion of the oral examination, members of the candidacy committee evaluate the student's demonstration of breadth and depth of knowledge and ability to respond to questions, both orally and in writing. Following discussion, each member casts a vote of "pass" or "fail." Students are not present for this discussion. The majority vote is recorded on the [Report of Doctoral Candidacy Examination](#).

Students become candidates (i.e., PhDc) upon successful completion of the written and oral examinations as judged by a majority of candidacy committee members. Students are now qualified to register for Dissertation I and must register continuously for Dissertation I each semester (fall, spring) for a total of 30 credit hours.

### ***Failure of Candidacy Exam***

The student fails the examination if it is judged by a majority of the committee to have not demonstrated enough breadth, depth, and synthesis of course content..

In the event of candidacy examination failure, the advisor and committee, in consultation with the PhD program director and student, develop a written plan of action for the student to

address these deficiencies. The plan, which must be submitted to the student no later than two weeks following the committee's decision of failure, includes specific actions, time frames, and outcomes for remedial work (e.g., additional coursework or repeat of specified courses). This written plan is placed in the student's academic file. The advisor reviews the written plan with the student and a repeat examination, which will follow the guidelines described above, is scheduled. Failure of the second candidacy examination will result in dismissal from the PhD program.

## **Proposal Defense**

After successfully completing the Candidacy Exam, the candidate prepares for the dissertation proposal defense. In consultation with the chair, the candidate selects a dissertation committee consisting of:

- One additional College of Nursing faculty member, and
- One faculty member from outside the College of Nursing.

Once the first three chapters of the dissertation are prepared, and with the chair's approval, the candidate distributes these chapters to the committee. Committee members must receive the materials at least 10 business days prior to the defense to allow adequate time for review.

If the committee agrees the student is ready, the proposal defense is scheduled. The purpose of the defense is for the candidate to present the proposed research and for the committee to evaluate and approve the proposal.

- Presentation: The student gives a 15–20-minute presentation of the proposed study.
- Discussion: Following the presentation, committee members ask questions to clarify, critique, and strengthen the proposal.
- Deliberation: The student then leaves the room while the committee deliberates and makes a decision.

The committee will render one of the following decisions:

- Revise and Resubmit – The candidate may not move forward until specific revisions are made and approved by the committee and/or chair.
- Conditional Approval – The candidate may move forward once minor revisions are incorporated as suggested by the committee. The committee may request to see (or decline) the revisions prior to the candidate moving forward with the proposed research.
- Approval – The candidate may proceed with the study as proposed.

Once the proposal is approved, the Approval of Dissertation Topic form is initiated by the chair: <https://dynamicforms.ngwebsolutions.com/Submit/Start/505837db-d500-4578-ae3f-7d941d2ef4bf?SSO=N> . Then the student begins the **IRB submission process** under the guidance of the chair and determines the appropriate dissertation format option.

## **DISSERTATION: OPTIONS AND REQUIREMENTS**

### **Format Selection**

After successfully completing the Candidacy Exam and proposal defense, students, in consultation with their advisor/chair, will select a format for their dissertation. The College of

Nursing offers three options for presenting research: Traditional Dissertation, Non-Traditional Dissertation, or Non-Traditional Grant Proposal Dissertation. The chosen format does not influence the rigor or scholarly expectations of the dissertation.

### ***Traditional Dissertation***

The traditional dissertation consists of an abstract and five chapters: Abstract, Chapter 1-Introduction, Chapter 2-Review of the Science, Chapter 3-Methods, Chapter 4-Results, and Chapter 5-Discussion. The format may vary depending on the type of study conducted (e.g., quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods).

### ***Non-Traditional Dissertation***

The non-traditional dissertation, often referred to as the "manuscript option," allows students to include submitted (publication-ready), accepted, or published manuscripts as part of their dissertation. The student, chair, and dissertation committee will collaborate to determine the focus and content of a minimum of **two manuscripts** and identify the peer-reviewed journals for submission.

### ***Requirements***

- Faculty with expertise in publishing research will mentor students through the non-traditional dissertation
- To receive a passing grade in the final defense semester (NURS 80199 Dissertation I), all agreed-upon manuscripts must be either submitted for publication or in a publication-ready format. A publication ready for publication manuscript involves iterative (multiple rounds) writing with the chair and committee when applicable.
  - Publication ready is defined as clear, coherent and is formatted according to the chosen journal guidelines. A well-formatted document reflects attention to detail and can enhance the credibility of the content. The manuscript has undergone meticulous proofreading to catch any lingering typos or grammatical errors. The manuscript incorporates feedback from the dissertation chair and when applicable the committee.
  - Depending on the type of manuscript being published there may be [external guidelines](#) to adhere to in addition to the formatting requirements of the journal. For example, for observational studies, the [STROBE format](#) may be required, the [CONSORT](#) for RCTs, the [COREQ](#) for qualitative research.
  - The [COPE](#) standards of publishing must be adhered to during the publication process.
- At least one manuscript must be data-based (e.g., data from qualitative or quantitative studies).
- Each manuscript (including purpose/aims, research questions, etc.) must receive approval from the dissertation Chair and committee at the proposal stage.
- Manuscripts authored by the student prior to passing the Candidacy Exam may be included with the dissertation committee's approval.
- Any dissertation committee member who contributed to the manuscripts should be listed as a co-author.
- When the student assigns copyrights to the publishing journal (unless publishing Open Access), they must obtain written permission from the copyright holder to include the



material in the dissertation. Please note, it is important to determine this prior to manuscript submission.

### ***Non-Traditional Grant Proposal Dissertation***

In place of a second manuscript, students may write a grant proposal for competitive funding based on the findings from the manuscript for an external funding application. The grant proposal should follow the specific requirements of the funding agency and mechanism, including sections such as Specific Aims, Background, Methods, Budget (with narrative), Timeline, and Bio-sketch. The grant proposal must be ready for submission by the completion of Chapter 5. The grant proposal will be added as Chapter 6.

### **Submission Requirements**

Regardless of the chosen format, students must ensure that the final dissertation is uploaded to OhioLINK, adhering to the required style guide.

### **Dissertation and Graduation**

The guidelines for dissertations can be accessed at: <https://catalog.kent.edu/academic-policies/dissertation-doctoral-degree/>

Successful defense of a dissertation is required of every PhD candidate before graduation. The dissertation topic, for which a proposal is submitted, must be approved by the doctoral dissertation committee (during the proposal defense process). The dissertation proposal and the dissertation are described in the next sections of this handbook.

The dissertation is an original investigation and demonstrates mature scholarship and critical judgment in the theoretical and methodological approaches to development of nursing knowledge. The dissertation is expected to be the first step in the development of a program of research and scholarly activity. A minimum of 30 credit hours of dissertation (Dissertation I) are required. If additional time is needed for the dissertation, the student registers for 15 credit hours of dissertation (Dissertation II) continuously (fall, spring semesters) until the dissertation is successfully completed and within the time limits set by the University. Students do not have to register for dissertation hours during the summer unless they want to access University resources and assistance from faculty and staff. Defense of the dissertation must be completed in accord with [university deadlines for graduation](#).

### **Terminology Associated with the Dissertation**

#### ***Dissertation Chair:***

The chair for the dissertation must be from the KSU CON, possess a PhD, and have Full graduate faculty status and approval to direct dissertations. The dissertation chair should be either a content or methods expert for the dissertation topic and be willing to work with the student. The dissertation policy that describes the composition of the dissertation committee can be accessed at <http://catalog.kent.edu/academic-policies/dissertation-doctoral-degree/>

#### ***Dissertation Committee:***

The committee consists of a minimum of four (4) members: the chair, two members from the CON who meet University guidelines, and one faculty member from a discipline outside of the nursing program at KSU who also meets university guidelines <http://catalog.kent.edu/academic-policies/dissertation-doctoral-degree/>. It is highly recommended that students work with

advisors and chairs to identify the other members of the committee.

When students are ready to defend their dissertations, a Graduate Faculty Representative is appointed by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in collaboration with dissertation chairs or PhD program director. The Graduate Faculty Representative most often comes from outside the student's department but may be a member of PhD in Nursing faculty that has expertise outside the candidate's area of research. The Graduate Faculty Representative represents the KSU graduate faculty by noting whether the nature of the questioning and the responses during the dissertation defense meet highly respectable scholarly standards. If the Graduate Faculty Representative has any reservation regarding this, the reservations are presented immediately to the Dean or Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. The Graduate Faculty Representative is expected to question the candidate and to vote on the passing of the final defense. For further information see KSU guidelines for dissertation final examination, <https://catalog.kent.edu/academic-policies/dissertation-doctoral-degree/>

***Termination of Dissertation Chair Relationship:***

When either the candidate or the faculty dissertation chair believes that they can no longer continue in the dissertation chair-student relationship, each should consult with the KSU CON PhD program director. Beyond the first semester of the dissertation chair-student relationship, the investment of effort and resources by both parties indicates that termination is a step that should not be taken lightly.

***Termination of Dissertation Committee Members:***

When the candidate believes he/she can no longer work with a committee member, the candidate should meet with the dissertation chair to discuss the issues. The dissertation chair can meet independently or in conjunction with the candidate and committee members to resolve the issue. Any changes to the committee membership after initial approval by the Graduate College shall be discussed with the director of the PhD program, and if needed, forwarded to the Graduate College by the chair for ratification and approval. Requests for changes in committee membership should include a reason for such changes.

***Dissertation Proposal Defense:***

The dissertation proposal is a written document using APA format that includes an outline of the parameters of the projected dissertation topic with a rationale and statement of the problem to be researched, a preliminary review of the literature substantiating the need for the study, the methodology and design of the study, and the sources of information for the dissertation. The proposal is often the first three chapters of the dissertation: Chapter 1, Introduction and Statement of the Problem, Chapter 2, Review of Literature, and Chapter 3, Methods. A proposal defense meeting of the dissertation committee is required for approval. This meeting is confined to the candidate and dissertation proposal committee members only. Approval of the proposal permits the candidate to proceed with implementation of the actual dissertation research. The Proposal Defense Form titled "[Approval of Dissertation Topic](#)" is completed once the proposal is successfully defended. This form is completed by the doctoral candidate, signed by members of the dissertation committee, and submitted to the PhD director, who submits it to the Graduate College.

***Clinical Compliance Policy***

Students should refer to the clinical compliance policy in the CON if they complete their research practicum in a site that requires that compliance.

<http://catalog.kent.edu/colleges/nu/#policiestext>. If the student is required to abide by the clinical



compliance policy, it should be noted on the “Approval of Dissertation Topic Form” and the student should consult with the Office of Academic Advising and Student Services. The College of Nursing GSN Canvas Learn course contains the instructions and information for completing the clinical compliance policy.

### ***Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval***

<https://www.kent.edu/research/office-research-compliance/irb-forms>

Research that involves human subjects must have approval from a Human Subjects Review Board before recruitment and data collection begins. Simultaneous approval may be sought from the KSU IRB and/or healthcare agency review board. The candidate works with the dissertation chair to develop an IRB application. A copy of the IRB approval letter must be retained by the chair and student. In addition, the IRB date of approval and number should be entered onto the “Approved Dissertation Topic and Proposal Form” and resubmitted to the PhD Director, who will forward it to the CON Office of Admissions for retention in the student’s file. Discerning the need to obtain IRB approvals from other healthcare agencies is the responsibility of the candidate working under the guidance of the dissertation chair.

### ***Conducting Research***

During the process of conducting dissertation research, candidates should be in frequent contact with their dissertation chairs and committee members as needed. The schedules of all committee members, including the outside members, shall be considered when selecting a time for committee meetings.

### ***Preliminary Approval of Dissertation and Pre-Defense Meeting***

When the dissertation chair thinks that the dissertation is ready to defend, it will be distributed among the members of the dissertation committee. The chair allows at least a 10- working-day period for committee members to read the dissertation and then convenes the dissertation committee (without the candidate’s presence). The Graduate Faculty Representative is notified of this meeting and invited to attend. The purpose of the pre-defense meeting is to determine the readiness of the manuscript for the final oral defense. The following are possible committee decisions:

- Unanimous agreement that the dissertation is ready for the oral defense and any suggestions for changes do not need to be seen before the oral defense;
- One or more committee members request that minor changes be made and wish to see the revisions before determining readiness to defend; and
- Committee members determine that major revisions are needed, thus necessitating postponement of the oral defense. If possible, a tentative timeframe for completing changes, in collaboration with the doctoral candidate and committee, are identified and a potential date for the next pre-defense committee meeting is set.

Recommended revisions are noted by the chair and communicated to the candidate. When appropriate revisions have been made (i.e., chair and committee members are in agreement), the chair will inform the PhD director that the final oral dissertation defense may be scheduled.

### ***Selection of the Moderator for Dissertation Oral Defense***

Normally, the moderator will not be a faculty member in the department of the candidate's major. The role of the moderator is to preside and moderate the oral defense. The Graduate Faculty Representative may serve as the moderator and query the student and vote.

### ***Dissertation Oral Defense***

A **pre-defense meeting** must be held with the dissertation committee prior to scheduling the

final oral defense. At this meeting, the committee will document one of the three possible decisions as outlined in the Graduate Student Handbook. While there is no official form, it is recommended that the chair send an email summarizing the committee's decision and copy both the PhD Program Director and Terrie Adams; this email serves as the official record of the student's "readiness to defend." The Graduate Faculty Representative should also be invited to participate in this meeting.

Possible outcomes:

- The student may not proceed until specific issues are addressed in the written document.
- The student may proceed, but will need to address issues in the final oral defense and correct the written document post defense.
- The student does not have to address any issues and the oral defense will proceed.

The **dissertation defense** date should be scheduled in line with university deadlines for dissertation defense. The dissertation chair will designate the time and place of the final oral defense and notify all members of the examining committee. The defense should be scheduled to allow at least ten business days for the dissertation committee to review the written dissertation. The candidate should be prepared to make further revisions after the oral defense. The Graduate College encourages all dissertation defenses to be publicized well in advance and to be open to all faculty and students. An email and public announcement are made at least two weeks before the scheduled final oral defense. Copies of the abstract of the dissertation should be available from the CON prior to the defense and at the defense itself to familiarize other members of the faculty with the methodology and findings.

### ***Order of the Defense***

The scheduled defense is typically two hours in length. The candidate opens with a brief (i.e., 15-20 minute) presentation of findings, after which the members of the examining committee question the candidate in an order determined by the moderator. Any family or guests may be asked to leave before the committee begins asking questions. The candidate is expected to respond to substantive and methodological questions related to the dissertation. When members of the examining committee have had an adequate opportunity to question the candidate, the moderator allows questions from the audience in the room, or, if appropriate, on Teams. Once the questioning has been completed, the moderator adjourns the defense and clears the room of everyone except the members of the examining committee.

### ***Determination of Success or Failure of Defense***

The candidate is evaluated on the quality and significance of the dissertation and the oral defense of the findings. All committee members are polled for votes (i.e., pass or fail) on the dissertation and oral defense. The candidate passes if there is no more than one dissenting vote cast by the examining committee. All members of the examining committee will affix their signature to a single form signifying their vote. [The Report of Dissertation Final Exam](#) form must be completed upon the conclusion of the defense.

### ***Report of Dissertation Final Examination Form***

The [Report of Dissertation Final Exam](#) form is filed by the dissertation chair. The form is sent to the KSU Registrar as the single form indicating that the defense has been held, and that the student has passed or failed. This form must be on file in the Registrar's Office at the time the dissertation is officially submitted. Copies are also filed with KSU Graduate College and CON Office of Academic Advising and Student Services.

***Repeating the Oral Defense***

If the doctoral candidate fails the oral defense of the dissertation, the dissertation committee may consider conditions for another oral defense. The dissertation committee is not obligated to provide a second opportunity to defend the dissertation; however, the candidate may be granted one additional opportunity.

***Completion of Final Dissertation***

All comments and questions by the committee are to be addressed by the candidate in the final version of the written dissertation.

***Dissertation Submission***

Refer to [University guidelines](#) and the College of Nursing's Style Guide for instructions on submitting your dissertation.

**TABLE 1: TIMETABLE FOR COMPLETING DISSERTATION DEFENSE AND GRADUATION.**

Semester Start Date	Application for Graduation	Distribution of Dissertation	Oral Defense of Dissertation	Dissertation and Abstract Filing	IP Grades Cleared (Last day to enter grades in Flashline)	Commencement Date
Week 1	Week 1 of Semester	Week 8 of semester Week 6 of Summer	Week 10 of semester Week 8 of Summer	Week 12 of semester Week 10 of Summer	Week 12 of semester Week 10 of Summer	Published by Registrar
	<p>Student completes application for Graduation in Flashline Student- &gt;Resouces-&gt; Graduation-&gt; Apply for Graduation</p> <p><b>When: Completed</b> application for graduation is due the first Friday of the semester in which student plans to graduate (deadline is <u>firm</u>).</p>	<p>Student submits dissertation to the committee for review at <b>least two weeks prior</b> to the scheduled oral defense</p>	<p><b>Two weeks before final filing</b> of dissertation.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> It is better to allow more than two weeks for any major edits</p>	<p><u>Three weeks before graduation</u>, latest (firm deadline)</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> All Dissertations and abstracts may be filed free of charge electronically (ETD)</p>	<p>Graduate CON office keeps an electronic copy of completed Report of Dissertation Final Exam and sends original to Registrar</p> <p>Deadline for faculty of record to enter "S" for Dissertation II course in the <b>current and final semester</b> when entering final grades for the semester in Faculty Tools.</p>	

			<p>In special circumstances, permitted by committee and with the consent of the student, the oral defense may be closer to final filing date for dissertation.</p> <p>If passed, faculty of record changes "<b>IP</b>" grades for current and prior semesters' Dissertation I &amp; II to "<b>S</b>"</p>	<p>Take advantage of the ETD workshops to learn how to file your dissertation electronically. For more information, go to <a href="https://www.library.kent.edu/about/departments/copyright-services/electronic-theses-dissertations">https://www.library.kent.edu/about/departments/copyright-services/electronic-theses-dissertations</a></p>	<p>Graduate CON office changes SHADEGR to '5' and adds title of dissertation to SHAQPNO</p>	
January 13, 2025	January 17, 2025	March 14, 2025	March 28, 2025	April 11, 2025	April 11, 2025	May 9, 2025
May 14, 2025	2/1/25 to 5/30/2025	June 26, 2025	July 10, 2025	July 18, 2025	July 18, 2025	August 9, 2025
August 18, 2025	August 23, 2025	October 18, 2025	November 1, 2025	November 15, 2025	November 15, 2025	December 12-13, 2025
January 12, 2026	January 16, 2026	March 13, 2026	March 27, 2026	April 10, 2026	April 10, 2026	May 8, 2026
May 11, 2026	May 15, 2026	June 26, 2026	July 10, 2026	July 17, 2026	July 17, 2026	August 8, 2026
August 24, 2026	August 28, 2026	October 16, 2026	October 30, 2026	November 13, 2026	November 13, 2026	December 18-19

## **PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS**

The faculty of the College, our partner practicum agencies, and the clients we serve expect that students present a professional, well-groomed appearance that reflects the nature of the program, profession, and facility. Safety and cultural awareness are also vitally important in consideration of the standards of appearance. Both faculty and students are to follow the CON standards and any additional standards of the practicum, educational, or research settings to which they are assigned. Certain faculty, agencies, or specific units may establish additional appearance standards beyond those listed below.

### ***Professional Liability Insurance***

While students are in their practicum courses, KSU provides liability insurance. This coverage includes a substantial out-of-pocket deductible. Students may, but are not required to, obtain their own student liability insurance. A copy of the liability insurance form can be found on GSN Canvas.

### ***Clinical Incident Reports***

If involved in an incident during a practicum experience involving self, a patient, family member, or staff member, the student must notify the preceptor and course instructor and complete a clinical incident report as soon as possible.

### ***Cleanliness***

Personal cleanliness and hygiene are essential both to portray a professional appearance, and to safeguard the health of clients, agency staff, and other students. Hygiene maintenance requires attention to odors. Students must use only fragrance-free body products since scented products (e.g., perfumes, colognes, lotions, deodorants, after shaves) can be offensive or allergenic to many people. Students should also be cognizant of body odor and bad breath and take measures to avoid both. Students who smoke should have no detectable odor of smoke on their person when in practicum setting.

### ***Attire***

Attire appropriate to the type of experience (e.g., lab coat, scrubs) and agency requirements must always be worn during each practicum experience except in selected areas such as obstetrics, community health, and psychiatric/mental health, where scrubs or street clothes are worn. Specific apparel requirements for these areas are provided by the affiliating practicum agencies, the course syllabus, and/or the faculty. All clothing worn should fit appropriately and at no time should breast or gluteal cleavage be visible. Clothing should meet the standards of the agency, be appropriate for professional appearance, and the College name badge should be worn. The College name badge should not be worn outside of the practicum experience in the program. Below is information related to how to obtain a badge and what information to include on the badge. To register for a badge, go to Practicum Module in The College of Nursing GSN course on Canvas for specific instructions.

- **The following information must appear on all name badges (See below):**
  - First and last name
  - Concentration Name
  - College of Nursing
- **The following should NOT appear on name badges:**
  - Affiliations
  - Degrees

### ***Hair***

Hairstyles for men and women must be neat and clean. Beards and mustaches must be neatly trimmed. When in contact with patients, long hair must be pulled back and fastened by a clip or elastic band so that it does not fall forward over the shoulders or face. In nursing units that require covering of hair, such standards will be followed.

### ***Jewelry***

A watch with a second hand, a single pair of plain gold or silver posts worn in the lower ear lobe of pierced ears, and a wedding band are the only acceptable jewelry. Visible piercings with jewelry in places other than the lower ear lobes (e.g. upper ear, nose, tongue, eyebrows) are not permitted in the practicum area. All open piercings must remain empty. Spacers are not permitted while attending practicum experiences.

### ***Nails***

Artificial nails are not permitted during direct contact with patients in any practicum setting. This includes wraps, inlays, decals, and artificial nails. Natural nails are to be clean and less than one-quarter inch beyond the fingertip when in contact with patients. Nail polish, if worn, must be clear in color and not chipped or cracked.

### ***Body Art***

Tattoos or other body art must be covered as much as possible in the practicum setting.

### **Medical Marijuana**

Marijuana is not recognized as legitimate treatment by the federal government. All Marijuana use is prohibited by our healthcare partners.

### ***Other***

Excessive makeup is not acceptable, and gum chewing is not permitted in the practicum or research setting.

## **GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP**

The CON encourages and supports graduate student engagement in research and scholarship activities throughout their academic studies. Both the College and University provide support for students. All support (college or university) is dependent on the resources available and the timing of the request.

### **Center for Nursing Research**

The [Center for Nursing Research \(CNR\)](#) aids students pursuing nursing research and scholarly endeavors. In coordination with the student faculty advisor, the CNR can provide students with relevant consultation and assistance with all aspects of the research or scholarly project, including conference-related abstracts or manuscript editing (outside of class assignments). Examples of the type of assistance include help with grant development, proposal review, project budgets, and potential funding opportunities. Editorial review and assistance with manuscripts is also offered by the CNR to ensure manuscripts follow each journal's author guidelines, adhere to the required style guide, contain well-developed and organized ideas, and are as error-free as possible. Students should submit the *Nursing Research Proposal Form* located on the CNR website for research or scholarship assistance.

Statistical support for research and projects is also offered. Completion of the *Statistical Support*

*Form* located on the CNR website is required prior to meeting with the statistician.

The CON hosts six Brown Bag Engagement Series lectures/presentations with 1.0 continuing education unit (CEU) awarded for attendance per session. These presentations occur three times during the Fall semester and three times during the Spring semester. The sessions are held virtually and are video recorded for later viewing.

Funding is available for nursing research and innovation through various donor supported funds. Students and faculty who are interested in accessing these funds should complete the *Nursing Research Proposal Form* located on the CNR website. The CNR will facilitate completion of an internal proposal, and the faculty members of the Research and Innovation Advisory Board will review the request and make recommendations to the CON Dean. Applicants will be asked to provide numerous supporting documents and are encouraged to have dialogue with the CNR and their faculty advisor throughout the process. The internal funding available through the CNR aims to support projects that have potential to lead to additional funding through national funders (HRSA, NSF etc.). For any inquiries about the board, application process, or available funds, please reach out to the Center for Nursing Research.

For more information about Research in the CON, please check our website:

<https://www.kent.edu/nursing/research>

### **University Resources**

- The Graduate Student Senate Research Award is a competitive award that supports research or project-related expenses. This award is offered twice per year with application deadlines in the Spring and Fall semesters. Students are eligible to receive one Research Award per academic year. For more information, go to <https://www.kent.edu/graduatecollege/awards>
- The Graduate Student Symposium is one of the largest annual research events on campus. The event itself features oral and poster presentations by graduate students from a wide variety of disciplines. For more information about the next event, visit <https://www.kent.edu/graduatecollege/getting-started-student-services>
- The Three Minute Thesis is an event that allows graduate students to present research they are conducting for a thesis, dissertation, terminal project, as well as any other research project they are engaged in. The exercise develops academic, presentation, and research communication skills and supports the development of graduate students' capacity to effectively explain their research in three minutes in a language appropriate to an intelligent but non-specialist audience. For more information, please see <https://www.kent.edu/graduatecollege/three-minute-thesis>
- The Graduate College offers Research Writing Retreats for Graduate Students during the academic year. This program has been developed to help provide you with a quiet space to focus on your writing as well as network with other colleagues. Additionally, all of your meals are provided in one place, including breakfast, lunch, snacks, and plenty of coffee and tea to fuel your progress. <https://www.kent.edu/graduatecollege/research-writing-retreat>



## STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS AND CON COMMITTEES

The CON encourages graduate students to participate in student organizations and committees.

- Several CON faculty committees (e.g., Graduate Curriculum Committee, Academic Complaint Committee) invite students to serve as members.
- The Kent State University graduate student community is home to several student organizations. Check out their websites at the link below for more information and events: <https://www.kent.edu/graduatecollege/graduate-student-organizations>
- [Graduate Student Senate](#) – Graduate Student Senate (GSS) is composed of senators from all departments and programs on campus that have graduate programs on the master and doctoral level. Through regular meetings, the senate seeks to improve graduate student life and research on campus through student initiatives and research grant funding.
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- The Delta Xi Chapter of the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI), has been recognizing excellence in academic achievement and supporting student success at KSU CON since 1980. STTI is dedicated to advancing world health and celebrating nursing excellence in scholarship, leadership, and service. Its members are nurses and nursing students committed to the pursuit of excellence in clinical practice, education, research, and leadership. Sigma Theta Tau is the second largest nursing organization in the United States and one of the five largest in the world.
  - Student membership is selective and by invitation only. Awarding membership recognizes, encourages, and actively supports nursing excellence and scholarship by advancing professional development, scholarly pursuit, leadership, creativity, and commitment to nursing. Members receive honor cords to be worn at commencement, are recognized in the commencement program as honor society members, and receive benefits of membership in the organization, including career counseling, networking opportunities, conferences, subscription to the organization's journal and other literature, chapter activities and service. Delta Xi offers an academic year internship to work with the chapter, chapter leaders, and undertake a project consistent with the STTI mission. Research grant opportunities are also available. For more information on any of these opportunities, use contact information below.
  - Students in all academic programs are reviewed for eligibility at least once yearly according to the following criteria:

Criteria	BSN	RN-to-BSN	MSN & Doctoral (PhD & DNP)
Minimum number of <u>nursing</u> (NURS) hours completed	½ of program total	½ of program total	1/4
Minimum number of overall program hours completed	N/A	12 (NURS or non-NURS)	N/A
Minimum overall GPA	3.5	3.5	3.5

- **For More Information:**
  - Email: [deltaxistti@gmail.com](mailto:deltaxistti@gmail.com)
  - Websites:
  - Delta Xi: [deltaxi.nursingsociety.org](http://deltaxi.nursingsociety.org)
  - STTI: <http://www.nursingsociety.org/why-stti/stti-membership/stti-member-benefits-and-resources>
  - <http://www.nursingsociety.org/AboutUs>