

*ROAR*



# *PHD*

---

## Student Handbook



**Idaho State  
University**

**School of  
Nursing**

2021-2022

## Table of Contents

Welcome from the SON Director of Graduate Studies .....	4
School of Nursing Vision, Mission, and Philosophy .....	5
Ph.D. Program Overview .....	6
Ph.D. in Nursing Program Outcomes .....	6
Ph.D. Program Curriculum .....	6
Advisement .....	7
Procedure for Changing an Advisor, Dissertation Chair, or Project Committee Composition .....	8
Final Program of Study .....	8
Electives .....	8
Approval of Special Problems or Independent Study Courses .....	8
Grading System & Student Progression Policy .....	9
Waiver of Course or Deviation from Published Curriculum .....	10
Policy on Medical or Other Withdrawal.....	10
Student Responsibilities Related to Completion of Degree Requirements .....	11
Length of Time to Complete Requirements.....	12
Continuous Registration Requirements .....	12
SON Student Concerns and Formal Complaint .....	13
Final Course Grade Appeal.....	14
Policy Regarding Participation in Commencement Ceremony .....	14
Standards of Confidentiality .....	15
Library.....	16
Procedural Information .....	16
Malpractice Insurance.....	17
Financial Assistance .....	17
Registration Enrollment Procedures .....	17
Roles of the Dissertation Committee Chair .....	18
Qualification and Selection of Dissertation Committee .....	18
Roles and Responsibilities of the Dissertation Committee .....	19
Written Comprehensive Examination.....	19
Criteria for Passing the Written Comprehensive Examination.....	20
Scheduling the Dissertation Proposal Oral Defense .....	21

Candidacy for Doctoral Degree .....	21
Dissertation .....	22
Guidelines for the Three Manuscript Option.....	22
General Guidelines for the Final Oral Defense of the Dissertation or Three Manuscript Option.....	24
Protection of Human Subjects.....	24
Application for the Ph.D. Degree.....	25

Developed 8-2013; Revised 6-30-15; Revised 6-13-16; Revised 8-14-17; Revised 7-2-18;  
Revised 6-2019; revised 6/2020SST; 6/2021SST

**Welcome from the Director of Graduate Studies in Nursing and Associate Professor,  
Susan S. Tavernier, PhD, APRN-CNS, AOCN®**



Welcome to the School of Nursing (SON) at Idaho State University!  
The faculty and I look forward to working with you as you complete your coursework and research. Active engagement and collaborative interaction between you and the faculty will prepare you to conduct original research and collaborate as a scholar and leader in nursing and healthcare. Improving the quality of life for patients is an outcome that occurs as you integrate compassion, innovation and science into your work.

Please take time to read the Ph.D. Handbook and utilize this as a primary resource as you enter and progress through the program. The Handbook is updated each year or as needed so this is an important document to review on a regular basis. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of assistance as you move forward in this endeavor at (208) 373-1783 (office) or [tavesusa@isu.edu](mailto:tavesusa@isu.edu)

---

All students in the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) program must meet and maintain the requirements specified by ISU, the Graduate School (GS), the KDHS, as well as the SON Graduate Ph.D. Student Homeroom, and within the Ph.D. Handbook.

Students will be enrolled in a Ph.D. Student Homeroom in Moodle upon admission. This site will provide ongoing information for Ph.D. students, documentation requirements for progression, forms, guidelines, policies and procedural information, as well as other pertinent information. The student must access the PhD Student Homeroom on a regular basis to remain informed and to support progression.

Students will enter the program holding a Bachelor's degree from an accredited nursing program. A Master's degree in Nursing from an accredited program will be considered for admission. The student must complete a minimum of 59 credit hours on full time status, successfully pass a written comprehensive examination, complete a dissertation or three manuscript option, and complete a final oral examination (defense) in order to graduate with the Ph.D. degree.

All students begin with a required, on campus orientation (Pocatello) in August of admission year.

For additional information about graduate education at ISU refer to:  
<http://www.isu.edu/graduate>.

For additional information about the Ph.D. program in the SON refer to:  
<https://www.isu.edu/nursing/programs/doctor-of-philosophy-Ph.D.-in-nursing/>

## **School of Nursing Vision, Mission, and Philosophy**

### **Vision**

The SON vision is to be a distinguished SON committed to being as humanistic and compassionate as we are scientific and innovative.

### **Mission**

The SON Mission is to prepare caring, exemplary nurse leaders who integrate education, service and scholarship, through practice and research, to enhance the quality of life for rural and diverse populations.

### **Philosophy**

The faculty in the SON subscribe to a common philosophy about human beings, nursing, and nursing education that encompasses both the undergraduate and graduate programs. Faculty strives to be leaders and visionaries in their roles as nurse educators, consumers and advocates for consumers of health care, and health professionals.

Humans are dynamic, holistic, and multidimensional. They have intrinsic worth and needs which are uniquely experienced and expressed within the totality of their environment. The manner in which those needs are met influences the individual, family, and community growth and development through the life cycle. Humans have the right and the responsibility for their health and welfare. Moreover, they have the right to access basic services for health promotion, disease prevention, and treatment of acute or chronic illness. To this end, the faculty recognizes their social and professional responsibility to sanction access for health care through educational, leadership, political, and public service activities.

Education is a community responsibility shared by recipients and providers of health care, students, and faculty. Faculty is committed to creativity in the learning process and continuous quality improvement in curriculum and program development. Faculty facilitates the educative process, promote an environment for effective application of knowledge integration, stimulate critical thinking, and professionalism. Learning is a lifelong process. Students are active participants in their education and are accountable for developing personal and professional knowledge.

Professional nursing is educative, facilitative, and caring. Professional nursing practice is grounded in sound scientific and humanistic knowledge formed from a complex and diverse field of study. Furthermore, nursing practice is a collaborative endeavor, which promotes health and wellness in a variety of ways and settings. Nurses administer healing arts and support families through normative and tragic transitions. Professional nurses use knowledge integration from theories, research and practice to plan and deliver holistic client care. Decision-making, teaching-learning, research, therapeutic communication, and critical thinking processes are used by professional nurses.

Utilization of nursing knowledge is the major focus in the undergraduate curriculum in the development of beginning level practitioners. The undergraduate program prepares graduates to meet the present and emergent community health concerns at local and global levels. Throughout the development of the professional role, students learn to view the recipients of nursing care as individuals, families, groups, or communities within cultural and environmental contexts. The population distribution and geographical nature of Idaho mandates that graduates be proficient in rural and frontier nursing.

Graduate education is built upon undergraduate education. Students are prepared to assume advance practice roles by developing nursing knowledge through research, theory, and practice. At the graduate level, faculty and students contribute toward the application and elaboration of nursing theories to describe, explain, predict, and understand nursing phenomena. Graduate education facilitates learning environments where students can construct their own knowledge integration at an advanced level. Advanced practice nurses develop broad based knowledge and experience to facilitate or deliver personalized, holistic health care to clients over the lifespan in a variety of settings with emphasis on rural practice.

## **Ph.D. Program Overview**

The Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Nursing degree program will prepare the candidate to conduct independent research, collaborate as a scholar and leader, and educate for improving health and health care globally. The research emphasis is dedicated to extending the knowledge base of nursing and improving the delivery of health care for rural and vulnerable individuals, families and communities within existing cultural, geographical, and health care context. An interprofessional research focus provides an opportunity for students to advance science collaborating with other professionals in identifying research opportunities, recognition of the contribution of other disciplines to the improvement of health status, open channels of communication, and prepare graduates for leading change and advancing health and health care systems.

### **Ph.D. Program Goal**

The Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Nursing degree program is designed with a research emphasis dedicated to extending nursing science and improving the delivery of health care for rural and vulnerable individuals, families and communities within existing cultural, geographical, and health care context. An interprofessional research focus will provide an opportunity for students to learn by collaborating with other professionals, and prepare graduates for leading change and advancing health and health care systems.

### **Ph.D. in Nursing Program Outcomes**

Each student will complete a core curriculum and work closely with faculty to complete an individualized plan of study that fulfills the student's goals and develops the foundation for a program of research using online technologies integrating an interprofessional approach to:

1. Communicate scientific knowledge through mentorship, collaboration, and dissemination.
2. Create original research that contributes to scientific nursing knowledge.
3. Contribute to the development of methodologies congruent with the broad concerns of the nursing discipline.
4. Contribute to the discovery, application, and integration of nursing and interprofessional knowledge and leadership.

### **Ph.D. Program Curriculum**

The curriculum, with recommended course sequencing, for the full time and part time Ph.D. program is posted in the SON Nursing web site and in the Moodle Ph.D. Student Homeroom. Course descriptions are found in the [ISU Graduate Catalog](#). The SON may substitute a required course with an equivalent course offered through another department within ISU. Course sequencing may be subject to change based upon student enrollment. Students should work closely with his/her assigned Faculty Advisor (FA) upon admission and throughout enrollment to establish a Plan of Study (POS) which is updated each semester by the student and approved by the FA. Students are admitted on full or part time status and are required to maintain the established POS until graduation unless approved by his/her FA and the Director of Graduate Nursing Studies.

Ph.D. students can petition to have up to 15 graduate level credits approved to meet curriculum requirements for the Ph.D. program excluding the Dissertation course credits (NURS 8890), comprehensive examination, and dissertation proposal options. Transfer credits taken more than five years or more are not recommended. Request for transfer credits MUST be received by the SON Graduate Nursing Studies Council (GNSC) and the Graduate School within the first year of enrollment. The student must petition by course to have these credits reviewed by the SON GNSC for approval. If the credits are approved through the SON GNSC, the petition is forwarded to the Graduate School for review and approval to meet curriculum and degree requirements. The student must work closely with his/her FA in the SON to complete this process.

## **Advisement**

Upon admission, each student is assigned a faculty advisor (FA). The student is expected to meet with his/her FA early in the first semester and at the beginning of each semester thereafter. In collaboration with his/her FA, each student develops a POS that constitutes a unified program, planned within the framework of the established curriculum for the Ph.D. program. Once selected, the Dissertation Chair becomes the student's FA. Formal communication occurs through the student's FA/ Dissertation Chair, and/or Director of Graduate Studies as appropriate to support student progress.

## **Qualification and Selection of Faculty Advisors**

Faculty Advisors must hold Full or Allied Graduate Faculty Status. The FA may or may not have specific expertise in the area of the student's anticipated dissertation interests. If the FA becomes the student's Dissertation Committee Chair, this individual must hold Full Graduate Faculty status.

## **Role of the Faculty Advisor**

The FA plays an important role in orienting the student to the SON and the program, assisting with the initial POS and clarification of goals, helping the student to structure a meaningful and integrated learning experience, and monitoring the student's progress in adjusting to doctoral study.

The specific responsibilities of the FA to the student are to:

- Interpret the doctoral program's design, requirements and policies.
- Assist in planning objectives for doctoral study and clarifying career goals.
- Assist in developing the student's original and ongoing POS in accordance with program degree requirements, individual dissertation interests and career goals.
- Assist with selection of appropriate elective courses to create a program of study supportive of the student's dissertation interests and career goals.
- Monitor student progress through verification of completion of coursework and progression in required nursing and elective courses as indicated in established POS.
- Communicate with the student on a regular basis and assist the student to identify strategies for success in the program.
- Advise the student in the identification of a dissertation Chairperson appropriate to the student's area of research.

## **Student Responsibilities with Respect to Advisement\***

The student is responsible for:

- Becoming familiar with and complying with all relevant policies and procedures as set forth by the SON, GNSC, GS, KDHS, and ISU. Policies related to the GS can be found at the GS website at <http://www.isu.edu/graduate/> or in the Graduate Catalog at <http://coursecat.isu.edu/graduate/> which is updated yearly. ISU policies and procedures can be found at <http://www.isu.edu/policy/>
- Communicating each semester with his/her FA regarding progress, goals and plans, including problems that delay completion of the degree requirements to the FA in a timely manner.
- Selecting a Dissertation Committee Chair no later than the end of fall semester year 2 in consultation with the FA.
- Initiating contact with the faculty whom he/she is considering as Dissertation Committee Chair.
- Selecting and initiating contact, with the approval of the Dissertation Committee Chair, members of his/her Dissertation Committee.

**\*Note:** Reference to deadlines presented in this PhD Handbook are based on a full-time admission status and Plan of Study. Determination of deadlines will be modified based on part-time status and the established Plan of Study.



### **Procedure for Changing Advisor, Dissertation Chair or Committee Composition**

When a graduate student seeks a change in his/her FA, Dissertation Committee Chair, or Dissertation Committee composition, the following procedure must be followed:

1. It is highly recommended that the student speaks first with his/her FA/Chairperson prior to requesting a change. The student must submit to the SON Director of Graduate Studies a written request for change of FA, Dissertation Committee Chair, or Dissertation Committee composition. This request shall contain the rationale on which the request is based and may include a request by the student for a specific replacement of committee member(s).
2. The Director seeks input as appropriate from committee members and course faculty. If the SON Director of Graduate Studies accepts the rationale, and if a qualified replacement is secured, the Director will document final approval in the student's file.
3. Should the SON Director of Graduate Studies not agree to the proposed change and the conditions thereof, and if no compromise acceptable to all parties can be reached, the matter shall be arbitrated by the GNSC. Such arbitration may need to consider the question of ownership of the components of the dissertation already undertaken by the student under the supervision of the Dissertation Committee Chair.
4. Any student appeal of the decision in this regard shall be directed to the Director of Graduate Studies in the SON.

### **Final Program of Study**

The Final Program of Study lists all course requirements that must be completed by the student in order to receive the Ph.D. degree. A Final Program of Study form must be completed by the student based on all coursework to be completed through to graduation, inclusive of 12 dissertation credits. The Final Program of Study is electronically signed by the student and submitted to their Dissertation Chair for review and signature. The signed form is then forwarded to the SON Director of Graduate Studies for required signatures and then to the Graduate School for final review and approval. The final Program of Study must be submitted and received by the Graduate School according to Graduate School posted deadline, usually found at <http://coursecat.isu.edu/previouscatalogs/2020-21/graduate/generalinfoandpolicies/proceduresummary/>.

### **Electives**

A minimum of (6) elective credits at the graduate level in courses relevant to the student's identified area of research or professional role is required. An independent study (NURS 6636 Special Problems) does not serve as an elective unless approved by the GNSC using the petition process. With the guidance of the FA or Dissertation Committee Chair, students choose elective courses in areas relevant to their dissertation subject, methods or population or that develops their achievement of professional role. The courses must be graduate level (5000-8000) and must be taken for a letter grade. Students may take additional graduate courses in the SON or in other departments as electives. A course from another institution for credit can be taken as an elective; the course description and syllabus must be reviewed and approved by the student's FA/Dissertation Chair. Each elective is documented on the student's POS.

### **Approval of Special Problems or Independent Study Courses**

Students may elect to take Special Problems (Independent Study) courses in the SON or in other departments on campus to further enhance their research or professional role preparation. Enrollment in Special Problems courses requires approval of the FA and completion of the Special Problems learning contract. The contract must include learning objectives for the semester and identification of measurable goals or outcomes to be accomplished. The student can petition (using ISU SON petition form) to have an independent study approved to meet an elective requirement on a case by case basis.



## **Grading System**

The SON has delineated the following grading system:

A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
<u>B</u>	<u>83-86 Must pass all courses with a “B” or higher</u>
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 and below

## **Student Progression Policy**

Students enrolled in all graduate programs must achieve a B or higher in all required courses and electives toward the degree based on the POS to progress. If a student receives a B-, C+, C or C- in any one required course or elective, the student will be initially placed on probationary status. At the discretion of the GNSC, a student may be required to retake a course in which a B- or less was achieved. If the student receives a second B-, C+, C or C- in any additional required course or elective, the student will be dismissed from the program. Any student who receives a D or F in any required course or elective based on the Plan of Study will be dismissed from the program.

A grade point average of 3.0 must be maintained for progression in the Ph.D. degree program. If the FA/Dissertation Committee Chair in the SON determines that a student is not making satisfactory progression toward the degree, a request may be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies to place the student on probation. Unsatisfactory progress may include; unsatisfactory grades, incomplete grade not completed by the subsequent semester, failure to maintain communication with FA or Dissertation Committee Chair, failure to maintain documentation requirements in the Ph.D. Student Homeroom, and/or failure to successfully complete any component of the Ph.D. program. Failure to maintain any requirements may result in dismissal from the graduate program in the SON.

See the GS home page at <https://www.isu.edu/graduate/>; and Graduate Catalog at <http://coursecat.isu.edu/graduate/> for further information.

## **In Progress Grades (IP) for NURS 8890 Dissertation credits**

See ISU GS policy for in-progress grades at:

<http://coursecat.isu.edu/graduate/generalinfoandpolicies/courselevelcreditsgrading/>

Students receive an IP for NURS8890 dissertation credits until the dissertation is completed. After the dissertation is completed (final written document and successful final defense) in the final semester of study, the student will receive a grade for all NURS 8890 credits. The Dissertation Chair will complete the *ISU Change of Grade Form* to have the grade recorded for all NURS 8890 credits.

If expectations for the dissertation are not met by the student per the Dissertation Guidelines during the enrollment in NURS 8890, consideration for progression in the Ph.D. program will be evaluated through the GNSC based on failure to meet expectations of the Ph.D. as outlined by the student and Dissertation Chair and committee members. Failure to complete IP grade and/or earning an unsatisfactory grade in NURS 8890 constitutes grounds for dismissal from the graduate program.

### **Incomplete Grades (I)**

See the GS catalog for the ISU GS policy for incomplete grades found at:

<http://coursecat.isu.edu/graduate/generalinfoandpolicies/courselevelcreditsgrading/> . Please be aware that an incomplete grade may change the POS and/or targeted date of graduation.

### **Waiver of Course or Deviation from Published Curriculum**

A student may petition, using the *Departmental Graduate Petition form* to waive existing requirements, or deviate from the published curriculum for any one option in the graduate program. The student FA, SON GNSC, and the SON Director of Graduate Studies must approve such petition. Some waivers may require approval through the KDHS and/or University Graduate Council approval. The student completes a petition form. The written petition for waiver/deviation is to be accompanied by supporting material which is detailed on the petition form. Only a complete petition will be reviewed by the GNSC. The petition is forwarded by the student to their FA for consideration and signature. The petition is then posted by the FA in the GNSC meeting file for review by the GNSC. The FA is to make a request to the Director of Graduate Studies to place this item on the agenda for the next GNSC meeting. The petition will be placed on the GNSC agenda for consideration and outcome determination. Once the decision is made by the GNSC, the outcome is documented on the petition form by the FA and submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies for signature. Decision on such matters are documented in the student's file, and information as appropriate is forwarded to the KDHS and/or Dean of the Graduate College by the Graduate Administrative Assistant 1 in the SON. The student is notified by the SON of the outcome of the petition process. A copy of the completed petition with outcome documented on the petition form, is maintained in the student file. See "Ph.D. Program Curriculum" section of this handbook for the process to petition the transfer of previously completed course credits to meet required Ph.D. coursework.

### **Leave of Absence**

A student needing to take a brief period of time off from doctoral studies for an appropriate reason may request a Leave of Absence (LOA). It is recommended that the student first meet with his/her FA to discuss options. The student must have completed at least one semester in good standing (minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0) prior to making the request. The *ISU SON Request for Leave of Absence* form must be completed, submitted, and approved by the FA and forwarded to the SON Director of Graduate Studies for final decision. Examples of appropriate reasons to request a LOA are: personal illness, pregnancy complications, illness in the family, or unexpected financial crisis requiring the student to work additional hours. A LOA may be granted for no more than two semesters. The student is expected to re-enter the program according to what was outlined on the *ISU LOA Request for Leave of Absence* form. Failure to do so may place the student at risk for losing his/her seat in the program. Should the student wish to extend the leave of absence beyond the agreed upon time but still within the two semester limit, he/she must submit an additional *Request for Leave of Absence* form. If the student wishes to re-enter sooner than agreed upon, she/he must submit the request via email directly to the SON Director of Nursing. Re-entry to the program prior to or later than the timeline established in the initial *Request for Leave of Absence* cannot be guaranteed.

Once the LOA time limit is exceeded, the student will be considered dropped from the program and must apply for readmission to the university, GS, and the SON and will be considered in competition with other applicants to the program. The student may need to retake classes. The SON Director of Graduate Studies will notify the student, FA/Dissertation Committee Chair and GS if a doctoral student has been approved for a LOA.

### **Policy on Medical or Other Withdrawal**

Students wishing to withdraw completely, medically or otherwise, after the established deadline for withdrawals (see current academic calendar) should contact their FA in order to determine available

options (i.e. incomplete, L O A , medical withdrawal, staying enrolled). If the student makes the decision to pursue a medical withdrawal, the ISU SON adheres to all written policies related to medical withdrawal at the university level. Please see the ISU policies on medical withdrawal in the ISU Student Handbook located at: <https://www.isu.edu/registrar/student-resources/> and the [ISU GS catalog at http://coursecat.isu.edu/graduate/generalinfoandpolicies/](http://coursecat.isu.edu/graduate/generalinfoandpolicies/).

Any student that withdraws from the ISU SON graduate program related to medical reasons will be required to submit a formal petition to the Director of Graduate Studies to request readmission to the graduate program. The petition must be received within three months of planned date of intent to return to the graduate program. The GNSC will review student progression given intent to return and determine if there is space available to re-enter the program in which the student was enrolled. There is no guarantee of placement; re-entry into the program will be determined based on space availability. All students will be evaluated for progression and may be required to repeat a course or remedial work prior to readmission to any option. The student may be required to submit a letter from a licensed professional indicating medical clearance to return to the graduate program. The Medical Withdrawal Application Form is located at the following website: <http://www.isu.edu/healthcenter/forms/>

Any student that withdraws from the IUS SON graduate program for reasons other than medical reasons and wishing to re-enroll in the SON is required to submit a formal petition to the SON Director of Graduate Studies to request readmission to the graduate program. The petition must be received within three months of planned date of intend to return to the graduate program. The Petition must include the reason for withdrawal and specific plan for academic success if approved for re-enrollment. The GNSC will review prior student performance progression and written petition. The student will be evaluated for progression and may be required to repeat a course or remedial work prior to readmission to any option.

The student will receive a letter from the Director of Graduate Studies regarding decision made on re-entry within 15 working days of receipt of letter of intent to return to the graduate program in any fall or spring academic semester. If the student submits a letter of intent to return during the summer session, a letter of decision may not occur until the fall or spring academic semester begins.

### **Student Responsibilities Related to Completion of Degree Requirements**

The student is expected to:

- Take an active part in planning his/her POS , including selecting appropriate elective courses and updating the POS each semester. The student is responsible for submitting an updated POS each semester to the FA for review and signature.
- Submit any petitions required for approval of courses to meet curriculum requirements within the first year of enrollment.
- Check transcript at the end of each semester to be certain that courses are listed correctly and grades are reported. If an error was made in enrolling or a grade is missing, it is the student's responsibility to follow-up with the completion of appropriate form(s) or to notify the instructor that the grade must be filed. This includes courses taken through any other institution.
- Complete any incomplete coursework by the end of the next full semester of enrollment or by an earlier deadline mutually agreed upon with course professor.
- Maintain continuous enrollment after the student initially enrolls in NURS8890, the Dissertation or Three Manuscript Option. (See section on Continuous Registration Requirements).
- Maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 on a 4 point grade scale and per ISU GS policy.
- Meet all Dissertation or Three Manuscript Option requirements based on established guidelines.

- Submit all necessary forms at the appropriate time.
- Submit changes of name, address, phone or email in writing to the advisor, to the SON Graduate office, and online through Bengal Web.
- Participate in the program evaluation process via completion of instructor and course evaluations, surveys, or other as requested by the SON and/or the ISU GS.

### **Length of Time to Complete Requirements**

The student is expected to follow the POS established in the fall of the year of admission. The expected time for completion of the Ph.D. program is expected to be 6 semesters (3 years) when enrolled full time. The expected time for completion if enrolled part-time is five years. Student progress including completion of all courses in the established curriculum and elective courses is the responsibility of the student, supported by the FA/Dissertation committee Chair. Prolonged time to degree beyond the expected time will result in action ranging from counseling by the FA, Dissertation committee Chair, and/or SON Director of Graduate Studies, to consideration for dismissal from the program. Unsatisfactory academic progress could result in temporary ineligibility for any Teaching Assistant, Graduate Student Research position(s) or other award. Per GS policy, it is anticipated the dissertation is completed within 5 years of the comprehensive exam (refer to Credit Time Limits policy at <http://coursecat.isu.edu/graduate/generalinfoandpolicies/courselevelcreditsgrading/> ).

### **Continuous Registration Requirements**

Students are expected to enroll each semester from admission through graduation. All doctoral students must maintain enrollment and follow the Plan of Study. Once the student has enrolled in any NURS 8890 Dissertation credit, the student is required to maintain continuous enrollment, excluding the summer semester, until they have completed their degree/graduated.

Students who, for compelling reasons, wish to interrupt their work on projects, theses, or dissertations may request, in writing, a leave of absence (refer to Leave of Absence policy above). The academic clock does not stop during the violation of the continuous enrollment policy.

Graduate students who fail to meet the continuing registration requirement will be judged to have dropped out of their programs and will no longer enjoy access to university resources, including the library and computer facilities. To regain access to university resources, students will be required to reapply to the GS and be readmitted. A corollary of this requirement is that a graduate student must be registered for at least one graduate credit in order to take a final oral examination or be processed for graduation. Any student who registers for the required credit and then subsequently drops the credit, will be considered in violation of this policy. See ISU GS policy for continuing registration for graduate students at: <http://coursecat.isu.edu/graduate/generalinfoandpolicies/courselevelcreditsgrading/>

### **Dismissal from the Graduate Nursing Program**

Dismissal from the School of Nursing graduate programs follows the policies and procedures of the ISU Graduate School. These may be found at <http://coursecat.isu.edu/graduate/generalinfoandpolicies/appealsanddismissals/>. The following will constitute grounds for dismissal from the graduate program:

- Failure to complete and update as necessary all requirements of the Graduate Program. These include required health documents.
- Background check results that make the student ineligible to complete clinical research and course requirements.
- Failure to meet grade requirements as detailed in the progression policy.
- Failure to complete any course according to SON progression policy
- Failure to maintain a 3.0 grade average.

- The academic judgment of two thirds of the graduate faculty in the SON that the student is not making satisfactory progress in the program, and such judgment is recorded by formal vote of the GNSC.
- Violation of academic, ethical, or professional standards of nursing practice and the SON, including plagiarism and cheating. Violations of plagiarism or cheating related to GS work do not proceed through the Student Conduct Process.

If the student disagrees with the dismissal from the Graduate Nursing Program, the student can choose to move forward with a formal appeal process, outlined in the GS catalog.

**Of Note:** the SON Associate Dean is the equivalent to the Dean of the Academic College and Academic Dean.

### **SON Student Concerns and Formal Complaint**

*This process excludes final course grade appeal or dismissal appeal- see separate sections of this Handbook*

A formal complaint is a written letter or email communication, which includes a statement of fact and rationale for a claim of difference in opinion, judgement or evaluation by a student, faculty, staff or community member, regarding an issue involving the university, a university program(s), individual, or circumstance at or about the university. Formal complaints are managed as directed by university policy in the University Student Handbook, the ISU Faculty/Staff Handbook, the GS Catalog, and the SON Faculty Staff Handbook, Undergraduate Student Handbook, and the Graduate Student Handbook. A formal complaint in all SON programs is a written document that provides a clear, substantive statement of the issue and supportive documentation of fact. A formal complaint can be submitted to a course instructor, program administrative personnel based on chain of command, Associate Dean, or Dean. Any complainant is encouraged to first attempt to resolve a concern/complaint through direct conversation with those involved and/or at the appropriate level of administration before taking formal, written action in the form of a formal complaint. Should resolution not be possible, the complainant can file a formal, written complaint according to the process herein.

### **Student Formal Complaints**

A formal complaint is resolved with the student attempting to resolve the complaint with the faculty/instructor responsible for the course, policy, procedure, or decision that resulted in the complaint/grievance. The student will make an appointment to meet with the faculty/instructor to discuss the student's concern as soon as the problem is identified. Documentation of the meeting (including written narrative of the student's problem, disagreement or issue) and result of the meeting will be placed in the student's permanent file. The student will receive a copy of this documentation. If a mutually agreeable resolution cannot be reached with the faculty/instructor and there is clear documentation that the student and faculty/instructor cannot reach a resolution, the student needs to make an appointment with their advisor to discuss next steps. The faculty advisor can discuss plans and help guide the student to resolution of any complaint. The student then can move to the administrative faculty to discuss the issue according to chain of command and organizational structure based on organizational chart in the SON. The student should bring copies of all documentation and the plans for action he/she would like to take to seek resolution. If the student is unable to resolve the complaint, the student can proceed through the chain of command following the same process to the point of the Dean. If a settlement cannot be reached and the student wants to pursue acceptable resolution, the Dean shall appoint a committee of three (3) faculty members who are not directly involved in the student's situation. This committee will meet within five (5) days of its appointment. The function of this SON ad hoc committee is to hear the student's concern and the faculty's response and make a recommendation within 24 hours to the Dean. The Dean will make a final decision on the student complaint. The Dean will meet with the student and discuss his/her final decision. If a settlement cannot be reached and the student wants to

pursue acceptable resolution, the student may proceed to the Division of Health Science Scholastic Appeals Committee (in the case of a grade appeal) and follow the appeals process established at the KDHS level.

A formal complaint process beyond the Associate Dean of the SON will be handled according to university policies (and GS policies as appropriate) and then to the Idaho State Board of Education policies (see links below).

Policy on student complaints and grievances can be found in the ISU Student Handbook at <https://www.isu.edu/media/libraries/student-affairs/Student-Handbook.pdf>

ISU Graduate Council policies can be found at: <http://coursecat.isu.edu/graduate/generalinfoandpolicies/appealsanddismissals/>

Idaho State Board of Education Complaint procedures can be found at: <https://boardofed.idaho.gov/higher-education-private/private-colleges-degree-granting/state-authorization-reciprocity-agreement-sara/complaint-procedures/>  
(All student grievances must exhaust institution's dispute resolution processes first)

### **Final Course Grade Appeal**

The SON adheres to the policy and procedure of the Graduate School for course grade appeals, found at <http://coursecat.isu.edu/graduate/generalinfoandpolicies/appealsanddismissals/>. If a student disagrees with a final grade assigned in a course, the professor of that course is the first point of resolution. If the instructor agrees to make a grade change based on evidence submitted by the student, the grade is changed using standard procedures. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the meeting with the professor of the course, the student can choose to move forward with the formal appeal process, outlined in the GS catalog. Written appeal must be submitted to the SON Director of Graduate Studies within 10 business days of when a final grade is posted in Bengal Web.

**Of Note:** the SON Director for Graduate Studies is the equivalent to the Department Chair role found in the GS policy.

### **Policy Regarding Participation in Commencement/Convocation Ceremony**

The student must successfully complete and pass all requirements for the degree set by ISU, SON, and GS and meet all ISU, GS and SON deadlines related to graduation in order to participate in SON convocation or ISU commencement ceremonies.

### **Other Information**

#### **Documentation**

All Ph.D. students will be required to complete the health documentation process. Students can access required health documentation information and/or forms in the SON Graduate Homeroom. All health related documentation must be completed and on file in the SON Graduate Homeroom See the Ph.D. Student Homeroom for required documentation and associated policies. Failure to maintain current documentation records in the Student Homeroom can result in dismissal from the Ph.D. program. Please note that if the dissertation study requires the student to be in a clinical setting, all requirements of the clinical setting must be documented and an affiliation agreement on file PRIOR to the student beginning the study.

#### **Background Checks**

All students must complete a criminal background check prior to beginning the program and yearly while continuing as a student. Results of the check will be released to and reviewed by the Associate Dean,

designated administrative faculty, or the Office of General Counsel to determine if the criminal background check is “clean.” A “clean” background check is defined as an evaluation with no pending or past criminal charges described herein, or a charge determined to be a misdemeanor and occurring greater than seven (7) years ago. If the search is “clean” the student will be eligible for admission to and/or continue in the SON program. Any “hits” on the criminal background check will be reviewed confidentially by the Director of Graduate Studies and action will be taken as appropriate. The student may be dismissed from the program based on criminal background check and potential inability to complete degree requirements based on institutional/organizational policies extent to the SON and ISU.

### **Identification**

The student obtains an Idaho State University SON name tag through Campus Connections. A name tag with full name and identification is required to be worn when completing coursework or dissertation work on and off campus. Instructions for obtaining name tags are posted in the SON Graduate Homeroom.

### **Standards of Confidentiality**

Due to the personal nature of nursing and nursing education, students are bound to strict confidentiality expectations under all circumstances. Confidentiality is defined as private information confined to particular persons or groups. Confidentiality is a professional standard. The student will be required to sign the Acceptance of Responsibility for Access to Protected Information form found within the Contracts and Agreements section of the SON Graduate Homeroom in Moodle. Violation of the standards of confidentiality can place the SON and ISU at a significant legal risk; therefore, consequences can include dismissal from the nursing program. Students are bound to the standards of confidentiality related to HIPAA, and follow standards detailed in the *ISU SON Electronic Professionalism Policy* found in the SON Graduate Homeroom Policy folder in Moodle.

### **HIPAA Training**

All information relating to a client's health and/or personal status per the Health Information Privacy and Accountability Act (HIPAA) is confidential. HIPAA training is required **annually** by all nursing students. Instructions are posted in the Student Homeroom. HIPAA training requirements and process is posted in SON Graduate Homeroom. All students must complete HIPAA training by the established deadline. Students are required to sign a *\*Confidentiality Agreement Acceptance of Responsibility for Access to Protected Information* form which must be signed and posted by the student at the appropriate site in the Contracts and Agreements section of the Homeroom.

### **Affiliating Agencies**

Lab/clinical/practicum experiences and research are provided in a variety of health care settings/agencies. In all agencies where students have learning opportunities, the ISU SON must hold an affiliation agreement which provides for the student in a clinical site. An affiliation agreement between the agency and ISU must be on file in the SON before a lab/clinical/practicum/research experience begins. Identification of appropriate clinical sites and preceptors is a responsibility held by the student. In some cases, the student is required to set up a lab/clinical/practicum experience and must communicate with appropriate faculty and staff who will facilitate the affiliation agreement process in the SON. Students may not participate in learning or research experiences in any agency in which there is no affiliation agreement.

### **Code of Professional and Ethical Conduct**

Professional behavior is an essential part of each student's nursing education. The student enrolled in any program in the ISU SON has the responsibility to maintain professional conduct in both classroom and clinical/lab/practicum settings. Unprofessional behaviors that violate the *\*ISU SON Electronic Professionalism Policy* (found in Graduate Student Homeroom Moodle site) or any ISU policy in this regard can result in immediate dismissal from the graduate program.



Graduate students are expected to be accountable and responsible for professional and ethical behaviors outlined by the American Nurses Association in addition to, but not limited to: academic honesty in all activities, professional dress when representing ISU, and demonstration of respect for all individuals. Students are expected to communicate appropriately in every situation in which you are representing ISU. This includes but is not limited to faculty, staff, preceptors, patients/clients, peers and the community at large in any verbal, written or electronic communications.

### **Academic Dishonesty**

Academic integrity is expected of all individuals in academic settings. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and fabrication. Students in ISU SON must comply with ISU and GS Policy and Procedures regarding academic dishonesty. The consequence for academic dishonesty of any kind can be immediate dismissal from the SON graduate program. See GS policies in the Graduate Catalog at: <http://coursecat.isu.edu/graduate/generalinfoandpolicies/academicdishonesty/>

### **Sexual Misconduct/Harassment in External Lab/Practicum/clinical Sites**

There may be instances in external lab/practicum sites where a student feels he/she has been sexually harassed OR the student may be accused of sexually harassing another person. The SON expects the same appropriate conduct in external clinical sites as the university expects on campus. See the University Student Handbook. The student should contact their advisor with questions in this regard.

In the event there is reason to believe criminal conduct has occurred, i.e., such as sexual assault, battery, rape or attempted rape, etc., the student is to refer to the Student Handbook regarding action.

See ISU Student Handbook at:

<https://www.isu.edu/studenta/student-rights-responsibilities-and-advocacy/student-handbook/>

### **Important Resources**

#### **Instructional Technology Support**

Instructional technology (IT) support is provided through the ISU Help Desk at (208)282-4357 or [help@isu.edu](mailto:help@isu.edu). For assistance with Moodle, contact the Instructional Technology Resource Center (ITRC) at (208)282-5880 or [itrc@isu.edu](mailto:itrc@isu.edu)

#### **Library**

The ISU Health Sciences Library has a collection of the standard nursing journals and books that will be needed for the Ph.D. program. The student can access major databases for journal articles through the library. Interlibrary loan service is also available through the library. See SON Graduate Homeroom in the Research and Library Resources section for further information on library resources or go to the Library web site, <https://isu.edu/library/>

#### **Student Health Center**

The Student Health Center makes available a complete range of preventive, diagnostic and primary care therapeutic health services at little or no cost to registered ISU students. All registered and enrolled students are eligible to use the facilities.

### **Procedural Information**

#### **Change in Name/Address/Telephone Number**

It is the student's responsibility to maintain up-to-date contact information including name, address, and/or telephone number with each the following:

- GS
- Office of the Registrar
- SON Graduate program Administrative Assistant 1

To update your information, go to Bengal Web and select “Password and Account Management” from the home page

### **Status as a Licensed Registered Nurse**

All Ph.D. students must maintain current and unencumbered licensure as a registered nurse. Verification of a current license must be posted and remain current at all times in the SON Graduate Homeroom.

### **Student Health Insurance**

All students will be required to hold and provide proof of health insurance through the duration of the program. See Ph.D. Homeroom for specific information on provision of proof of health insurance requirement and contract.

### **Malpractice Insurance**

All students must purchase malpractice insurance through Idaho State University which is a component of the Cost of Attendance.

### **Financial Assistance**

Sources for student financial assistance vary from year to year. Many sources of funding are listed on the Financial Aid website:

<http://www.isu.edu/finaid/> and <https://www.isu.edu/financialaid/apply-for-financial-aid/graduate-students/>.

Students may contact the Financial Aid office at (208) 282-2756 for information on other sources of funding. If there are questions about Financial Aid, please access the Financial Aid office at

<http://www.isu.edu/finaid/>.

### **Registration/Enrollment Procedures**

Registration, payment of fees, and enrollment in classes are separate processes at ISU. Registration fees and other University charges are paid through

Bengal Web at <https://bengalweb.isu.edu/cp/home/displaylogin>.

For registration and enrollment assistance, please call the Registrar’s Office at 208-282-2661.

For information regarding payment of fees, please call the Cashier’s Office at 208-282-2900.

Students are responsible for checking their account online and making sure they do not have any outstanding bills. Students will receive an electronic registration bill at the email address they maintain on file in BengalWeb. Payments can be mailed, paid with cash, credit card, ACH, and installment loans. Students cannot register or graduate if there is an academic or financial hold placed on their account.

### **Enrollment in classes at ISU is completed online through BengalWeb**

Students will need their ISU student ID number (9 digit number) and password to enroll or access their records through BengalWeb. The student should meet with their Faculty Advisor each semester and review/update the POS.

## **Dissertation Committee, Final Comprehensive Exam and Dissertation**

The student is responsible for selecting a Dissertation Committee Chair no later than the end of completing 36 credits. The student selects the Dissertation Committee Chair with input from the FA. The FA can move into the Dissertation Committee Chair role if Full Graduate Faculty status is held by the FA. The dissertation product is developed based on current GS published guidelines for the Dissertation or the Three Manuscript Option guidelines in this handbook.

### **Role of the Dissertation Committee Chair**

The Dissertation Chair, once selected, becomes the student's FA (must hold Full Graduate Faculty status through the GS). The Dissertation Chair has the following responsibilities:

- Assist the student in developing a Dissertation Committee.
- Serve as the primary point of contact as the student prepares for the written comprehensive examination.
- Work closely with the student in development of the dissertation proposal and preparation for the dissertation proposal defense.
- Assume primary responsibility for guiding the student throughout the Dissertation (or Three Manuscript option) research process and completion of the Dissertation including selecting and delineating a research topic; preparation and presentation of the Dissertation proposal, IRB approval process, carrying out the research as proposed and approved; and developing the Dissertation, among other responsibilities to support progression.
- Documentation of the student's candidacy for the Ph.D. degree (successful completion of written comprehensive examination and approval of the dissertation proposal by Dissertation Committee vote).
- In conjunction with the student, determine his/her readiness to complete the Final Oral Defense of the Dissertation or Three Manuscript option.
- Work directly with student to set up time/date/place of the Final Oral Defense.
- Complete and forward the *Final Oral Defense Committee Report* to the Director of Graduate Studies at the completion of the Final Oral Defense.
- Communicate student concerns regarding progression to the Dissertation Committee, GNSC and/or Director of Graduate Studies as appropriate.

### **Qualification and Selection of Dissertation Committee**

The student will develop a Dissertation Committee by the time they have completed 36 credits. The committee shall consist of the following members:

1. Committee Chair is a full time member of the SON faculty (must hold Full Graduate Faculty Status) with expertise in an aspect(s) of the student's area of research.
2. Second member (Full or Allied Graduate Faculty Status) selected from the SON faculty.
3. Third member from faculty in KDHS (Full or Allied Graduate Faculty Status) or someone outside of the KDHS as appropriate to the dissertation topic and approved through the GNSC.
4. Graduate Faculty Representative (GFR) approved through the GS.

The student will work directly with the Dissertation Committee Chair in forming a full Dissertation committee no later than the time the student has completed 36 credits (end of Fall, second year if enrolled full time). The choice of Dissertation committee members is based on mutual agreement between the Dissertation Chair and the student. A current CV/resume is required from any member who is not a faculty member of ISU. The GFR represents the GS on the examining committee and is responsible for reporting the results of graduate examinations to the Dean of the GS.

Once committee membership is determined, The *Nomination of Dissertation Doctoral Committee* form must be completed by the student. If the student elects to use the Three Manuscript option, the *ISU*

*SON Nomination of Three Manuscript Option-Doctoral Committee* form is used instead. The Dissertation Chair posts the completed form and non-ISU faculty CV's in the GNSC folder for the next meeting of the GNSC, and requests the committee review for approval be placed on the GNSC agenda through the SON Director of Graduate Studies. The final committee membership will be reviewed for approval through the GNSC. Once the dissertation committee is approved through the SON GNSC, the GNSC enters the approval date and vote tally. A copy is sent to the student and the Graduate School and another placed in the student file. It is the student's responsibility to ensure the process is completed.

### **Role and Responsibilities of the Dissertation Committee**

The Dissertation Committee, selected on the basis of experience relevant to the student's proposed Dissertation research, serves in an advisory capacity to the student. The Dissertation Committee ensures that the Dissertation research and written dissertation are of sufficiently high quality to demonstrate to the scientific community at large the student's competence as an independent researcher. Member(s) of the dissertation committee serve to evaluate the written comprehensive examination, dissertation proposal, and Final written and oral defense of the Dissertation or Three Manuscript Option.

The responsibilities of the Dissertation Committee are to:

- Advise the student as appropriate on dissertation research plan and the written dissertation proposal.
- Review the written comprehensive examination and make a determination of PASS or NO PASS.
- Hear the oral dissertation proposal presentation. The student must have a majority of the Dissertation committee membership approve the proposal prior to progressing forward in the Dissertation research or Three Manuscript option.
- Be available to the student for consultation regarding the Dissertation while in process.
- Read the Dissertation and, when appropriate, designate the Dissertation to be defensible.
- Members of the Dissertation Committee are members of the student's Final Oral Defense (Examination) Committee.
- Hear the Final Oral Defense of the Dissertation or Three Manuscript option and make a determination of PASS or NO PASS.

### **Written Comprehensive Examination**

Upon completion of Ph.D. curriculum coursework or near the end of the last semester of coursework, the student must take the comprehensive examination to assess his/her readiness to begin the doctoral Dissertation. The written comprehensive examination is graded PASS or NO PASS. The written comprehensive examination is graded by the Dissertation Chair and the two members of the student's Dissertation committee. Following completion of the written comprehensive examination based on SON established guidelines, the Dissertation Chair documents the outcome of the examination using the *Ph.D. Program Written Comprehensive Examination Final Report* form found in the Ph.D. Forms Folder of the Graduate Faculty Homeroom. The signed document is placed in the student file.

The written qualifying examination will address the synthesis of all completed coursework and based on established program outcomes of the Ph.D. program. A successful PASS on the written comprehensive examination allows the student to move to doctoral candidacy once all of the required coursework (except NURS 8890) is completed.

The written comprehensive examination is to be completed in the final semester of required doctoral coursework preceding enrollment in Dissertation (NURS 8890). The written comprehensive examination will be completed based on established process within the SON and will follow a take-home format. Students will have 15 calendar days to prepare their response to the examination questions. Students must submit their examination by the published deadline. All exams will be judged as PASS or NO PASS. The

written qualifying examination will be graded by the three members of the student's Dissertation committee. Two "PASS" scores must be achieved to pass the examination. In the interest of providing students with feedback on their writing, all students who complete the written examination will receive the comments and be provided the opportunity to meet with the Dissertation Chair for a review of the examination grades.

The student must pass the written comprehensive examination before moving forward with the dissertation proposal oral defense. The Dissertation Chair has the responsibility of completing the *Ph.D. Program Written Comprehensive Examination Final Report* form following the outcome decision of the student's Dissertation committee, and providing this documentation to the Administrative Assistant 1 for Graduate Studies to be placed in the student's file.

The comprehensive examination may be repeated once. If the student does not PASS the written examination on the first attempt, re-examination must begin no sooner than 30 days and no later than six months (180 days) from the completion date of the initial examination. If the student fails the second attempt of the written examination, the student is dismissed from the Ph.D. program. The student must PASS the written comprehensive examination to move forward to the dissertation proposal defense.

### **Criteria for Passing the Written Comprehensive Examination:**

To pass the written comprehensive exam, the student:

- Provides answers that are complete, logical and responsive to the specific question(s) asked. All crucial aspects of the question are answered accurately and in detail.
- Writes a creative, independent, and original examination.
- Selects and applies a theoretical framework.
- Demonstrates an understanding of the research process. Implications are made which are valid and appropriate.
- Demonstrates the ability to analyze and synthesize knowledge from his/her readings and courses.
- Organizes material in a logical way that reflects synthesis of pertinent concepts.
- Creativity and originality are demonstrated to some degree.
- Cites relevant sources to support responses.

Plagiarism, copying and deception are reasons for failure. Suspected cases will be reported to the GNSC in the SON. See the GS catalog and the SON Graduate Studies Homeroom website for more information on academic integrity. Academic dishonesty can result in dismissal from the program and university.

### **Dissertation Proposal Oral Defense**

Once the student has passed the written comprehensive examination, the student can then move forward with the dissertation proposal oral defense. This is guided by the Dissertation Committee Chair. The student is required to present the dissertation proposal to all members of the dissertation committee with the exception of the GFR. The student must achieve approval of the Dissertation proposal from all Dissertation committee members (except GFR) prior to moving forward with implementation and completion of the Dissertation research.

The purpose of the Dissertation Proposal oral defense is to evaluate the merit, rigor and appropriateness of the student's Dissertation proposal. After the satisfactory completion of the following, the student is eligible to schedule the Dissertation proposal oral defense meeting:

- Completion of all required coursework
- Achieving a PASS on the written qualifying examination
- Development of a written research proposal which has had initial approval of the Dissertation Chair

The Dissertation proposal oral defense will require the student to:

- identify the primary research strand
- identify and describe the researchable problem and/or phenomena of study
- identify and defend the research design
- discuss the philosophical underpinnings that shape their view of the problem or phenomena
- discuss and appropriately apply a conceptual or theoretical framework
- provide a summative review of the literature
- describe and justify the proposed research methods/methodology (specific aims, study sample, study setting, measures/instruments, procedures, protection of human subjects, procedures)
- provide a discussion and summary that describes how the research will contribute to nursing science and shape nursing practice and/or the delivery of health care.
- If the student chooses the three manuscript option, the focus of each manuscript is described. The student must also provide a listing of potential peer reviewed journals appropriate for each manuscript, source and format for proof of submission and suggested co-authorship

### **Scheduling the Dissertation Proposal Oral Defense:**

- Prior to scheduling the Dissertation Proposal Oral Defense an approved (by Dissertation Chair) written proposal is required.
- When the Dissertation Chair is satisfied with the quality of the proposal, the student will distribute the proposal to the Dissertation Committee members for their feedback.
- After allowing *at least two weeks* for the Dissertation Committee members to read the proposal, the student should contact them for feedback.
- The student should discuss the feedback with the Dissertation Chair, make revisions and redistribute the proposal to the Dissertation Committee *at least two weeks* before the scheduled date for the Dissertation Proposal Oral Defense.
- The student, in consultation with the Dissertation Chair and the members of the Dissertation Committee, is responsible for scheduling the date and place of the Dissertation proposal oral defense. The GFR is not required to attend the Dissertation Proposal oral defense.
- The Dissertation Committee will evaluate the student's Dissertation Proposal and determine if the student is ready to move forward with the implementation of the dissertation by a vote of APPROVE/DISAPPROVE.
- The student must achieve a majority vote of approval of the dissertation committee to move forward with completion of the dissertation research. The Dissertation Committee Chair Completes the *Report on Dissertation Proposal Defense* form once the student has successfully completed the dissertation proposal defense.

### **Candidacy for Doctoral Degree**

Advancement to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree occurs after the student has successfully passed the written examination and has successfully completed the Dissertation Proposal oral defense. Students must bring to the dissertation proposal oral defense, a copy of the *Request for Advancement to Doctoral Candidacy* form. This form is completed by the Dissertation Chair and submitted to the Administrative Assistant I for Graduate Studies and the Director of Graduate Studies.

Once the proposal is successfully defended, the Ph.D. candidate may then enroll in NURS 8890 (Dissertation) and, after approval by IRB, begin implementation of the dissertation research. Students must be continually enrolled in a minimum of 1 graduate credit (excluding the summer semester) until and inclusive of the semester in which she/he successfully completes the Final Oral Defense of the dissertation or three manuscript option.

As per the GS policy, students who, for compelling reasons, wish to interrupt their work on projects, theses, or dissertations may request, in writing, a leave of absence from the GS. The academic clock does not stop during the leave of absence (refer to leave of absence section in this handbook). Graduate students who fail to meet the continuing registration requirement will be judged to have dropped out of their program and will no longer enjoy access to university resources, including the library and computer facilities. In order to regain access to university resources, students will be required to reapply to the GS and be readmitted. A corollary of this requirement is that a graduate student must be registered for at least one graduate credit in order to take a final oral examination or be processed for graduation. Any student who registers for the required credit and then subsequently drops the credit, will be considered in violation of this policy.

## **Dissertation**

The Dissertation or Three Manuscript option is required and should demonstrate an original and independent contribution to scientific knowledge in nursing. A dissertation based on the secondary analyses of data is acceptable if approved by the student's Dissertation Chair. The Dissertation must study an original research question, be based upon a sound conceptual framework, meet standards of rigor and scholarly interpretation, and reflect in depth understanding of the qualities and limitations of the data utilized.

It is the responsibility of the student to meet formatting requirements for the dissertation. The required format for the Dissertation can be found in the Thesis/Dissertation Manual on the GS website at: <https://isu.edu/graduate/current-students/graduation-information/>

An alternate format for the dissertation is the Three-Manuscript Option. This option requires the submission of three manuscripts on the original research completed as an outcome of the process. The manuscripts must be submitted to peer reviewed journals approved by the Dissertation Committee. The student is expected to keep the entire committee apprised of any significant changes to the planned manuscripts and their preparation. If the Three Manuscript Option committee decides that the Three Manuscript Option is no longer appropriate after the initial approval was granted, the student will be required to return to the traditional Dissertation format. The Dissertation committee, during the Final Oral Defense will judge the quality and acceptability of the three manuscripts and must agree that these are of sufficient scholarly quality and scientific merit such that they are suitable for publication.

### **Guidelines for the Three Manuscript Option:**

- The format of the Three Manuscript Option document should consist of an introduction of 5-10 pages describing the logical linkages between the three papers, followed by the three manuscripts (formatted according to journal guidelines) and then a concluding scholarly discussion of the implications and impact of these integrated findings on nursing knowledge.
- The manuscripts must be full-length articles (not abstracts, monographs, research briefs or short summaries).
- At least two of the manuscripts must be data-based. One of the three required manuscripts may be either a scholarly review of the literature or have a conceptual or theoretical focus. Deviation from these requirements must be approved by the Dissertation Committee.
- All manuscripts whether data based or not, must be prepared from start to finish under the supervision of the Dissertation Committee.
- The student must be the primary author on these manuscripts. Committee members may be listed as co-authors if contributions fall within publication guidelines.
- The three manuscripts including title, authorship, and journals for submission, are agreed upon by the student and Dissertation Committee.
- Manuscripts may be submitted for publication prior to the Final Oral Defense only with the full approval of all three Dissertation committee members.
- Upon successful completion of the Final Oral Defense, manuscripts are to be submitted to peer reviewed



journals either in nursing or other disciplines; evidence of manuscript submission as determined at the defense, is required prior to final Three Manuscript Option sign off.

### **Final Oral Defense**

The Final Oral Defense of the Dissertation or Three Manuscript Option will be completed in the final semester of the Ph.D. program. Each student must successfully complete a Final Oral Defense of the Dissertation or the Three Manuscript Option. The Final Oral Defense for the three manuscript option is identical to that of the traditional Dissertation.

The Final Oral Defense must be scheduled in the academic semester of the final year of study. The student is required to be enrolled in at least one semester credit during the semester (inclusive of summer) in which he/she defends the dissertation. If the defense occurs during the summer semester, all Dissertation Committee members must agree to review the written document and attend the defense. The student is required to be on campus (Pocatello or Meridian) to defend the Dissertation or Three Manuscript Option if the student resides within 100 miles of either campus. If the student resides outside the 100 miles may complete the oral defense on ZOOM. The student must have all technology working and ready to go at the scheduled start time of the defense. If technical difficulties occur on the date of the defense or in the process of completing the defense, the student would need to reschedule the Final Oral Defense.

The student completes the *Request to Schedule the Oral Defense* form and forwards this completed form to their Dissertation Chair for approval. Once signed by the student's Dissertation Chair, The Chair forwards the form to the Administrative Assistant I for Graduate programs in the SON to obtain a room assignment. The Administrative Assistant I will send out the notice of oral defense to all committee members and the GS.

The student must complete *Template Announcement of PhD* form for the Final Oral Defense, for the Dissertation Chair to post a minimum of two weeks in advance of the defense date. The defense is open to the public.

The student is expected to prepare and present a comprehensive power point presentation on the Dissertation or Three Manuscript Option for the Final Oral Defense. The areas detailed in the GS Guidelines provide a beginning guide to the final areas of content to be included in the presentation. The student should consult with the Dissertation Committee Chair for guidance in preparing the presentation. The candidate is expected to respond to any substantive and/or methodological questions raised during the Final Oral Defense. Dissertation Committee members including the Graduate Faculty Representative (GFR) are responsible for verifying that the completed Dissertation meets the criteria set by the SON and the ISU GS. Only the committee members and GFR will be allowed to be in the room and participate in deliberation of whether the student receives a PASS or NO PASS on the Final Oral Defense.

The Final Oral Defense must be completed with all members of the Dissertation Committee and the GFR present. The defense is rescheduled if any one member of the dissertation committee or the GFR is unable to attend for the entirety of the defense. The Final Oral Defense will be judged as PASS or NO PASS by the full Dissertation Committee and GFR. The student must achieve a PASS by a majority of the Dissertation committee in order to pass the final oral defense.

A student who does not pass the examination the first time will be permitted to retake the Final Oral Defense examination one time. Any re-examination must occur after 30 days from the initial oral defense but no later than 6 months from the date of the initial examination.

The outcome of the Final Oral Defense is documented by the student's committee Chair on the SON *Oral Defense Committee Report* form and placed in the student's file. Committee members and the GFR also

enter their individual decision of PASS or NO PASS using the electronic link provided by the GS.

Dissertation Committee members and GFR are responsible for verifying that the completed dissertation meets the criteria set by the SON and the ISU GS.

### **General Guidelines for the Final Oral Defense of the Dissertation or Three Manuscript Option**

- When the Dissertation (or Three Manuscript option, whichever is appropriate) Chair is satisfied with the quality of the written dissertation, the student can then plan for the Final Oral Defense.
- The student works closely with the Dissertation Chair to schedule the Final Oral Defense which will include all members of the Dissertation committee and GFR.
- When the Dissertation Chair is satisfied with the quality of the dissertation/three manuscript option, the student will distribute it to the Dissertation Committee members for their feedback.
- After allowing *at least two weeks* for the Dissertation Committee members to read the document, the student should contact them for feedback.
- The student should discuss the feedback with the Dissertation Chair, make revisions and redistribute the dissertation/three manuscript option to the Dissertation Committee *at least two weeks* before the scheduled date for the Dissertation Oral Defense.
- The Dissertation committee will evaluate the student's performance on the Final Oral Defense and will determine whether the student achieved a PASS or NO PASS. The student must pass with a simple majority of PASS votes
- The Final Oral Defense may be repeated once within 6 months of initial defense.
- The same Dissertation committee evaluates a retake of the Final Oral Defense. The student will PASS with a majority of the committee (inclusive of GFR) assigning a PASS. If the student is not successful on the second attempt of the Final Oral Defense, that student will be dismissed from the Ph.D. program.
- If the student is unable to take the examination on the specified date because of illness or other emergency, he/she must notify the Dissertation Chair as soon as possible, for approval to reschedule examination.
- The Dissertation Chair will be responsible for final verification that the completed written dissertation and Final Oral Defense meets the criteria set by the SON and the GS for an acceptable dissertation.
- The Dissertation Chair has the responsibility of completing the SON *Oral Defense Committee Report* form and providing this to the Administrative Assistant I for Graduate Studies and the Director of Graduate Studies following completion of the Final Oral Defense. A copy will be placed in the student file.

After the successful defense of the dissertation, the student must submit all appropriate documents to the GS within two weeks according to the directions found at <https://www.isu.edu/graduate/current-students/graduation-information/upload-thesis-dissertation/>.

Failure to submit the final Dissertation within two weeks of successful defense may delay graduation. If the required documents are not submitted within one year, the Dean or Associate Dean of the GS may declare the defense void and require that it be repeated.

### **Protection of Human Subjects**

Any scholarship/research conducted as an ISU graduate student must be reviewed through the Office for Research, the ISU Human Subjects Committee (HSC), Institutional Review Board (IRB). The link to the Office for Research is <https://www.isu.edu/research/>. The IRB determines if the project qualifies as research or not and the level of review required. The application is made using the Cayuse system. The

student is responsible for requesting access to Cayuse by contacting the ISU Office for Research. CITI training must be completed and a certificate obtained before access will be granted. Once access is approved for the student, the student completes the application for IRB review through the Cayuse system. The Dissertation Chair must review the IRB application in the Cayuse system, be listed as the faculty advisor, and then move the application forward through Cayuse to the IRB for review.

Once the Dissertation study has been approved through the ISU and facility (if applicable) IRB, the student can move forward with implementing the Dissertation research. Adherence to timelines and communication between the student and Dissertation Chair is critical to move this process forward in a timely manner.

Information on the Human Subjects project approval process, CITI training, and Cayuse IRB are available in the ISU Office for Research, Research Outreach and Compliance at:

<https://www.isu.edu/research/research-support/research-outreach-and-compliance/human-subjects/>

### **Application for the Ph.D. Degree**

The student is expected to apply for graduation through the GS. The application and a processing fee are submitted the first two weeks in the semester in which the student is expected to graduate. See <https://www.isu.edu/graduate/current-students/graduation-information/> for more information.

### **Graduation**

Primary steps to be accomplished to graduate include:

1. Development of an initial and ongoing POS.
2. Successful completion of all required courses.
3. Successfully passing the written comprehensive examination
4. Development of the Dissertation Committee.
5. Development and approval by the Dissertation Committee of the Dissertation Proposal.
6. IRB approval of the Dissertation Proposal through the Cayuse system.
7. Successful completion of the Dissertation study.
8. Successful completion (PASS) of Dissertation final written document and oral defense
9. Submission to the Dissertation Chair of a Final Program of Study. This Final Program of Study must be approved by the Dissertation Chair, signed, and forwarded to the SON Director of Graduate Studies.
10. Application for graduation and submission of associated fee.

The graduation checklist and other procedures can be found at:

<https://www.isu.edu/graduate/current-students/graduation-information/>