Susan and Alan Solomont
School of Nursing

PhD Handbook

Revised: June 2018
SON Diversity & Inclusion Statement

By 2020, the university will be a model campus community where all students, faculty and staff feel appreciated, respected, connected, valued and engaged with the larger life of the campus and beyond (UMass Lowell Strategic Plan 2020, July 2015).

Inclusivity is a key value within the culture of the School of Nursing. We are therefore focused on fostering an environment that values the unique contribution of each member of our community.

This commitment to inclusivity requires that we appreciate and respect our varying backgrounds and viewpoints.

We are committed to recognize the intrinsic importance of each person’s role and appreciate every individual’s contribution to meeting the School of Nursing Philosophy, Mission, Vision & Goals.

We commit to treating one another with high regard and respect. We are dedicated to performing our jobs in a courteous and professional manner.

We are committed to maintaining integrity and courtesy in our dealings with fellow members of the School of Nursing, College, University and community at large.

Communication, cooperation and teamwork are key to achieve our goal to foster a community that respects each individual’s worth and rights.
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Introduction and Historical Background

The history of the University of Massachusetts Lowell began in 1884 to 1885 when the Lowell Normal School and the Lowell Textile School were established in Lowell, MA. Many historians credit Lowell as the city of origin for the industrial revolution. Lowell is located 25 miles northwest of Boston, MA. It is a city built along the Merrimack River, which served to provide water, electricity and transport for the textile mills, which were prevalent in the 1800s through the mid-1900’s. In 1975, Lowell State College (formerly the Lowell Normal School) and the Lowell Technological Institute (formerly the Lowell Textile School) merged to become the University of Lowell. In 1991, the University of Lowell merged with the University of Massachusetts as one of its five campuses. UMass Lowell is among the top 200 research universities in the U.S. (U.S. News & World Report). The total research and development expenditures total more than $69 million. The university is ranked 13th in the U.S. for intellectual property generated. It currently includes ten University Research Centers, five Community Engagement Centers, and eight Seed Centers, which are developing research centers.

The School of Nursing was founded in 1968 as the Department of Nursing within the College of Health Professions in the former Lowell State College. The School of Nursing status was designated in July 2013. Susan and Alan Solomont provided support to the School and in July, 2017, it was dedicated as the Susan and Alan Solomont School of Nursing. Currently the Zuckerberg College of Health Sciences houses the School of Nursing, and the Departments of: Physical Therapy, Biomedical and Nutritional Sciences, and Public Health.

The PhD Program in Nursing at the University of Massachusetts Lowell (UMass Lowell) was established in 1996. It was the first known PhD in nursing program in the U.S. with a focus in health promotion. Since that time, the PhD in Nursing with its focus in health promotion has undergone one major curriculum revision in 2012 with a concurrent change in the methodology of its teaching. The PhD program in nursing has an excellent reputation for producing health promotion scholars, educators, and research scientists.
University, College, School Mission Statements

The **Mission of the entire University of Massachusetts system** is to: *conduct programs of research and public service that advance knowledge and improve the lives of the people of the Commonwealth, the nation and the world.*

The **Mission of UMass Lowell**: *In accord with the UMass System’s mission, the University of Massachusetts Lowell is a public research university committed to excellence in teaching, research and community partnerships. The University is dedicated to transformational education that fosters student success, lifelong learning and global awareness. UMass Lowell offers affordable, experience-based undergraduate and graduate academic programs taught by internationally recognized faculty who conduct research to expand the horizons of knowledge. The programs span and interconnect the disciplines of business, education, engineering, fine arts, health sciences, humanities, sciences and social sciences. The University continues to build on its founding tradition of innovation, entrepreneurship and partnerships with industry and the community to address challenges facing the region and the world.*

The **Mission of the Zuckerberg College of Health Sciences** is to: *Promote health of individuals, families and populations in a diverse global society through excellence in teaching, research, scholarship and service. Community and health care industry partnerships enable experiential learning activities to enhance the education of health care professionals and scientists.*

The **Mission of the Solomont School of Nursing** is to: *Educate students, advance knowledge, and provide service to the University, the profession, and the community through excellence in the discovery, application, integration, and dissemination of knowledge. The School emphasizes health promotion needs of individuals, families, groups, and communities at the local, national and global level.*

The PhD in nursing program, in concert with the other graduate and undergraduate programs, functions within the Solomont School of Nursing’s mission. These goals, objectives and outcomes are in clear alignment with the mission statements of the four bodies under which we serve, namely the Solomont School of Nursing, the Zuckerberg College of Health Sciences, UMass Lowell and the University of Massachusetts system.
The PhD program at UMass Lowell develops scholars who will conduct research and advance knowledge (UMass system mission). Our program is committed to excellence in teaching and research; we offer an affordable and transformational education program (UMass Lowell mission). In the past decade, UMass Lowell has experienced significant growth in research dollars and the development of new doctoral programs. This strong emergence of a focus on research and scholarship is congruent with the development of nurse scholars who will contribute to the development of science. We provide a foundation for our students to promote health for diverse individuals, families and communities through mentorship and experiential learning (College mission). And finally, the PhD in nursing program advances the state of the art in scientific knowledge through excellence in the discovery, application, integration, and dissemination of knowledge (School mission).

**PhD Program Goals, Program Outcomes, Student Outcomes**

Our PhD program produces graduates who are competent health promotion researchers, educators and leaders in the profession of nursing. Our program prepares graduates with high-level skills in research methods, teaching, leadership and interdisciplinary/transdisciplinary communication. The program goals, program outcomes and student outcomes were developed in the fall of 2014 and revised in spring, 2015. They were adapted from the *Indicators of quality in research-focused doctoral programs in nursing: Pathways to excellence* report (AACN, 2010) and are congruent with the missions of the University, College, and School of Nursing.

**PhD in Nursing Program Goals**

Graduates of the PhD Program in Nursing are prepared to:

1. Advance scientific knowledge through the conduction and dissemination of health promotion research.
2. Demonstrate leadership skills as nurse educators, researchers, and policy advocates for diverse populations.
3. Lead and/or participate in transdisciplinary research, professional organizations and community action teams.
PhD in Nursing Program Outcomes

The PhD Program prepares nurse scholars who:

1. Master in-depth knowledge in a substantive area related to health promotion.
2. Integrate knowledge related to the philosophy of science and theoretical foundations of health promotion into teaching and scholarship.
3. Conduct original research while maintaining adherence to professional and research ethical standards.
4. Critique and integrate different science perspectives in the conduct of research.
5. Assume leadership in the conduct of culturally competent scholarship to improve nursing practice.
6. Disseminate research findings to lay and professional audiences while identifying implications for health outcomes, policy, nursing and other healthcare providers’ practice.
7. Serve as a leader in the profession of nursing while adapting to the evolving roles and responsibilities of a nurse scholar.
8. Lead and/or contribute to transdisciplinary research teams that seek to examine health problems and promote the health of diverse populations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PhD Program Goals</th>
<th>PhD Student Outcomes: Indicators of Success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduates of the PhD in Nursing Program are prepared to:</td>
<td>Graduates of our program will:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1. Advance scientific knowledge through the conduction and dissemination of health promotion research. | a. Disseminate dissertation research through publication and professional presentations.  
| | b. Initiate a program of study within two years of graduation. |
| 2. Demonstrate leadership skills as nurse educators, researchers, and policy advocates for diverse populations. | a. Secure employment post-graduation as researcher, educator or policy-maker.  
| | b. Hold leadership positions in professional nursing organizations.  
| | c. Participate in political advocacy for populations with health disparities. |
| 3. Lead and/or participate in transdisciplinary and community action research teams. | a. Develop a team of research partners, including members from disciplines outside of nursing within two years of graduation.  
| | b. Participate in community service through research, community advocacy or other scholarship. |

Table 1. PhD Program Goals and Related Student Outcomes
Advising

Each PhD student is assigned an academic advisor upon acceptance into the program. This academic advisor is responsible for working with each advisee to develop a degree pathway (program of study) that meets the student’s needs and program requirements. Advising is ongoing, however, at least once per semester it is required that students meet with their advisor during the designated advising period noted in the University academic calendar (in person, via Skype, face time, or phone interview). During the advising meeting, the advisor and student will review current progress, course offerings for the subsequent semester, emerging student research ideas and upcoming scholarly events. Course registration is conducted online and is encouraged to be completed in the semester prior to ensure that adequate numbers are available to hold all courses.

PhD Program Grading Policy

It is the School of Nursing’s policy that doctoral students must receive a B or better for all doctoral courses. All courses follow the grading scale below with the exception of the Mentored Research course (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grade) and the dissertation credits (PR= progress and final dissertation grade when completed =S). Transferred course grades are not included in the GPA but must also be a B or better.

A (4.0)  A- (3.7)  B+ (3.3)  B (3.0)  B- (2.7)  C+ (2.3)  C (2.0)  D (1.0)  F (0.0)

Grading Scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACCEPTABLE</th>
<th>NOT ACCEPTABLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94 – 100</td>
<td>80 – 83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90 - 93</td>
<td>77 - 79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87 - 89</td>
<td>75-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84 - 86</td>
<td>70-75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or any grade below C-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grades may be appealed by following the University procedure: [https://www.uml.edu/Catalog/Graduate/Policies/Graduate-Grade-Appeal-Process.aspx](https://www.uml.edu/Catalog/Graduate/Policies/Graduate-Grade-Appeal-Process.aspx)
General Program of Study Description

Tables 2 and 3 summarize examples of a full-time and part-time degree pathway in the 48-credit curriculum plan for post Master’s students. A BS to PhD plan is in the development phase. Effective Fall 2018, there is also a MS-PhD fast track option for UMASS Lowell enrolled Master’s students and a DNP to PhD Fast Track option for enrolled UMASS Lowell DNP students. The courses offered are subject to change and thus it is important to plan ahead with the advisor to ensure what course dates and times will be offered in the subsequent semester. Several nursing courses are now only offered every other year so students must be sure to plan with their advisor. The Saturday weekend-blended nursing courses are typically held on the first Saturday of the month unless it is a religious or state/national holiday weekend. It in that event, a different weekend will be chosen. Weekend class times are typically three hours (9am-12noon, 1pm-4pm or 4pm – 7pm) with a one-hour period for lunch and/or scheduled Colloquia for PhD students (12pm-1pm). Typically, faculty members organize a plan for shared potluck lunches, including faculty and students, for all Saturday course-meeting days from 12-1pm. Two courses are typically conducted completely online (Epidemiology in Health Promotion and Quantitative Research Methods/Grantsmanship), although the latter may be offered as a blended course depending on course enrollment. Note: the two required statistics courses are not offered by the School of Nursing and thus the times for these two courses follow the traditional once/week or twice/weekly classes on campus during the day or evening. Effective Fall 2018, these statistics courses will be taken in the Psych Department (first intro course) and the School of Criminal Justice (second stats course). In addition, effective Fall 2018, one required nursing course will be offered at UMASS Boston in a renewed collaboration effective Fall 2018. This course will be blended but with periodic synchronous classes that meet during the weekday and will be recorded live; live participation is required via Zoom.

Please note – if doctoral courses were taken elsewhere prior to matriculation into the program and are approved by the admissions committee or the advisor as meeting a required courses component in our PhD program- this course may be transferred in along with its credits EXCEPT for when it was taken as part of a requirement for a former degree. If it was taken as part of a former degree requirement, it cannot be transferred in. Thus, if it is approved as similar to one of the program’s required courses, but it was taken as part of credits toward a former degree that was awarded, the student does not have to repeat the same course in the program, however, an alternate course in the general area should replace it to ensure 48 credits are attained for graduation. For example, if a statistics course was taken as part of a
former degree and is approved as similar to the required statistics courses – then an alternate statistics course is required. Similarly, if a research methods course is acceptable as a required course from a prior degree – then an alternative approved method courses must be taken. And prior curriculum and teaching courses would be replaced with a different type of education course. All such courses must be reviewed and approved by the advisor. This requires a copy of the syllabus. Course replacements must be at the PhD doctoral level. Master’s or DNP level courses are generally not acceptable as alternative replacement courses. See Tables 2 and 3 on the following pages for the post-master’s degree pathways.
### Effective Fall 2018: The Post Master’s Full-Time Degree Pathway

**Year 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Credit</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Credit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NU.700 Philosophy of Nursing Science (blended) – at UMASS Boston</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>NURS.7160 Qualitative Methods (blended)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS.7020 Theoretical Foundations of Health Promotion (blended)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>NURS.7300 Quantitative Research Methods and Grantsmanship (online) or Measurement (blended)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSYC.6500 Advanced Quantitative Methods (Note: on campus 2 mornings/week T/TH usually (comparable to former PUBH.5770, Intro to Biostats))</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>CRIM.6900 Advanced Regression Analysis (Note: On campus, one 3-hour meeting, typically evening 5-8pm) Comparable to former PUBH.6890 course)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summer**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>xxxx.xxx Elective 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Year 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Credit</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Credit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NURS.7070 Epidemiology in Health Promotion (online)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>NURS.7060 Measurement (blended) OR Quantitative Research Methods and Grantsmanship (online)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS.7310 Health Promotion Research (blended)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>NURS.7390 Mentored Research Experience (blended) Qualifying Examination</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS.7130 Curriculum and Teaching in Nursing (blended)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Years 3-4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall-Spring</th>
<th>Credit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NURS.7530 Dissertation Credits</td>
<td>9-12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL Credits: 48**

**Note:** *Blended* = meet once/month on campus for class and all other modules online, except for NU.700 which is 50% online, /50% on campus but available to participate on campus via live video feed.

**Online** = 100% online course

**Table 2. PhD in Nursing Health Promotion Degree Pathway – Full-Time Example**
Effective Fall 2018: The Post Master's Part-Time Degree Pathway

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall Year 1</th>
<th>Spring Year 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NU.700</strong></td>
<td>Philosophy of Nursing Science (blended) - at UMASS Boston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NURS.7020</strong></td>
<td>Theoretical Foundations of Health Promotion (blended)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summer Year 1 of 2**

| XXXX.xxxx | Elective | 3 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall Year 2</th>
<th>Spring Year 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PSYC.6500</strong></td>
<td>Advanced Quantitative Methods Note: on campus 2 mornings/week T/TH usually (comparable to PUBH.5770, Intro to Biostats)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NURS.7070</strong></td>
<td>Epidemiology in Health Promotion (online)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall Year 3</th>
<th>Spring Year 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NURS.7310</strong></td>
<td>Health Promotion Research (blended)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NURS.7130</strong></td>
<td>Curriculum and Teaching in Nursing (blended) Note: Only offered if we have 8 students = may need to take outside UML)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Years 4-5 | |
|-----------| |
| **NURS.7530** | Dissertation Credits 9-12 (Note: 9 credits allowed only if added elective taken) | | **TOTAL CREDITS = 48** |

**Note:** Blended = meet once/month on campus for class and all other modules online, except for NU.700 which is 50% online, 50% on campus but available to participate on campus via live video feed.

Online = 100% online course

Table 3. PhD in Nursing Degree Pathway – Part-Time Example
The Master’s to PhD Degree Fast Track Pathway

UMass Lowell graduate nursing students currently matriculated in the Master of Science program in nursing may apply for admission to the Fast Track Master’s (MS) to Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) Program. UMass Lowell Fast Track MS to PhD applicants must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.5 in the MS program at the time of application. Before graduating from the MS program, students must meet with their PhD program advisor and develop a course plan for the PhD program.

Admission requirements:

- Completion of 12 UMass Lowell credits in the Master of Science Nursing program
- A final GPA of 3.5 in the MS program
- Satisfactory GRE Score
- An interview with PhD nursing faculty
- Three letters of recommendation
- Graduate application (graduate application fee will be waived)
- Personal statement letter of professional goals and research interests
- Curriculum vitae

Up to six credits of graduate-level (700) courses may be taken by a student in the UMass Lowell Master’s degree program to be counted toward both the Master’s and PhD degrees. Courses credited to the PhD degree require a grade B or higher. They include:

1) The Required MS Research for Evidence-Based Practice course (NURS.6010) may be replaced with one of the following doctoral courses:
   a) The required PhD course NURS.7070 Epidemiology (online) or
   b) The required PhD course Quantitative Research Methods and Grantsmanship NURS. 7300 (online)

2) The MS level Research Project course and/or the MS program elective may be replaced by one of the following required PhD courses:
   NURS.7130 Curriculum and Teaching in Nursing (blended) (3 cr.)
   NURS.7020 Theoretical Foundations of Health Promotion (blended) (3 cr.)
   NURS.7160 Qualitative Research (blended) (3 cr.)
   NURS.7310 Health Promotion Research (blended) (3 cr.)

Other course choices would need to be approved on a case by case basis by the MS Coordinator and the PhD Program Director.

Note: Courses that were taken as part of the UMass Lowell Fast-Track BS to MS program cannot be counted again as a course for UMass Lowell Fast-Track MS to PhD program. If a student was accepted in the MS to DNP Fast-Track and then opted to apply to the PhD program instead, prior to starting the DNP program, those courses may be allowable, if applicable to the PhD program.
The DNP to PhD Degree Fast Track Pathway

UMass Lowell graduate nursing students currently matriculated in the DNP program in UMass Lowell Solomont School of Nursing may apply for admission to the Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) Program at UMass Lowell. Students must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.5 in the DNP program at the time of the application. Before graduating from the DNP program, students must meet with a PhD program advisor and develop a course plan for the PhD program.

Admission requirements:

- Completion of 12 UMass Lowell credits in the DNP program
- A final GPA of 3.5 in the DNP Program
- Satisfactory GRE Score
- An interview with PhD nursing faculty.
- Three letters of recommendation
- Graduate application (graduate application fee will be waived)
- Personal statement letter of professional goals and research interests
- Curriculum vitae

Up to six credits of graduate-level (700) courses may be taken by a student in the UMass Lowell DNP program to be counted toward both DNP and PhD degrees. Courses credited to the PhD degree require a grade B or better.

Courses that are required in both programs that could be counted for both programs include:

1. Epidemiology in Health Promotion NURS.7070 (online)
2. Psych 6500 Advanced Quantitative methods or equivalent, Introduction to Biostatistics course, PUBH.5770
3. One or two of the following required PhD courses could take the place of the elective in DNP program:
   - NURS.7130 Curriculum and Teaching in Nursing (blended) (3 cr.)
   - NURS.7020 Theoretical Foundations of Health Promotion (blended) (3 cr.)
   - NURS.7160 Qualitative Research (blended) (3 cr.)
   - NURS.7310 Health Promotion Research (blended) (3 cr.)
   - NURS. 7300 Quantitative Research Methods and Grantsmanship (online)

Other courses need to be approved on a case by case basis by the DNP Coordinator and the PhD Program Director. If students were enrolled in and completed the BS to MS Fast-Track program or the MS to DNP Fast-Track program, only those courses that are required for the PhD could be counted again for the DNP to PhD Fast-Track program.
**Student Progression**

Full-time enrollment requires enrollment in three courses (9 credits) per semester. Part-time students are expected to attend a minimum of two courses/semester in the first two years. Part-time students may change their status during their program if courses are available to progress to full time status.

Courses taken prior to matriculation in the program must be transferred in during the first semester of acceptance. The academic advisor or PhD Program Director must first approve them. The University policy is a maximum of 24 credits can be transferred into doctoral programs but it is rare that more than 6-9 credits are transferred in due to the specific specialized courses in health promotion that we require. As notes previously, courses cannot be transferred in if they were taken as credits toward a prior completed degree. All course transfers must follow the UMass Lowell policy which includes submission of the official transcript of the course and filing of a graduate academic petition [http://www.uml.edu/docs/petition_grad_tcm18-87176.pdf](http://www.uml.edu/docs/petition_grad_tcm18-87176.pdf) (Appendix A). This must be signed by the PhD Program Director and then sent along with the official transcript to the Registrar’s office. If the course transcript was sent electronically to the Registrar’s office directly, this should be noted on the academic petition.

In addition, if the course schedule does not include a required course within a given academic year, the student may submit an academic petition to request permission to take an equivalent course for one of the required UML PhD courses in the UMASS system or elsewhere. This is not encouraged, as we want to ensure our cohorts stay together and we expect students to take UMass Lowell Solomont School of Nursing courses so that we will have an adequate number of students to offer all required courses. However, if there is a legitimate reason to do so, students may submit an academic petition to request an alternative off-campus course after they have matriculated, along with the course syllabus. This is submitted to the advisor who will then submit the alternate course syllabus to the teacher of record at UMass Lowell to ensure that the course is equivalent. If approved, the PhD Program Director will then sign the petition.

Students are not eligible to progress in the Solomont School of Nursing PhD program if they receive lower than a B in a course. Students will receive a notice of dismissal if they have not met the requirements for continuation in the program by receiving a grade lower than a B in any course. They also will receive a letter of dismissal from the University if their semester cumulative average falls below
They may submit an appeal to request consideration to repeat the course and continue in the program. The form to use is:

If the appeal is granted, the student will be on probation for a minimum of one semester and must meet with his/her academic advisor regularly to develop and implement a plan of action to be able to meet the conditions of probation and successfully continue in the program.

The expected time to graduation for full-time students is three to four years. The expected time to graduation for part-time students is five to 6 years. Exceptions to these time frames may occur pending course availability and the number of prior courses that have been transferred in. Of note, it is a University requirement that all PhD programs must be completed in eight years (16 semesters). If a student foresees that he/she will not be able to graduate within the 8-year time period, he/she may submit an academic petition requesting one extra year. This should occur at least one year in advance of the 8-year time limit. If the reason for the delay is justifiable and the student proposes a specific time plan within the year that is reasonable, prior to the 8-year limit, it may be approved by the PhD Director. If the student does not complete the program in the one-year extension period, he/she may request a second-year extension but this must be approved by the University Graduate Policies and Affairs Committee (GPAC). This request must be sent to the GPAC Director with an extensive application that outlines the reasons why the dissertation was not completed in the 9-year time period with a detailed timeline of how the student could accomplish this in one added year.

**Qualifying Examination**

The School of Nursing policy for the completion of the Qualifying Examination is that it must be completed during the semester of the Mentored Research course. This is generally the final semester of course work. If the student does not pass one or both papers during this period, he/she is allowed one additional semester to successfully complete the examination. Students who are unable to complete the qualifying examination with these two semesters will be withdrawn from the program. Students may appeal this decision using the University appeal procedure for non-academic issues. Additional information about the QE follows on p.20.

Continued Matriculation

It is the University's policy that doctoral students may only register for a maximum of three Continued Matriculation courses throughout their program of study. See academic policy: [https://www.uml.edu/catalog/graduate/policies/registration-and-enrollment-policies-for-graduate-students.aspx - Continuous-Registration](https://www.uml.edu/catalog/graduate/policies/registration-and-enrollment-policies-for-graduate-students.aspx - Continuous-Registration)

Continued matriculation (CM7010) allows students to take a break from courses and/or their research due to personal reasons. They are not mentored during this period and may lose access to University privileges such as email and gym facilities. The policy states that students will not be allowed to progress if they have taken more than three semesters off, they will be withdrawn from the University. Exceptions may be made in advance of the fourth CM semester via academic petition, which would go to the PhD Program Director. Exceptions will only be allowed if there is a reasonable cause and they will not be made beyond one added semester in the School of Nursing. Thus, if a student is seriously ill or has a family or personal matter that is anticipated to last beyond three semesters, it is recommended that the student withdraw from the program, rather than risk automatic withdrawal if the issue lasted more than 3 semesters. Withdrawal from the program would ensure that his/her clock toward graduation (16 semesters/8 years) would not be progressing. He/she could then re-apply when he/she is ready and the clock would restart. Transfer courses within the past 5 years taken in the School of Nursing PhD program would be allowed in up to 24 credits only and courses taken beyond that period would need to be retaken. Students will be withdrawn from the program if they take more than 4 CM semesters without approved petition in advance.

Choosing an Elective

The 48-credit curriculum plan allows for only one elective. Students may choose to take more electives but they will not be counted toward their degree pathway for graduation. The required elective can be taken at any time. It is listed in the Degree Pathway as a summer course, however, if there is not a course available in the summer that is a good fit for the student’s research interest area, it is best to plan in advance for when the course is offered. The academic advisor must approve the elective. It should not overlap with the content of any of the required courses. The student should explore potential courses in his/her topical area or seek a course related to a methodology that he/she plans to use in the dissertation. All electives are required to be doctoral level courses. In some instances, a graduate course
that allows Master’s students may be allowed if the syllabus is reviewed and considered rigorous and the content is specific to the student’s interest area.

The first step for the review process for an approved elective is to contact the instructor of the course and request a syllabus (it may not be current at time of request but that is acceptable for review). Then the syllabus is sent to the academic advisor for review. He/she may consult with the PhD Program Director in regard to the recommendation if there is any question. If the course is approved and is located outside of UMass Lowell, after completion of the course, the student is required to submit an academic petition with the official grade transcript to the PhD Program Director in order to get it transferred into the UMass Lowell transcript. The PhD Program Director will only approve courses for transfers that were pre-approved courses by the advisor.

**UMass Boston Collaboration**

The original UMASS Lowell PhD Program in 1996 began as a formal collaboration with UMass Boston. In the early stages of the collaboration courses were shared across campus. This eventually became a more informal collaboration with only electives shared across the two campuses generally until the Spring of 2018 when a formal collaboration with course sharing resumed. Effective Spring 2018, UMass Boston students registered for Qualitative Research Methods course at UMass Lowell. Effective Fall 2018, UMass Lowell PhD in nursing students will register for Philosophy of Nursing Science at UMass Boston (NUR700). This course will be offered in a blended format with 2 classes online and 2 delivered live per month generally – using Zoom video for live interaction from a remote location. The classes that are held on campus during the week (Wednesday mornings generally) will be synchronous – requiring live participation by UMass Lowell students who are welcome to come to campus or participate via Zoom video technology.

**Inter-campus UMass Course Registration**

Students who register for NUR700, Philosophy of Science or an elective at UMass Boston must fill out the UMASS Intercampus course Exchange Policy Registration Form prior to taking the course. To find a potential elective course in the UMass system, please check the following link:

http://nursing.massachusetts.edu/index/

The UMass Lowell PhD/Graduate Program Director and both UMASS campuses registrars must approve the form in advance. This allows for an easy transfer of the course later directly into the transcript. Students pay for the UMass Boston course as they normally would for UMass Lowell courses. This form is
also used for any course taken at another UMass campus as well. There are some instances where some campuses do not allow this, if for example it is an online course at some campuses or if it is a summer course, this form may not work and the student registers for the course at the other campus and pays the other campus directly. Students need to check in advance with the host school if it is unclear. If the student cannot register using the cross-campus form, the student may later submit the course, as a transfer via an academic petition, once the grade transcript is available. The intercampus form can be found in Appendix B as well as: http://www.uml.edu/docs/intercampus_course_exchange_tcm18-3533_tcm18-117530.pdf

Mentored Research Course Planning

The mentored research course was developed to address the American Association of Colleges of Nursing’s (2010) recommendation to have mentored research experiences as a core curricular element in a research-focused doctoral program. This course is held in the last semester of course work and may be taken concurrently only with an elective. Major courses related to research such as biostatistics (2 required courses) and all research methods courses must have been completed prior to registering for Mentored Research. During this semester, the qualifying examination process must also be completed. The student chooses a research mentor, who is approved by the course instructor, and spends a minimum of 70 hours during the semester contributing to a research project. Interdisciplinary mentors who are part of a funded interdisciplinary team are recommended but it may also be an excellent experience to work with an experienced researcher on a solo project. **Planning for this experience starts in the semester prior to the course as securing a mentor takes considerable time and preparation.** The potential research mentor should be approached the semester prior to discuss the feasibility. At the beginning of the course, the student, mentor and course instructor sign a contract using a course template in regard to basic objectives and hours. Soon thereafter, the student writes up specific goals and a timeline to achieve those goals.

If the goals and objectives cannot be met within the semester, an incomplete may be an option if the objectives can be met prior to the final date to finish incomplete course work – during the subsequent semester (date posted on the academic calendar). See:
http://www.uml.edu/Registrar/Calendars/default.aspx
In addition to the 70 hours of mentored research, this course meets once/month on Saturday for a three-hour seminar on selected research topics. Students are required to write a journal that is shared periodically with the instructor and keep a time log to ensure the hours are met.

Qualifying Examination Process

The qualifying examination (QE) is designed to determine the student’s ability to analyze and synthesize conceptual, theoretical and methodological knowledge as it pertains to health promotion within a substantive research area. The examination provides a method of assessment to ascertain if the student is ready to advance to the dissertation stage. It consists of two written papers, that are focused on one of three main choices including a:

1.) conceptual or theoretical paper;
2.) paper focusing on a methodological issue or problem; or
3.) review of the literature including a traditional integrative review of the scientific literature, a research synthesis paper, a meta-analysis or meta-synthesis.

Both papers will be original, critical evaluations that relate to the student’s identified research area that are considered publishable.

Objectives

Specific objectives include that the student will be able to:

- Identify significant conceptual and methodological issues as they relate to a substantive nursing and health promotion content area.
- Demonstrate ability to organize and synthesize a relevant body of literature relevant to nursing and health promotion.
- Demonstrate capacity for original thought and in-depth knowledge of relevant concepts, theories and research methods.
- Demonstrate competence in writing two publishable papers independently.
Eligibility

Students are eligible to complete the qualifying examination during their final semester of coursework. The PhD Program policy is that students MUST begin and complete the Qualifying examination process during their final semester of coursework, when they take the Mentored Research course. If a student does not complete the examination process in this semester, he/she may register for Continued Matriculation Status (CM 7010) while completing the Qualifying exam. Students must pass the qualifying examination by the subsequent semester or they will be terminated from the program.

Overview of the QE Process

Students will plan with their advisor to determine the semester during which they will be eligible to complete the QE. Once they are determined to be eligible, they will first submit an abstract for their two proposed QE papers to the PhD Program Director. Students may submit abstracts at the beginning of the semester that they are completing the QE or they may submit abstracts in advance, during the semester prior, at the end of the semester but prior to the last day of classes. If a student has independently published a paper in a peer-reviewed journal of one of the three topics for the QE, this will be reviewed by the PhD QE Committee and, if approved by the Committee, this can serve as one of the QE papers.

The QE Committee, which consists of the Director and two other faculty members, will review the abstracts. If they are approved, the student may begin writing the papers. If they are not approved, the Committee will provide feedback to improve the proposed QE abstracts. This process will continue until the abstract is approved but this process must be completed within the timeline of one semester.

Papers are to be entirely the student’s conceptual work. Students should follow the University policies for academic integrity: http://www.uml.edu/Catalog/Graduate/Policies/Academic-Integrity.aspx. The student has an entire semester to write the papers, which are due on the last day of classes for that term. Papers handed in after that date will be accepted but not reviewed until the following semester.

The PhD Qualifying Examination Committee reviews the papers, which are graded as Pass, Conditional Pass or Fail. If a paper is a pass, there may be minor edits shared to help the student’s ability to publish the article. If there is a conditional pass, there are minor revisions that the student must attend to and resubmit to the Committee or PhD Program Director. The Committee will decide if the entire Committee or the PhD Program Director must review the minor revision. A failure has major issues requiring major revisions and must be resubmitted to the entire committee. If a student fails one of the
qualifying examination papers, he/she has one more chance to complete that qualifying examination paper. If one or both papers has/have been submitted two times and remains a failure, the student is not allowed to progress in the program.

One extended due date for QE paper submission may be granted at the discretion of the PhD Director. However, it must be no later than the subsequent semester. There is an eight-year limit for the entire PhD program. If extended time (beyond two semesters) is needed, students are advised to withdraw from the program and they can re-apply at a later date. There is no guarantee of re-admission.

**Guidelines for QE Abstract Submission**

Prior to submission of the detailed proposed abstract, the student may discuss general ideas with faculty; however, faculty members do not provide extensive tutoring with the abstract development or early draft reviews. At this stage, it is an expectation that students will be able to determine two topics to write on that will further their own progress toward the dissertation phase. Faculty input will be provided after the abstract submission.

Each student must write one abstract for each proposed QE paper idea (total of two separate abstracts). Each abstract should consist of 2-4 pages (double-spaced), with an overview of the student’s proposed paper idea with a clear problem statement, purpose statement of proposed paper and a methodological strategy. It is NOT a research abstract that typically has a one-paragraph limitation. The page range does not include a required cover page with a title of the proposed paper, reference page or any other supporting documentation (charts or figures). A reference list of cited references, using APA format, is also required. If students have not mastered APA at this point, the abstract will not be acceptable. While the reference list will not be exhaustive in the abstract, it should be adequate to justify the need for the proposed paper and be able to provide evidence that there is adequate literature available to meet the aims of the paper. There is no set organization for the abstract; this will vary according to the topic and type of paper being written. The abstract should include the targeted journal that the papers would be appropriate for. The organization of the paper would then follow this journal’s guidelines as well. In addition – any methodological guidelines anticipated in the paper must be clearly identified. While there is no specific number of references in the proposal, it is expected that a minimum of 5-10 references are included.

As noted, abstracts must be submitted to the PhD Program Director either:
1. By the last day of class during the semester prior to the anticipated writing of the QE papers OR
2. By the end of the first 2 full weeks of class during the actual semester of the writing period and completion.

The QE committee will review submitted abstracts within a month after submission and give approval or non-approval. If an abstract is not approved, the QE Committee will provide general recommendations for improvement. The student will have the opportunity to resubmit his/her QE proposals until they are acceptable. Note that there is typically a one-month time period between the submission of the QE proposal and papers and the committee reviews. The committee is not active in the summer. As noted, there is no limit on the abstract proposal submissions. Once the QE Committee approves the ideas for the abstracts, the student may proceed to the writing phase. Criteria for approval for the abstracts include:

- The need for the paper is justified by the literature
- The writing of the abstract is clear and concise
- There is adequate literature to support the methods of the paper (e.g. in a research synthesis – be sure to document that there are adequate references in the topic area)
- The references are current and reflect the state of the art literature (within last 10 years except for seminal historical literature cited)

**Guidelines: QE Paper Format and Submission Process**

Each student will write two QE papers choosing from two of the three categories noted. Each paper should be 12 - 15 pages, double-spaced (not including title page, abstract, figures, tables, or references in the 12-15 pages). APA format should be utilized. Students should identify an appropriate journal for publication.

Students submit one copy of the paper to the Graduate Program Director electronically and then immediately submit each paper as a first-time submission to the Turnitin.com site established by the PhD Program Director for QE examinations. Each semester the Turn-It-In course number and password will change; the student needs to check on this with the PhD Program Director.

**Theoretical/conceptual paper:** This paper should provide a critical understanding of a concept, construct or theory. It should include the philosophical basis of the concept, construct, or theory and its relevance to the health promotion topic of interest. Examples could include a concept analysis, an in-
depth exploration of a theoretical model for its utility in a health promotion topic, or comparison of two theories in the literature as they explain and predict a health behavior.

**Methods Paper:** This paper should examine a methodological approach or issue relevant to an identified health promotion problem. Examples include a report of a novel methodological approach appropriate for the student’s area of interest; psychometric evaluation of an instrument, a novel statistical analysis procedure; or in-depth examination of a tool used across groups.

**Review of the Literature:** This paper should represent a state of the art synthesis of the scientific literature on a specific topic related to health or health promotion. It should be written at a high level of synthesis, and not be written as report of individual, sequential summaries of research studies. The review may be a general review of the scientific literature, a research synthesis/integrative review, an intervention synthesis paper, meta-analysis or meta-synthesis. Examples may include a review of the literature on self-care management of adults with a specific chronic disease; a research synthesis of studies that examined quality of life among residents in a long-term care facility; a research synthesis of interventions to reduce specific health risks among a target population; a meta-analysis of studies that examine factors related to the onset of depression in adolescents; or meta-synthesis of qualitative studies that examined the phenomenon of healthy aging. Students are encouraged to buy books or writing an integrative review and they should use a method cited in their proposal and paper. They should also include a clear research question that the review will address. Scoping reviews are generally not recommended.

**Criteria for Evaluation for QE papers**
The QE papers will be reviewed by the Committee in relation to the:

- Clarity of writing
- Ability to conceptualize and analyze a topic in depth
- Capacity for original thought and substantive knowledge in a focused area
- Integration of the state of the art knowledge.
- Ability to write a paper of publishable quality using APA format.

There is no oral examination; however, a QE outcome meeting will be scheduled within two weeks of the exam review if deemed necessary by faculty or the student. Each paper is evaluated as a pass, conditional pass or failure. Successful completion of the qualifying examination (both papers) admits the
student as a candidate for the PhD degree, PhD (c). If the student fails one or both of the papers, he/she has the right to retake the failed QE exam (paper) **one more time** again by the end of classes of the subsequent semester. He/she may elect to revise the original submission or choose another topic. If a new topic is chosen, the student is required to submit a new abstract for review and approval. Successful passing of the exam requires that both papers are approved. Students may not progress in the program if they have failed the QE process (one or both exams) for more than two time periods, as noted. Thus, if a student fails one of both of the two QE papers in the first-time period, this is a failure and he/she must resubmit the failed paper/papers (time period 2) by the end of the subsequent semester. If after the second-time period, the student does not pass one or both of the failed QE papers, the student will no longer be eligible to progress or remain in the PhD program.

**PhD QE Committee**

As noted, the Committee consists of two to three faculty members, including the PhD Director. The Committee is appointed by the PhD Program Director and will typically be comprised of members of the PhD Program Committee or those that are active in the PhD program in other ways (e.g. dissertation committee members, PhD course teachers, colloquia presenters). In addition, a PhD QE ad hoc QE Committee member may be appointed by the PhD Program Director based on specific expertise related to the QE papers. The vote for the pass, conditional pass or failure of the papers must be reached by a majority of the QE Committee members. The form for the QE outcome is found in Appendix J. A signed copy is kept in the student’s record.

**Publication of QE Papers**

Students are strongly encouraged to submit successful QE papers for publication! This is not required as part of the approval process however. QE paper submissions are not a joint effort with faculty however as it should represent the student’s individual effort.

**Dissertation Process**

**When to Begin?**

It is highly recommended for students to think about a general research broad area starting in the first semester. This does not mean that the students will know what their study will be at that time but they should try to choose course paper topics in their related field to expand their knowledge in a focused
area. Students may want to discuss their evolving ideas with their advisor each semester during advising time or make an appointment to meet with other faculty periodically to discuss ideas. Students can ask at any time during the program if a faculty would consider providing input on their ideas, however they should not request a faculty member to be their Chair until they are closer to the dissertation process. The formal committee approval occurs after successful completion of the qualifying examination. Most students are still refining their research question once in the dissertation phase – with the assistance of the Chair and committee members.

**Proposal Stage**

Students are ready to begin their proposal phase once they have completed all coursework and successfully passed the Qualifying Examination. The first challenge is to choose a Chairperson. Some students may have already connected with someone by this time but, if not, it is time to make an appointment with tenured faculty who may have a similar research area of interest or expertise in the method they are planning on using, or expertise in a theory that is being considered by the students. It is recommended to get advice from the academic advisor at this point as to where to start. It is typically best to stick with tenured faculty, although in some cases, this may not be relevant (for example if an experienced researcher is hired with expertise in dissertation advisement but has not come up for tenure yet or perhaps a junior faculty is close to the process of tenure and has been research active in the student's area).

The list of tenured faculty varies year to year. Please refer to the current list of the entire faculty on the web: [http://www.uml.edu/Health-Sciences/Nursing/faculty/default.aspx](http://www.uml.edu/Health-Sciences/Nursing/faculty/default.aspx).

In addition, a brief summary of faculty research interests is readily available on the School of Nursing web page: [http://www.uml.edu/Health-Sciences/Nursing/Research/default.aspx](http://www.uml.edu/Health-Sciences/Nursing/Research/default.aspx).

Once students have successfully passed the QE in a spring semester and plan to start dissertation courses in the fall semester, then it is advised that they make appointments with several faculty members to discuss their possible willingness to serve as a Chair or Committee member in the late Spring. At this point the student only needs a Chairperson for the committee in order to register for the dissertation course, NURS.7530.xxx (the xxx extension will be specific to the Chair). The rest of the committee can be finalized in the early part of the first semester of the dissertation credits. The student should present to the faculty that they are meeting with a one-two page “white paper” that includes the need for this study, their research question and potential methods. This helps the potential committee members to think in
advance of what contributions they can make. Students should present themselves in a positive and confidant way – this is an honor for faculty, not a burden!

- Once the student has found a Chair, it is good to know his/her expectations in advance on many issues:
- Turnaround time (students should not expect quicker than 2 weeks for any draft reviews)
- Authorship on future papers related to the dissertation (most faculty expect second authorship on all papers and presentations)
- Availability during summer and other break time (most are not available or only for a limited time during breaks)
- Expectation for proposal hearing (it is generally expected to happen at the end of the first dissertation course)
- Recommendations for other committee members
- Frequency of meetings during the proposal development phase (meetings can be in-person or virtual)
- Development of a plan to reach the proposal hearing date in first semester and a tentative time frame for the entire study through to defense!

Choosing Committee Members

There is a minimum of three dissertation committee members in total. The Chair must be a nursing faculty member (or Dean) from UMass Lowell Solomont School of Nursing. The second committee member must be a nurse faculty member from UMass Lowell OR any of the other five Schools of Nursing in the UMass System (includes Boston, Worcester, Amherst or Dartmouth). This could include a retired nursing faculty member. To find potential committee members from the UMass system, please check research interest areas on:

http://nursing.massachusetts.edu/index/

The third member must be from outside the Solomont School of Nursing at UMass Lowell. It is recommended that it is an interdisciplinary member but this is not required. It could be a third nurse faculty or interdisciplinary member from outside UMass Lowell School of Nursing. It could be a UMass Lowell faculty member from another department.

In summary:

Our policy is to have a minimum of three committee members. They must include:
1. The Dissertation Chair – must be a nurse with a research–focused doctorate and an active UMass Lowell member of the Solomont School of Nursing faculty.

   **Note:** If the proposal hearing has been successfully completed – and the Chair decides to leave UMass Lowell or retire – if the faculty member agrees, he/she can remain as Chair. He/she may also have the right to step down if he/she is leaving the University. If a successful proposal hearing has not occurred prior to the Chair’s departure from UMass Lowell, a new faculty member must take over the Chair role.

2. A nurse researcher/faculty member (may be emeritus/retired) who is on the faculty of one of the 5 University of Massachusetts Nursing programs.

3. External Committee member: A researcher from nursing or another field who is a faculty member outside of the UML Solomont School of Nursing. The external member may be within UML but from another discipline or from outside of UML at another university. In addition, if the outside member is not in a current faculty member position but has the appropriate credentials (PhD, MD etc.) to contribute to a research dissertation, this is allowed. A nurse with a DNP may be qualified if he/she has demonstrated a high level of research activity through grants, and research-based publications but generally this is not the case. Interdisciplinary committee members are highly encouraged.

   A student may have an additional 4th member of the dissertation committee if it is absolutely deemed necessary. It is not recommended - unless necessary to meet the requirements and needs of the student's research. There should be content and methodological expertise as well as statistical expertise if a quantitative method is chosen that is beyond the level of the Chair’s expertise.

   Once the student and Chair agree on potential committee members, then the student would approach the potential committee members (in person if possible or via email is acceptable) to request consideration to be a committee member. The student needs to give potential committee members a good idea of what he/she is planning to do so the “white paper” summary will be important to send to them as well. It is recommended to send them a request to consider serving on the committee and offering to meet with them in person (if feasible) or on the phone/Skype so the student can have a conversation with them before they respond to the request. When the student asks any potential committee members who are not part of the UMass Lowell Solomont School of Nursing faculty, the student must tell them that there is a review process and that if they agree to serve, they first need to submit their CV. This gets submitted to the Committee Chair who will start the paperwork for the
Dissertation Committee Review form. The student needs to submit a draft dissertation title for the form. The PhD Program Director and School of Nursing Chair make the final approval of the Committee. If all potential committee members have agreed to be on the committee – the next step is a formal review and approval. There is a Dissertation Committee approval form template that needs to be generated by an administrative assistant that includes: (See Appendix C).

- Student Name and ID
- Proposed working title for dissertation
- Proposed Committee Members and their roles (Chair, second nursing member outside member)
- The outside member’s CV’s must be attached to this form and given to the PhD program Director and then the Chair of School of Nursing for review and approval.

Registering for Dissertation Credits

There are 9-12 dissertation credits required. The 9 credits are allowed only if the student also took an extra, approved elective (two electives vs. one) AND the student finishes the dissertation within 9 credits (typically 3 semesters). The final total number of course credits, including dissertation credits, must be 48. Typically, the student registers for 3 dissertation credits in the first semester during the proposal stage. It is the goal, as noted, to have the proposal hearing at the end of the first semester of three dissertation credits. The course number for PhD dissertation is: NURS.7530.xxx. The section number (last three digits represented by xxx here) is unique to the faculty member. Faculty must also give a unique permission number to students each semester in order for them to register. Students are allowed to register for up to 9 dissertation credits in a semester. This would be unusual but may be necessary for international students who must be registered for 9 credits throughout their program with the exception of one to two approved reduced-load semesters if they have finished all course work and dissertation credits. The course number is typically NURS.7530.xxx and the student can select 3, 6, or 9 credits using the faculty’s unique section number at the end of the course number. There may be cases where a student registers for 6 dissertation credits – for example, he/she has completed the proposal in the first three credits in a spring semester, does not need IRB review (exempt) and is using secondary data so he/she can work on the analysis all summer and is ready to write and defend in the following Fall. In that case, she/he could register for the remaining 6 credits if two electives had been completed) or 9 credits if it was anticipated that the defense will be at the end of the Fall (did not take 2 electives). This is very rare but has happened. The course number for 6 dissertation credits is again, the same,
NURS.7530.xxx (faculty's section number) but the student selects the number of credits. The number of registered credits must be approved by the Dissertation Chair in advance.

Students must be enrolled in dissertation or continued graduate research course credits while actively working on their dissertation. They cannot take more than 12 dissertation credits in total. If a student is still actively working on the dissertation with the Chair after 12 credits (it happens!) then the student must register for **Continued Graduate Research course** credits – a course set up for this problem. It most likely will need to be set up with the graduate registrar by the Chair as it is not automatically set up (as dissertation credits are). This course number is typically: **NURS.7610.xxx** (1-3 credits with the xxx referring to the Chair’s individual section number). If the student is actively working with the Chair, he/she may be required to register for 3 credits; it is up to the Chair to decide on the number of credits the student must register for. If a student decides to take a break (not advised!) and is not planning to work on the dissertation mid-way, the student could request to sign up for **Continued Matriculation status** (CM 701.201) if he/she has not already exceeded the limit for this (3 CM courses in total). But be aware that this means:

1. The student is graduating that semester and has finalized the dissertation the semester before but not in time to graduate. (Recommended to use in this case!)
2. The student needs to take a break/leave for a semester and is not working on the dissertation with the Chair.
3. During continued matriculation, students lose all University privileges including library and email so therefore it cannot be used while they are still actively working on the dissertation.
4. Students cannot take more than 3 semesters of CM or will be withdrawn from the University (unless a one-time exception is granted per academic petition to the PhD Program Director).

It is important to know that students must be registered for something (a course or continued matriculation status) during the semester that the student plans to graduate. More on this is available at: [http://www.uml.edu/ISSO/Maintaining-Status/continued-matriculation.aspx](http://www.uml.edu/ISSO/Maintaining-Status/continued-matriculation.aspx)

**Grading Dissertation Credits**

Each semester, students should be graded with a PR for dissertation or continued graduate research courses assuming that they have made some progress. If the student has not made satisfactory progress he/she will get a “U” grade (unsatisfactory). A “NC” is a grade for no progress at all. In most cases, the PR is given meaning some progress is made. Once it is the final semester of credits and the student is to graduate – the student will get a final “S” grade – for satisfactory completion. If the student
gets a U or NC, it does not count toward his/her required dissertation course credits – students need a PR for it to count! In that case it also does not count as part of their degree pathway (9-12 dissertation credits).

See grad registrar info on grading:
http://www.uml.edu/Catalog/Graduate/Policies/Grading-Policies.aspx

Proposal Development

It is helpful to set up an initial planning meeting in person with the Chair at the beginning of the proposal development semester (first dissertation course credits). At this time, it is suggested to set up a timetable for the proposal hearing, potential committee members and a set meeting plan for the semester. Subsequent meetings can be via phone or Skype if that best suits the student’s time management but the important thing is to have regular, ongoing advisement in this semester to help meet the goal of a proposal hearing in the first semester. In addition, there may be ongoing review of emails that have bits and pieces of the student’s developing ideas on a weekly basis. Once the dissertation committee is formed, it is also recommended to meet with them on occasion as needed and to keep in contact with them in terms of the student’s progress so they know when to expect the first dissertation proposal draft. The other committee members serve in an advisory and consultant role. They read the more polished drafts and give feedback and comments. It is the Chair who decides when the student’s drafts are ready for their review.

As students plan timetable, keep in mind that it is an expectation that it will take the Chair and committee members at least 2 weeks to review drafts. Sometimes the Chair may try to turn the work around more quickly but that may not be possible. If the student has submitted a draft for review, it is best to respectfully request a two-week period to review and ask up front if they cannot to let the student know, so he/she can plan accordingly. It may be that the student needs to revise based on feedback from two committee members and resubmit again rather than wait for a month from a second or third committee member who is unable to read the draft at that time. Also, if the student has not heard back from a committee member and the member had not anticipated needing more than 2 weeks for the review, it is ok for the student to send a gentle reminder.
Proposal Format

Once the topic and basic research question(s) have been decided on, it is a good idea to discuss the final format of the dissertation with the Chair. The Chair has the right to require the student to follow the Multi-monograph alternative dissertation format. This is generally encouraged as the format for all students as it later facilitates publishing the dissertation. This alternative format results in two or three papers (our PhD School of Nursing policy requires a minimum of two papers) – written in article format in ADDITION to a general introduction and conclusion chapter for the final dissertation. The committee should approve at the proposal hearing what articles will be presented if the monograph format is selected. The traditional and multi-monograph formats are described in the UMass Lowell thesis guide (latest version 2012):


Because the monograph format is not well developed in this guide, the Solomont School of Nursing has modified these guidelines, please see Appendix I.

Regardless of which format is chosen, the proposal is written using the same format. Students should use the technical specifications related to formatting in this guide as well for the proposal (title page, chapter headings, headers, pagination, etc.) in the UMASS Lowell Thesis guide.

The Proposal consists of two chapters:

I. Introduction (includes an introduction, significance, identification of problem statement, research questions, and hypotheses (if applicable), study purpose and the lit review).

II. Methods (includes study design, proposed sampling method, measurement, instruments (if applicable), study protocol including informed consent considerations and recruitment, proposed data analysis methods, study limitations).

If the student or Chair chooses the alternative monograph, it is the Chair and committee’s decision as to how many articles will result for the final dissertation: two or three. This must be finalized at the proposal hearing with all committee members present. If the Dissertation Committee agrees, one of the required papers can be a previously published paper while in the PhD program that is directly related to the dissertation topic, unless this paper has been used as one of the QE papers. If the Dissertation Committee agrees that a published paper can count toward the multi-monograph dissertation requirement, then this paper would be referenced in the introduction of the final dissertation but not included for copyright reasons within the final dissertation that is later bound. Also, students are advised
to pay for the copyright of their final dissertation, as this could be an issue later when they submit one of the articles for dissertation that was published in the UMass Lowell dissertation that will be readily available through dissertation searches.

It is recommended that dissertation students write each week, each day if possible, and submit drafts in sections to help move along in the process. The student and the Chair should work on an outline together so that the student has clear guidance as he/she begins to write. It may help to focus on one Chapter at a time. That way when the Chair is reviewing CH 1, the student can start to work on CH 2. The student needs to verify with the Chair and all committee members what format they prefer – hard copy sent and/or electronic copy of all drafts. Some prefer to have both on hand.

**Proposal Hearing Process and Guidelines**

The hearing date is often set in advance during the same semester as the anticipated hearing date. This is to prevent last minute scheduling conflicts among the committee when the student is finally ready. Because the dates are determined before the final draft has been approved, the Chair must make this decision. Therefore, the date is considered “tentative” until the Chair and Committee agree that the student is indeed ready for a hearing. The graduate program administrative assistant must send notices of invitation two weeks before the hearing. The graduate program assistant will prepare the hearing report form. For this he/she needs the list of the Committee members and where they are from, identification of Chair, and title of the proposed study. The invitations are sent to all nursing faculty, the Dean of Nursing and College of Health Science and all PhD Students. The student works with the Graduate administrator to book a “smart classroom” for the hearing.

The proposal hearing is a 2-hour formal meeting attended by the student, Committee Chair and committee members. The committee members may be “present” virtually with some sort of AV access (Go-to Meeting, Zoom, Skype) preferable to telephone conference call presence. The Chair and student must be present physically! It is recommended to have an IT tech from UML present in the room initially to ensure that the startup of any added communication mechanism is smooth. The IT person should contact the outside person 15 minutes prior to the start to ensure it works. The committee members who are attending virtually should have been given explicit directions prior to the hearing date by the graduate administrative assistant, with a possible test run if the committee member is unfamiliar with the technology. It is recommended that the student obtain a working phone number to contact ALL committee members in the event that they are coming in person but are late or they are attending
electronically and lose contact. The student should send the PP the night before to any committee member attending electronically in case he/she needs to view it from his/her own computer.

The hearing can be scheduled from Monday- Friday, 8am – 5pm during the academic year. Summer hearings and defenses are not allowed in our School as the majority of faculty members are on 9-month contracts. It is also expected that either the Chair of the School and/or the PhD Director must be present. Once the date is secured – the PhD Director and Chair must be notified immediately to save the date.

Once the student is ready for a hearing, he/she must have a final draft of the proposal printed and bound (ring binder at Staples or equivalent low-cost copier) and sent to committee members – with two extra copies for the School of Nursing (for the Dean, Chair and faculty), one for the PhD Director (unless he/she is already on the committee). These potential three extra copies are to be kept in the Nursing Office so that the PhD Director, Chair or other faculty who plan to attend the hearing can read it in advance, if they so choose. The PhD Program Director later stores these for future reference for other students. The student needs to get the best working address from the committee members (home or work) to mail the final bound copy to which should arrive two weeks prior to the hearing date. Many committee members also may request an electronic copy as well. And occasionally they prefer only an electronic copy but it should be assumed that a hard copy is sent to them unless otherwise requested.

In preparation for the hearing, the student prepares a PP presentation that should last no more than 30 minutes. This will allow plenty of time for questions and discussion. The student should print out copies for the committee and, if possible make extras for anyone else attending (10 extra copies are usually sufficient). If an outside member is attending virtually, the PP is sent electronically in advance, as noted. The Chair may elect to help review the PP in advance, that is a personal preference.

At the hearing, the Chair starts the proceedings with a welcome and introduction of the Committee members and student. The Chair also introduces the PhD Director, Dean, Chair and/or other faculty members present. It is not customary to introduce students and family members present, but a general welcome to all is given. Some students like to invite their family members, which is ok but remember – young children are not appropriate and very old adults may find it difficult to sit through this process for 2 hours. After the introductions, the Chair sets the rules for this hearing and then it is the student’s turn to present the proposed study to the committee. The committee is the audience that the student should prepare for, not others who come to observe the process….so the student is speaking to the committee and assuming they read the proposal which is why an in-depth lit review is not required for the proposal.
hearing. The student should summarize the lit review only briefly and focus most of proposal on the actual methods that he/she proposes to carry out the study.

After the student’s proposal presentation, the Chair will lead the discussion and questions among the committee members and then, if time allows, entertain questions from faculty and/or students present. Once the question period is over, as determined by the Chair, everyone present leaves the room, including the presenting PhD student, while the committee deliberates on the result of the hearing. After the Committee deliberates, the student and others are asked to return. The student is given the result of the committee: Pass, Pass with Conditions or Failure. All committee members sign the form. If one is not present the Chair gets the member’s email or Fax to get the signature within 24 hours, if possible. The signed form is eventually placed in the student’s academic record. See Appendix D.

Note: it is extremely rare to fail a hearing or defense as the Chair would not allow the student to move forward if the student was not ready.

If the result is a pass, the student is ready to prepare for IRB review as soon as possible. IRB review must occur after a successful proposal hearing. The student may be given minor edits to clean up in preparation for any later writing, but if the edits are minor, it can still be a pass.

If the result is a conditional pass, the student is given a verbal summary of the major issues that need to be addressed at the hearing. Within 24 hours, the Chair follows up with a written summary of the conditions for passing. The committee decides – if the revision needs a full review by all members or only the Chair. A conditional pass does not need a second hearing.

If the result is a failure, the student will be given instructions as to what needs to be revised and a plan devised with the Chair as to how to plan for a second hearing. Only two hearing are allowed. If the student fails two proposal hearings, he/she is no longer able to remain a PhD student in the program.

**IRB Review Process**

It is a University policy that the IRB application is submitted after the successful proposal hearing. This is to reduce the number of changes and amendments to the IRB if the hearing followed the IRB process (as it did in the past at UML). The Chair is considered the PI in all student IRB proposals. However, it is the PhD student who does the work and then submits to the Chair for review and approval before the Chair submits the application to the IRB.

If the student is doing secondary data analysis, the student must fill out the IRB Exempt status form and submit to the Chair who will submit the form. This is generally a very fast and relatively easy
process. Most PhD projects that are not secondary data analyses are typically categorized as “Expedited” reviews. This may take several months back and forth during the process of review; students need to be prepared for this. Students should be encouraged to read carefully all the IRB materials on Human Subjects Research to minimize returned proposals. A “full review” is required if the student is conducting a study with vulnerable populations or involved in a study that could potentially cause harm. This review may take several months - up to 6 months in some cases.

The student should read all the related information on the IRB website prior to starting to write the IRB application.


In addition, before the student even starts the IRB process – he/she should make sure that his/her NIH or CITI human subjects research certificate is up-to-date (every 3 years needs renewal). That would be the first step prior to IRB submission as it is required. Also, the student needs to ask if the Chair’s certificate is up-to-date, as the application requires his/her date of completion as well.

If students are working on data that have been approved by an outside IRB, then they can apply to have the original IRB as the lead IRB agency. There is a specific form, the Collaborative Institutional Agreement form for this available on the IRB webpages. It requires IRB signatures from both IRB’s – UML and the outside agency. http://www.uml.edu/Research/OIC/human-subjects/forms.aspx

**Dissertation Stage: Keeping on Track**

Once the IRB is approved – the student is ready to go!!! The student can now start to recruit subjects or collect data or start to examine the data if the data have been previously collected. It is good to establish a plan at this point about meeting times with the Chair. It may need to be flexible but always the eyes should be on the projected end date….and how to accomplish that goal. During this period, communication should be at least every 2 weeks and more often if needed. Often there are numerous emails in between. Typically, a Skype or in-person meeting every 2-4 weeks is helpful.

**Data Analysis Support**

If the student is conducting quantitative analysis, it is recommended to have a “stats person” on the committee. This person becomes a key player during the analysis phase. Some students have thought about just having a stats consultant on the side but this person will have no legitimacy during the proposal hearing or defense so best to keep a stats person as a committee member, if appropriate. Even
with this support, the student is expected to be prepared to conduct the analysis him/herself and not expect someone else to do it. The “stats person” is not always a statistician, it may be a psychologist who is a whiz in the type of the analyses that the student is doing or it may be a nursing faculty who teaches stats, etc.

If a student is conducting a qualitative analysis, it is recommended to have the Chair knowledgeable on this method so he/she can perform an independent analysis on a subset of the transcripts (usually 1/3 – 1/2 of the transcripts depending on the number of interviews). This helps later when the student begins identifying and labeling themes to have someone who truly gets a sense of the data. It can serve as a means of validation or it can help the student to reframe the preliminary analysis in a different way. Generally other committee members are not expected to do this level of detailed analysis.

**Writing and More Writing**

It is recommended that students write nearly every day – even if it is brief. Some students experience writer’s block during this period. Keeping a calendar and timeline helps! This includes the dates earmarked for the 2-week turn around for each draft. Typically, at least 2-3 drafts/subsequent revisions go to the committee (assuming a very careful initial review and revisions after the Chair's first review). When the student postpones the writing, the student needs to realize that he/she will not make the target date of graduation. If the student does not produce the work in a timely manner, he/she can’t try to push it through at last minute – it will not be a quality product. It is difficult when students procrastinate but then almost catch up at the end, leaving the committee to review the materials in less than a week. Students cannot expect the committee to step up so the student can graduate on time; it does not work that way. The student needs to be continually productive if he/she wants to succeed. This is a common problem so students need to be aware of it and get counsel from the Chair as needed on this often! It works well to have a student support group if others are also in the writing and analysis phase.

**UML Thesis (dissertation) Guidelines**

As noted in the proposal section, the recommended format is the Article/Multi-monograph alternative format. *The Chair may have a preference and thus make the final determination on the final format.* Here is a brief description of the two formats.
Traditional Format

The traditional format follows the chapter format in the thesis guide. Each chapter is lengthy and describes each section in detail. There is no page cutoff; dissertation lengths in the School of Nursing have ranged from 125-300 pages! This is the traditional format and has served our students well in the past. However, it is challenging to then write a 15-page article (or more) after the inclusion of all the details that have been deemed essential in the large printed volume. A single header throughout the document is used in this format.

Article/ “Multi-Monograph Alternative” Format

If a student chooses the article format, the committee must know and approve the choice of articles in advance prior to the writing. The recruitment, data collection and analysis are not different in the two dissertation styles. The only difference is in the presentation of the final results. The drafts for review by the committee should include not only the 2 papers but also:

- A General Intro Chapter (which would include the general problem statement, significance of the problem, and a description of the two articles that will describe the results). Note: there is no extended literature review anymore – a brief literature review would be included in each article. And students cannot plagiarize themselves – so be sure the literature reviews are not the same!
- The two (or 3) manuscripts written in 15-20 page article format (Each will be a separate chapter in the final document put them in order that makes sense, if a literature review or psychometric evaluation of a tool is one of the papers, that would go first before the final results paper)
- A general conclusion chapter
- Relevant appendices.
- Please review Appendix I for the School of Nursing guideline for the alternative monograph format which is more structured than the university thesis guidelines. The School of Nursing format should be followed.

A final draft (regardless of format chosen) is to be submitted to the committee 2 weeks in advance of the dissertation date. It needs to be sent in a bound format, - for both the traditional and alternative formats. If committee members request an electronic format, that is also sent. In addition, four extra bound copies of the final dissertation must be submitted to the School of Nursing office for the Dean, Chair, PhD Director and one for faculty review. If any of these people are on the committee and already will get a copy, the student can subtract that from the final number of copies. Refer to the UML
Thesis guidelines for chapter format as well as numerous other regulations for the bound dissertation. APA is required in the dissertation unless it contradicts the UML guidelines, which supersede APA requirements. See the guidelines for the detail in terms of required cover page and other required formats:


Note the cover page is typed by the student and brought to the defense by the student to obtain all committee signatures. If a member is not physically present to sign, accommodations must be made for a direct signature through express mail. Faxed and electronic signatures for the cover page are not acceptable. This signature page will be submitted to the library along with any edits taken care of for the final permanent dissertation. Both dissertation formats will ultimately be bound in the blue volumes and will be available electronically in the same manner.

One of the differences from this format, in comparison to the traditional format, is that there is no one header throughout the document since the chapters include two unique articles. Also in this format, students should include references as needed in each chapter rather than one final reference list as in the traditional format.

**Dissertation Defense Process and Guidelines**

Once the Chair determines that the student is making adequate progress and likely will be able to defend in a semester, he/she will give the go-ahead to the student to try to find a defense date. The use of http://www.doodle.com facilitates finding a mutual date for all committee members. Again, this decision is the Chair’s to make and he/she may consult with other members at this point or not. The point is that the defense should not happen if all the committee members are not in agreement that the student’s work is defendable. The Chair may opt to contact the other members prior to the defense with or without the student to be sure that they agree the student is ready to go forward. If a date has been set and the student does not have a reasonably good draft ready 2 weeks prior to the defense, the defense is cancelled.

The student requests that the graduate administrative assistant secure a room once a date is established. The student requests that the administrative assistant type a dissertation defense form as well. This is different from the front cover page that the student will bring on good quality paper as recommended by the thesis guidelines. Again, the student supplies the title of dissertation, identifies the
Chair and all committee members and their affiliations at this time. The time frame for the dissertation defense is 3 hours (vs. 2 for the proposal hearing).

The process and procedure for the defense is similar to the proposal hearing except that the student has more time to present this time: 45-50 minutes max vs. 30 for the proposal. The Chair serves as a time keeper and gives a 5-minute warning at 45 minutes.

The procedure of the dissertation defense follows a similar pattern as the proposal hearing:

- The Chair welcomes all and introduces the committee and the student. This introduction of the student is a bit longer than at the proposal. The past degrees and where the student graduated is typically noted, and any special talents or accomplishments are often mentioned.
- The Chair gives a reminder that everyone present must stay for the entire defense, it is too distracting to leave in the middle. People can leave after the question period however when the student and others are asked to leave while the committee deliberates. If anyone needs to leave before the completion of the presentation and questions, he/she should leave before the process begins.
- A reminder to turn off cell phones is given by the Chair.
- The student will first present his/her dissertation for no more than 50 minutes - without interruption, even by the committee.
- The Chair will give a 5-minute warning after 45 minutes of presentation.
- There is no food allowed to minimize distractions. Often the student brings water, which is allowed, but it is not required.
- Immediately after the presentation, the Committee members only ask questions – typically starting with the external committee member(s).
- The questions are a dialogue back and forth with the student. The committee can ask questions at any time they want to but the Committee Chair leads the discussion and question period.
- It is at the discretion of the Committee Chair if there is time allowed for questions from others who are not on the committee. If so, questions would be solicited from the School of Nursing Dean, Chair, College Dean or PhD Director and then from faculty present. Only if time allows, students may ask questions.
• Once the question period is over, as determined by the Chair, everyone present leaves the room, except for the Committee, including the PhD student, while the committee deliberates on the result of the defense.

• After the Committee deliberates, the student is asked to return. Others may come back into the room at this time.

• The student is given the result of the defense: Pass, Conditional Pass or Failure.

  If the result is a pass, the student has successfully completed the dissertation phase! There may be minor edits shared which must be integrated in the final dissertation (traditional format or non-traditional format) which is given to the library in order to graduate. The due date that the library needs it is found on the Intent to Graduate Form for that year:

  http://www.uml.edu/docs/clearance_form_tcm18-3565.pdf

  (see 2017 example, Appendix F).

  If the result is a conditional pass, the student is given a verbal summary of the major issues that need to be addressed at the end of the defense. Within 24 hours, the Chair follows up with a written summary of the conditions for passing. The committee decides – if the revision needs a full review by all members or only the Chair. A conditional pass does not need a second defense. If the result is a failure, the student will be given instructions as to what needs to be revised and a plan devised with the Chair as to how to plan for a second defense. Only two defenses are allowed. If the student fails the dissertation defense twice, he/she is no longer able to remain a PhD student in the program.

**The Dissertation Defense Presentation**

  The student’s oral presentation defense will be quite similar no matter if a student chose the traditional format or the alternate article format. It is still a presentation of the findings of the study presented in 45- 50 minutes. It should include a brief overview of the following. The Chair can modify this as he/she sees fit:

  • Introduction and Problem Statement
  • Research Questions and Study Purpose
  • Literature Review – very brief – this is often a problem that students spend too much time on this section!
  • Theoretical/ Conceptual Framework (if applicable)
  • Methods
Design – with specific hypotheses related to each research question identified
✓ Sampling & recruitment method, IRB adherence
✓ Protocol
✓ Measurement
✓ Data analysis methods

- Results: sample characteristics and then study results (based on hypotheses if a quantitative research study).
- Discussion (includes implications for nursing practice, health promotion, and policy with limitations identified at end)
- Recommendations for future research and practice if applicable
- Conclusions (note the thesis guide reverses these last 2 steps in the traditional written bound dissertation so be sure to keep to that format for the traditional written dissertation, if chosen, but for the presentation this follows in a more natural order).

Forms to Sign at Defense:

1. The front signature page of committee members stays with the dissertation for final binding. The student types this up and brings to defense. It must follow UML thesis guidelines format. Best to use just one main dissertation title if using the monograph format (like the traditional format title) rather than the name of two potential articles. The article names can be identified in the body of the dissertation. **Note:** If a committee member will not be physically present at the defense, the student should send this form to him/her **one month** prior to the defense to ensure it is signed by the defense date. This must be on the high-quality paper that the rest of the final dissertation must be submitted to the library. Be sure to check acceptable paper quality when submitting this form early. The committee member is assured that it will be used only if the dissertation is a pass. The committee member does not check any boxes regarding Pass/Conditional Pass/Fail – he/she just signs his/her signature at this time in advance. The Chair will later check off the appropriate box for the outside member with his/her permission.

2. The Dissertation report form (Appendix E): this should have been requested by the student well in advance with the information given to the administrative assistant to be able to type it up. The administrative assistant sends it to the Chair. The Chair brings it to the defense and gets the
signatures from the committee. This form CAN be faxed or sent electronically to the committee if a member is not present. It is later stored in the student’s academic record.

**Forms for Graduation and When to Submit the Dissertation to Library**

There is a required form that students must take care of before the dissertation defense. If a student intends to graduate, he/she must submit the Declaration of Intent to Graduate Form early in the semester. As noted, this is available online:  
http://www.uml.edu/docs/clearance_form_tcm18-3565.pdf

The date to submit will vary each year. For degrees to be conferred in May, 2018, the deadline to apply with the Intent to Graduate Form was March 30, 2018. The deadline to submit the dissertation to the Library was May 4, 2018. Students should make an appointment with the Lydon Library librarian on North campus (Kelly Morin as of 2016; 978-934-4567) prior to dropping off the final dissertation to ensure that she is available. There are forms to fill out at the library regarding the publication of the dissertation. It is recommended that students always request and pay extra for the copyright and request that the University must give permission prior to anyone downloading the dissertation online. This is to ensure that journals will not later consider the dissertation to have already had free access to the public and thus already “published” prior to publication in their journal.

**Grading Final Dissertation Credits**

As noted in the grading section, the grade for the dissertation course in the final semester is “S” (satisfactory). Prior to that, as noted, all grading for dissertation is “PR” assuming some progress is made. If there has been no progress, the student may receive a "U". The student does not get any credits for this grade. Additional grading information is found at:  
https://www.uml.edu/catalog/graduate/policies/grading-policies.aspx

**University Graduate Policies**

It is critical that PhD students are very familiar with all University Graduate policies. They will not be repeated here and are found at:  
http://www.uml.edu/Catalog/Graduate/Policies/General-Policies.aspx
It is recommended that students “print the catalog” which is available at the bottom of the screen. While a few policies may be slightly different in this catalog (the School of Nursing can be more stringent but not less stringent than the University), for the most part the School of Nursing follows the University policies. They include a wide range of issues including: academic integrity, academic standing, commencement, course credits, equal and fair treatment, grading policies, grade appeal process, registration and enrollment policies, access to student records, statute of limitations, transcript policies, transfer credit, University non-grade appeals process, disciplinary procedures and the withdrawal process. Also, if students have any other graduate-related questions, they can often find the answers on:  
http://www.uml.edu/grad

International Students

The International Student and Scholars Office provides counsel for international students on many levels. Their website is a wealth of information:  
http://www.uml.edu/ISSO/default.aspx. They are also readily available to meet in person for advice. International students must be enrolled full time (9 credits). If courses are not available in the degree pathway, they may need to register for additional courses to be in compliance with their visa status. They may request to take a reduced load only with permission after completion of course work, the qualifying examination and all of their dissertation credits have been taken. International students are expected at a minimum to be on campus twice weekly for advising with course instructors or their advisor.

Maintaining a Scholarly Environment

There are several mechanisms that the Solomont School of Nursing has integrated into the program to help to support a scholarly and social environment! They include:

- Attendance at the annual Eastern Nursing Research Society conference is strongly encouraged. At least one attendance is expected during the program of study! The site for this varies from Boston to cities as far south as Washington DC, all along the eastern coast. It is an excellent way to see current doctoral student and faculty research and meet a broad mix of people interested in research. Students are also encouraged to present their dissertations at this conference after graduation and some may be ready to present a poster close to graduation. There is also an “early PhD” student poster that only one student from each campus may allow. To be considered, PhD
students send a poster abstract to the PhD Program Director well in advance of the due date. The
faculty will review the submitted abstracts and choose one “early” student to represent UMass
Lowell. The conference is typically held in April.

- Attendance at the annual five-campus UMASS PhD Student and Faculty Symposium is also
  expected. This is an annual gathering of UMASS PhD and faculty for a half-day series of lectures
  and seminars. It is typically held in October.
- Periodic Colloquia are set up on Saturdays once or twice per semester. These are one-hour
  meetings, with presentations by faculty, students or outside speakers on hot topics of interest to
  PhD students.
- Potluck lunches on class days are organized by the faculty and a fun time to relax and get to know
  each other!
- Attendance at as many proposal hearings and dissertation defenses is highly recommended to
  witness this scholarly milestone that all must pass through.

**Library Resources**

The UMass Lowell library provides a wide array of electronic databases with subscription to most
major nursing and health related journals. Through interlibrary loan, nearly any article can be retrieved,
often within a few days. The library also houses the Ref Works program, which is highly recommended
for all PhD students to master early in their program. Ref Works is a web based, citation-formatting
software that is available to all students.

The librarian for the Zuckerberg College and Solomont School of Nursing is Sara_marks@uml.edu
who is very engaged and dedicated to the nursing graduate programs. She often guest lectures in PhD
courses and colloquia. She is available to meet with students one-on-one to help them learn to navigate
the vast available resources or assist with fine-tuning a search for dissertation work. The library
resources can be accessed off campus very easily once students have a student ID, email set up and
password.
Quality Improvement/Program Evaluation

Since the inception of the 2012 revised curriculum there has been one current student evaluative survey. In addition, we have closely monitored course evaluations and welcomed student feedback. As a result of this input the Solomont School of Nursing has made minor changes in selected courses. In 2014, an alumni survey was sent to all alumni to examine overall program satisfaction and areas needing improvement. The ratings were overall highly favorable on all aspects of the program. These graduates completed the prior 60-credit curriculum but it was still important to identify areas related to faculty support and resources at the university that needed improvement. This overall alumni survey will be repeated every 5-7 years to coincide with the periodic required external program review, called the Academic Quality Assessment and Development process at the University (AQAD). Recent Graduates were also sent an End of Program survey. This survey will be sent to all graduates of the program on an annual basis. We hope to maintain contact with our graduates so we can elicit their help on our advisory board committee or other social and scholarly cooperative endeavors.

The PhD Program Committee consists of the PhD program Director and several appointed faculty. They typically meet monthly on the second Tuesday from 3-5pm. Each year the PhD Program Committee faculty ask for a PhD Student representative to attend the meetings to speak on behalf of students. While the times and dates are subject to change, other PhD students are always welcome to attend. The faculty value student input and recommendations for improvement.

**Best wishes to all students as they progress in the program at this most intellectually stimulating moment in their lives!**

Barbara Mawn, RN, PhD, PhD Program Director, June 1, 2018

References Cited

APPENDIX A:

GRADUATE ACADEMIC PETITION
## GRADUATE ACADEMIC PETITION

**Office of the Registrar**
220 Pawtucket Street, University Crossing, Suite M10
Lowell, MA 01854

Phone: 978-934-2550
Fax: 978-934-4076
Email: registrar@uml.edu

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### Transfer of Credits

- [ ] From University of Massachusetts Lowell
- [ ] From Another Institution

I request acceptance of the following transfer course credits by University of Massachusetts Lowell.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Number</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Date</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** An official transcript must accompany this request to the Office of the Registrar except for courses taken at the University of Massachusetts Lowell.

**Regulations pertaining to transfer of credit:**
Please see graduate catalog [http://www.uml.edu/catalog/graduate/policies/Transfer_Credit.htm](http://www.uml.edu/catalog/graduate/policies/Transfer_Credit.htm)

### Other Request (change of status, etc. Explain in full)

---

**Required Signatures:** (students: when completed with all signatures, please submit petition to the Office of the Registrar.)

- **Student Signature**
- **Date**

- [ ] Approved

- [ ] Denied

**Courses**
- [ ] Credits

**Graduate Coordinator/Chair**
- **Date**

**Graduate Coordinator/Chair Signature**
APPENDIX B:

INTERCAMPUS COURSE EXCHANGE POLICY REGISTRATION FORM
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS
INTERCAMPUS COURSE EXCHANGE POLICY
-- Graduate Students Only --
REGISTRATION FORM

STUDENT INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>MI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birthday (mm/dd/yyyy)</th>
<th>Social Security and/or Student ID</th>
<th>Sex (M/F)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Zip</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home Campus</th>
<th>Amherst</th>
<th>Boston</th>
<th>Dartmouth</th>
<th>Lowell</th>
<th>Worcester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country of Citizenship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate Degree Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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COURSE INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Course # / Section #</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Offered</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus Offering course</th>
<th>Amherst</th>
<th>Boston</th>
<th>Dartmouth</th>
<th>Lowell</th>
<th>Worcester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student’s Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

By signing this form, I certify that I have reviewed course prerequisites/requirements information and that I will adhere to the policies/dates on home and host campuses for dropping courses without financial penalty. If I choose to drop the above course(s), I will submit the intercampus course exchange drop form to both home and host campus officials according to the official course drop deadline for the host campus.

---

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APPROVAL SIGNATURES – HOME CAMPUS</th>
<th>APPROVAL SIGNATURES – HOST CAMPUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home Campus – Grad. Prog. Dir.</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host Campus – Grad. Prog. Dean/Rep</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C:

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION FORM
ZUCKERBERG COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES
SOLOMONT SCHOOL OF NURSING
DISSERTATION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION FORM

Name of Student: _____________________  S.I.D. _________

*************************************************************************************

*Dissertation Title:
Please note that program policy requires a minimum membership of 3 committee members including a
Chair (UMass Lowell nursing faculty), one additional nursing faculty member from any UMass campus
and one member outside of the UMass Lowell Department of Nursing.

*************************************************************************************

Name ____________________________  University/Department

______________________________  Nursing / University of Massachusetts

______________________________  Lowell

Name ____________________________  University/Department

______________________________  __________________________

We recommend that the above-named members be approved for the dissertation committee for the student named above:

PhD Program Director _____________________  Date _____________________

Dept. Chair _____________________________  Date _____________________

7/17 bem

UML Solomont SON PHD Handbook/bem/rev6-18
APPENDIX D:

PROPOSAL HEARING REPORT FORM
ZUCKERBERG COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES
SOLOMONT SCHOOL OF NURSING
PROPOSAL HEARING REPORT FORM

Name of Student: ____________________  SID# ____________________

Dissertation Title: ____________________

Hearing Date: ____________________

Results of Hearing:  Pass [ ]  Conditional Pass [ ]  Fail [ ]

________________________________________________________________________

Print Name                          Signature

________________________________________   Pass [ ]  CP [ ]  Fail [ ]  _______________

Committee Chair
University of Massachusetts Lowell
College of Health Sciences

________________________________________   Pass [ ]  CP [ ]  Fail [ ]  _______________

Name. Affiliation

________________________________________   Pass [ ]  CP [ ]  Fail [ ]  _______________

Name. Affiliation

Second examination required  YES ___  NO ___

Does the committee require certain conditions to be met before the pass becomes effective?

YES ___  NO ___

Specify conditions
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX E:

DISSERTATION DEFENSE REPORT FORM
ZUCKERBERG COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES
SOLOMONT SCHOOL OF NURSING
PHD PROGRAM IN NURSING
DISSERTATION DEFENSE REPORT

Name of Student ___________________________ S.I.D# ___________________________

EXAMINATION FOR DISSERTATION DEFENSE

******************************************************************************

Dissertation Title: ___________________________

Examination Date: ___________________________

Results of examination: Pass ☐ Conditional Pass ☐ Fail ☐

******************************************************************************

Pass ☐ CP ☐ Fail ☐

Print the name ___________________________ Signature ___________________________

Committee Chair ___________________________
University of Massachusetts Lowell

__________________________ ___________________________
[Name and University Affiliation]

__________________________ ___________________________
[Name and University Affiliation]

Does the Committee require certain conditions to be met before the pass becomes effective?

YES_____ NO_____

Specify conditions ___________________________

__________________________ ___________________________

UML Solomont SON PHD Handbook/bem/rev6-18
APPENDIX F:

INTENT TO GRADUATE FORM
2018 EXAMPLE
DECLARATION OF INTENT TO GRADUATE (Master’s, Ed.S. or Doctoral Degree) OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR 220 PAWTUCKET STREET, UNIVERSITY CROSSING, SUITE M10 LOWELL, MA 01854

phone: 978-934-2550 fax: 978-934-4076 email: registrar@uml.edu

For Summer completion: Degrees conferred on August 31, 2018 Deadline to apply: August 13, 2018 Deadline to submit thesis/dissertation to Library: August 20, 2018
For Fall completion: Degrees conferred on February 1, 2018 Deadline to apply: December 5, 2017 Deadline to submit thesis/dissertation to Library: December 18, 2017
For Spring completion: Degrees conferred on May 19, 2018 Deadline to apply: March 30, 2018 Deadline to submit thesis/dissertation to Library: May 4, 2018

I intend to graduate in:

Spring
Summer
Fall

Previous Degree Information (Students must fill out and please do not abbreviate the name of the school.)

If Required by Program:

Please be aware a student will not be cleared to graduate until a final review by the academic department confirms that the student has successfully completed all requirements for the degree.
I certify that the student has met all requirements of the degree program pending successful completion of the final semester grades and/or submission to the library for publishing.

Signature
Signature

(Education and Engineering only)
Signature

I understand that I must register for a course or for Continuing Matriculation during the semester in which I graduate. (International students must have ISSO approval for course registrations for fewer than nine credits).
Student Signature

Please submit the completed form by email, fax, mail or in person to the Registrar’s Office (see above).

For Office Use Only:

Doc Type: Clearance Form

REV. - 10/18/2017 SIS ID# Telephone E-mail Option Major Degree Anticipated Defense Date School Date School MI Last Name First Name Year Country Bachelor’s Degree (BS, BA...) Thesis/Dissertation Title Imaged Effective Term Verified 1 Processed Thesis/Dissertation Advisor (if applicable) Graduate Coordinator Verified 2 Year Country Other Degree (BS, BA...) College Dean Date

NOTE: for proper formatting and a fillable form refer to:
https://www.uml.edu/docs/clearance_form_tcm18-3565.pdf
APPENDIX G:

ALUMNI DISSERTATION TITLES
Pamela P. Di Napoli, 2000  
A Contextual Analysis of Adolescent Violence Using the Interaction Model of Client Health Behavior

Catherine Yetter Read, 2001  

Patricia Lussier Duynstee, 2001  
A Community’s Readiness for Needle Exchange: An Analytic Case Study

Mary M. Aruda, 2001  
Predictors of Unprotected Sex for Teens at Pregnancy Testing

Paul L. Desmarais, 2002  
Q-Wave Versus Non Q-wave Myocardial Infarction after Cardiac Rehabilitation: Morbidity and Mortality

Jeanne M. Cartier, 2003  
An Examination of Multiple Stressors and Resources in Married Women: An Application of the Interaction Model of Client Health Behavior

Heather A. Butler, 2003  
Motivation: The Role in Diabetes Self-Management in Older Adults

Susan S. Kelly, 2004  
The Impact of Life Style Risk Factors on Female Fertility Status: An Application of the Interaction Model of Client Health Behavior

Ainat Koren, 2004  
Unintended Pregnancy among Married Women: An Ecological Exploration

Janice M. Boutotte, 2005  
Factors Impacting Treatment Completion in Persons with Tuberculosis Disease Undergoing Self-Administered Therapy and/or Directly Observed Therapy: A Retrospective Study of Massachusetts Cases 1999-2001

Maureen Murphy, 2005  
Determinants of Nurse-Midwifery Screening and Interventions Practices Related to Postpartum Onset Depressive Mood Disorders: A National Survey

Deborah McCarter-Spaulding, 2007  
Breastfeeding Self-efficacy in Women of African Descent
Susan Rowan James, 2008
I Think I Can: Parenting Self-Efficacy in Parents of Young Adolescents

Mary Colleen Simonelli, 2008
Predicting Relapse to Smoking: A Cluster Analysis of Postpartum Women

Catherine J. Fogg, 2009
Beliefs and Intentions of the Homeless toward HIV Screening

Lauri Welch, 2010
Out of Pocket Prescription Costs and Nurse Practitioner Prescribing: A National Survey

Mary Kelly, 2010
Factors that Influence the Utilization of Primary Care by Families of Children with Special Health Care Needs.

Sally Crotty, 2011
Risk and Protective Factors Influencing Binge Drinking and Health-Risk Consequences in a National Sample of College Students

Georgia P. Ameia Yen-Patton, 2011
Nurse and Nursing Assistant Reciprocal Caring in Long Term Care: Outcomes of Absenteeism, Retention, Turnover and Quality of Care

Nancy Labore, 2012
Transition to Self-Management: The Lived Experience of 21-25 Year olds with Sickle Cell Disease

Susan Lynde Hamilton, 2012
Predictors of Readiness for HIV Testing among Midlife Women

Terri Jabaley Leonarczyk, 2012
The Experience of Cancer Risk Management Decision Making for BRCA Positive Women

Yuan Zhang, 2013
Sleep duration and Health Outcomes among Formal Caregivers in Skilled Nursing Facilities: The Contribution of the Work Environment

Shari Goldberg, 2013
Food Insecurity Among Older Adults: A Social Ecological Approach

Traci Alberti, 2014
The Association of Health Literacy and Health Information Seeking Behaviors to the Adherence to Discharge Instructions
Deborah Benes-Nadworny, 2015
The Influence of Social and Environmental Supports on Moderate to Vigorous Physical Activity Levels in Hispanic Adolescent Females

Judith Fredette, 2015
Quality of Life of College Student Living with Type 1 Diabetes

Somsak Thojampa, 2016
The Moderating Effect of Social Cognitive Factors on Self-Management Activities and HBA1C in Thai Adults with Type Two Diabetes

Pamela Delis, 2016
Uncertainty in Illness and Quality of Life in Systemic Lupus Erythematos

Deborah A. Stone, December, 2016
Intimate Partner Violence Among the Late Adolescent and Young Adult Population: A Critical Social Theory Perspective

Linda Foley, 2016
Impaired Sleep and Its Association with Type 2 Diabetes, Depression, and Stress in the Boston Puerto Rican Health Study

Marni Kellogg, 2017
Secondary Traumatic Stress in Pediatric Nurses

Janet Ierardi, 2017
Exploring the Experiences of Men Whose Partners Have Postpartum Depression

Cherlie Magny Normilus, December, 2017
Self-Management of Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus: The Lived Experience of Adult Haitian Immigrants
APPENDIX H:

FINANCIAL SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS
FINANCIAL SUPPORTS

LOANS:
UMass Lowell enrolled in the institutional Nurse Faculty Loan Program in 2014. Awards are designated from the federal government each year. Students are asked if they are interested and an informational session is held at the beginning of the semester. This is geared to those who want to be nurse educators after graduation. It is not needs based. If they secure a full-time nurse faculty position after graduation for four years, they can eliminate 80% of the loan, which is forgiven. There are detailed requirements and one must be a U.S. citizen or national. For more information about this loan program and other Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) opportunities check out the website: https://www.hrsa.gov/about/organization/bureaus/bhw/bhwannualreportfy16.pdf

SCHOLARSHIPS (ranging from ~ $500-$9,000)
The May Futrell Scholarship Award is an endowed scholarship that students can apply to each year for support. The requirements are sent to all PhD and graduate students in the spring of each year. Dr. Futrell is a professor emerita of UMass Lowell School of Nursing and former Chairperson. The award is announced in May.

The Susan Reece Scholarship is another opportunity for students to apply for support. Dr. Reece is also a professor emerita who was a member of the School of Nursing Faculty. The award requirements are sent to all PhD and graduate students in the spring of each year and it is announced in May.

The Eileen Bean Scholarship was initiated in memory of a former UMass Lowell nursing student. The candidate must be a former graduate of UMASS Lowell School of Nursing for the BS and/or MS degree. The requirements are sent to all PhD students annually and it is announced in May.

OTHER SOURCES OF PHD STUDENT FUNDING IN THE PAST
Nurses Educational Funds Scholarship http://n-e-f.org/index.php/apply.html

March of Dimes Scholarship
http://www.marchofdimes.org/nursing/index.bm2?cid=00000003&tpid=ne_s3_1_3

MA Nurses Association http://www.massnurses.org/about-mna/mnf/scholarships

Minority Nurse Scholarships: http://minoritynurse.com/scholarships/ and http://www.aacn.nche.edu/students/scholarships/minority

American Association of Colleges of Nursing. They have their own scholarship opportunities and a great reference list for others.
http://www.aacnnursing.org/Students/Financial-Aid

Johnson & Johnson Nurse Scholarships: https://www.discovernursing.com/scholarships#no-filters
APPENDIX I:

ALTERNATIVE MONOGRAPH DISSERTATION FORMAT
GUIDELINE FOR ALTERNATIVE MONOGRAPH DISSERTATION FORMAT
SOLOMONT SCHOOL OF NURSING
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS LOWELL

TITLE (Signature) Page – see Thesis guide!
ABSTRACT TITLE PAGE
ABSTRACT (ii)
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS (iii) (optional)
TABLE OF CONTENTS (with page references) (iv)
LIST OF TABLES (with titles and page references) (v)
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS (with titles and page references – includes figures) (vi)

TEXT
I. INTRODUCTION (overall – inclusive of all articles submitted includes more in-depth lit review than articles allowed to have, identifies how dissertation will be organized in terms of what articles and a final overall conclusion chapter). ADD LITERATURE CITATION AT END OF CHAPTER.

II. Monograph I [state title of article for chapter title – do not write monograph 1, place literature reviews or psychometric analyses first – check with the Chair about placement if you are unsure]
   BRIEF INTRODUCTION (includes significance, purpose of paper and brief lit review)
   METHODOLOGY
   RESULTS
   DISCUSSION
   CONCLUSION
   RECOMMENDATION
   LITERATURE CITED

III. Monograph 2 [State title here for chapter title – not monograph 2]
   BRIEF INTRODUCTION (includes significance, purpose of paper and brief lit review)
   METHODOLOGY
   RESULTS
   DISCUSSION
   CONCLUSION
   RECOMMENDATION
   LITERATURE CITED

(note: students cannot self-plagiarize within the 2 articles)

IV. Monograph 3 (if applicable, only minimum of 2 required but if used state title here as chapter title) – same format as above 2 articles/monographs

IV. (or V if the student used Chapter IV for a 3rd article) CONCLUSION (Overall – discusses the conclusions based on the results from all papers submitted. Be careful not to copy and paste from each paper here! Be creative and come up with some overall implications for nursing practice, health
promotion, health policy, and future research recommendations. ADD LITERATURE CITATION AT END OF CHAPTER.

Appendix (if necessary) followed by Biographical Sketch of Author (required)

Note: The use of a header is confusing for this format so it is not recommended. Continual Pagination only however is required.

APPENDIX J:

QUALIFYING EXAMINATION REPORT
ZUCKERBERG COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES
SOLOMONT SCHOOL OF NURSING
PHD PROGRAM IN NURING
QUALIFYING EXAMINATION REPORT

Name of Student: ____________________________  Semester/Year: ____________________________

QE Paper Title: ____________________________

Date of Review: ____________________________

Result of Examination: ____________________________

Pass _________  Conditional Pass _________

Fail _________  _______________________________________________________________________

******************************************************************************

Qualifying Examination Committee  Signature

Dr. Barbara Mawn, Chair of QE Committee  ____________________________

NAME Committee Member  ____________________________

NAME Committee Member  ____________________________

******************************************************************************

Second examination required  YES _________  NO _________

******************************************************************************

Specify conditions:

7/17 bem