**PhD Nursing Student Handbook
Academic Year 2023-2024**

University of Massachusetts Boston
Robert and Donna Manning College of Nursing
and Health Sciences

PHONE: 617.287.7571

EMAIL: phdnursing@umb.edu

Table of Contents

1. **PhD Program Introduction**

This handbook provides important information about the PhD program in Nursing Science. It includes policies and procedures established by and specific to the PhD program in Nursing.

This handbook is designed to supplement the University's Graduate Handbook and Graduate Studies Catalog that contain material related to student rights, academic policies, registration, tuition, fees, financial aid, campus facilities, and course offerings. A full listing of university graduate requirements can be found in the Graduate Studies Catalog, primarily in the "Regulations, Procedures, and Degree Requirements" section. Students are responsible for being familiar with these requirements. Rules and procedures pertaining to the code of student conduct, confidentiality of academic records, resolution of problems, human subjects' protection, faculty conduct, and student governance are not reproduced in this handbook. http://catalog.umb.edu/

This handbook is subject to change. When updates occur, students will be notified in a timely manner by email.

Mission and Philosophy
University Mission
https://www.umb.edu/about/mission--values/

The University of Massachusetts Boston is a public research university with a dynamic culture of teaching and learning, and a special commitment to urban and global engagement. Our vibrant, multi-cultural educational environment encourages our broadly diverse campus community to thrive and succeed. Our distinguished scholarship, dedicated teaching, and engaged public service are mutually reinforcing, creating new knowledge while serving the public good of our city, our commonwealth, our nation, and our world. There are seven (7) values representing this mission: 1) inquiry, creativity, and discovery; 2) transformation; 3) diversity and inclusion; 4) engagement; 5) environmental stewardship and sustainability; 6) economic and cultural development; and 7) an urban commitment.

Robert and Donna Manning College of Nursing and Health Sciences

Our mission is to educate health and fitness professionals from diverse backgrounds to engage in building scholarly community with a special focus on health, and to provide substantial research, professional and community service.

Department of Nursing Mission

Department of Nursing: *Enhancing Health Equity and Quality: Populations and Policies.*
MISSION: The Mission of the Department of Nursing is to create an inclusive, student-centered learning environment that fosters innovation in research, scholarship, education, and service and prepares graduates to promote health equity and quality as professionals working in complex systems.
VISION: To be the premier leader in educating innovative nursing professionals committed to advancing health equity and achieving optimal population health in local, global and urban communities by the development and evaluation of health policies.
VALUES: Integrity, Inclusion, Diversity, Transparency, Transformation, Resilience, Relationships, Accountability, Collaboration, Equity, and Excellence.

The Population Health and Health Policy focus in the PhD Program in Nursing in the MCNHS , prepares graduates to explore Population Health/Health Policy research questions. Our PhD graduates obtain research skills to study phenomena in these highly related areas in order to attain the highest possible quality of life for populations, by means of nursing activities directed to promote or restore and maintain wellness across the life course and to prevent disease (Fawcett & Ellenbecker, 2015)

Our PhD program focuses on the intersection of nursing, population health and health policy, and prepares its graduates for leadership roles as researchers and educators who:

- Analyze historical, sociological, economic, political, and healthcare perspectives of population health issues and health policies.

- Evaluate health policies that influence the access, quality, and cost of healthcare delivery and nursing practice locally and globally.

- Generate theory-guided qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods research that advances Nursing Science with an emphasis in population health or health policy.

- Create innovative, evidence-based strategies to shape population health and health policy development at local, national, and global levels based on contemporary nursing and interdisciplinary research.

- Relate new inquiries, activities, and values to role development as a nurse scientist, steward of the discipline, and educator for the next generation.

Our PhD Graduates are prepared to meet the American Association of Colleges of Nursing expected outcomes of PhD Programs in Nursing as below:

Develop the Science: Assume leadership in the conduct of culturally competent scholarship to improve nursing practice (Master in-depth knowledge in a substantive area; Critique and integrate different science perspectives in the conduct of research; Communicate research findings to lay and professional audiences and identify implications for policy, nursing practice, and the profession)

Steward the Discipline: Integrate the components of scholarship: research, teaching, mentoring, and service to the profession (Communicate scholarship including peer-refereed publications and presentations for professional interdisciplinary audiences; Understand the evolving roles and responsibilities of a nurse scholar)

Educate the Next Generation: Contribute to a global community of scholars

2. Degree Requirements

PhD in Nursing Curriculum

All students are encouraged to meet with their academic advisor each semester to review course work completed and plan for future course work prior to registration time at the university (usually

October/November/ and March/April each academic year). The program director and assistant are always available to help with any questions related to courses and requirements (https://www.umb.edu/registrar/academic_calendar)

The PhD Nursing Program at UMass Boston collaborates with the PhD Nursing programs at the other four UMass campuses and the Exercise and Health Sciences PhD Program at the Robert and Donna Manning College of Nursing and Health Sciences at UMass Boston. Because of the collaborative nature of the PhD program in Nursing, some of the required courses are taught on one campus or the other. Students may be required to travelfrom one campus to the other. Students also may enroll in courses at any of the UMass campuses for elective credits.

Collaboration with faculty and students at UMass PhD programs who have similar research interests or expertise is encouraged. This collaboration enriches and expands the program within the UMass system. When registering for courses at other UMass campuses, students need to fill out an Intercampus Registration Form. It is delivered to the registrar's office for processing. The completed form should be submitted to the program assistant of the PhD Program for processing with the registrar.

Course Planner Procedure
Course Planners can be found on the Microsoft Teams Bulletin Board for PhD Nursing Students under Advising.

Program Statue of limitations (SOL)
The Robert and Donna Manning College of Nursing and Health Sciences specifies that a student must complete all degreerequirements within eight (8) calendar years of entering the program.

The PhD Faculty have decided that after January 1, 2019, students will only be granted a 6-month SOL extension with the program director and the Dean of Graduate Studies approval. The request must be put in writing with a rationale. But for now, students can take up to 9 months to complete their dissertation defense if supported by their chairs and the director (i.e., this time frame will realistically allow for completion.

Annual Reporting of Student Progress
At the end of each semester, the program director will review each student's transcript and assess the adequacy of each student's progress in achieving university and program objectives. Students will be required to complete a progress report annually in April the program director. If students are not progressing as expected within the SOL, the director in consultation with the Academic Advisors will prescribe a course of action to be completed in order for the student to return to good standing in the program. The program director will inform the student in writing that s/he is not meeting minimum academic standards and what the committee prescribes as corrective action.

Dual Degree Programs
BS-to-PhD obtaining Master's Degree (En Route Master's Degree) or Master's Degree

An En route MS degree can be awarded after completion of 30 credits in the PhD program and successful performance on the comprehensive examination. Students need to submit a degree application to

the office of the registrar to formally request the MS degree to be awarded upon fulfilling the requirements. Students receiving the En route MS degree will not be eligible for certification in an APN specialty without further didactic and clinical courses.

The 30 credits comprise 21 credits from the BS-to-PhD curriculum plus 9 credits required as part of the AACN essentials (NU 615 Advanced Health Assessment, NU 634 Advanced Pharmacology, and NU 614 Advanced Pathophysiology)

Note: An NP certification is offered if students choose to take an additional 18 credits after successful defense of their PhD dissertation. Please ask the PhD Program director for more details.

3. Courses and Registration

Academic Advising and Course Registration

The program director serves as a general advisor to all students. When entering the PhD program students are assigned to an individual academic adviser. The academic advisor will guide in choosing courses and staying on target with the curriculum plan until comprehensive examinations are passed. A course of study for the entire program is developed and placed on file with the academic adviser and in the PhD Program office. Each semester the plan will be reviewed with the student and revisions will be placed on file. Students taking courses need to meet with their academic advisor in the spring to plan for fall and in the fall to plan for spring during the designated time by the university calendar periods. Registration holds will be placed on each student and released after advisement is received. Student should access their WISER account to register for classes.

Course Load

Full-time students are expected to take at least nine (9) credit hours per semester. Full- time continuous students should complete all their course work by the second year of study. The university considers graduate students engaged in dissertation research to be full-time students, regardless of the number of dissertation credits for which they register, providing the program director certifies they are working full-time on research. A student may not take more than 6 dissertation credits in one semester.

Part-time MS- PhD students must carry at least six (6) credits per semester in each of the fall and spring semesters. Part-time students should complete their coursework in three years.

A student may take up to 15 credits during the fall and spring semesters and up to 9 credits in the summer. Any student who wishes to register for more than the maximum credit load must secure written permission from the program director and approval from the Office of Graduate Studies.

Grading Policy and Required Grade Point Average

	Grading Policy	
	Letter Grade	**Percentage**
	A	93-100%
	A-	90-92%
	B+	87-89%
	B	83-86%
	B-	80-82%
	C+	77-79%
	C	73-76%
	F	0-72%
	INC	A grade of Incomplete (INC) is not automatically awarded when a student fails to complete a course. Incompletes are given at the discretion of the instructor. They are awarded when satisfactory work has been accomplished in the majority of the course work, but the student is unable to complete course requirements as a result of circumstances beyond his/her control. The student must negotiate with and receive the approval of the course instructor in order to receive a grade of incomplete
	IF	Received for failure to comply with contracted completion terms.
	W	Received if withdrawal occurs before the withdrawal deadline.
	AU	Audit (only permitted on space-available basis)
	NA	Not Attending (student appeared on roster, but never attended class. Student is still responsible for tuition and fee charges unless withdrawal form is submitted before deadline. NA has no effect on cumulative GPA.)

Students are required to receive a grade of B or better in all courses. A student who fails to earn a grade of B or better in any course will be placed on probation. The student who does not meet the grade of a B or better must retake the failed course. Failure to achieve a grade of B or better through re-taking the course will result in a referral to the PhD program committee with consideration of dismissal from the program.

Independent Study Courses

Students may complete an independent study to fulfill required or elective credits. Independent study credits vary from one (1) to three (3) credits depending on the scope of the project. The independent study should consist of study and work at the graduate level with a specified written product. The faculty member or external expert who agrees to work with the student in independent study must be a recognized expert in the content area. If the expert is an external scholar a review of that scholar's CV will occur through the program director and a file will be kept including a detailed contract including goals, objectives, timeline, and number of credits for the intended deliverables of the independent study. The student and faculty member must agree to the UMass Boston number of credits, scope of the work and the amount of supervision required (for example, weekly or biweekly meetings). **A written agreement, signed by the student and the faculty member, must be approved by the program director or his/her designated advisor in all cases of independent studies** (see Microsoft Teams Bulletin Board for PhD Nursing Students).

Electives

Electives should enhance the student's competency to complete the dissertation requirement and have a research method focus. Electives should be chosen in collaboration with the student's academic adviser or the program director.

Courses offered by the Robert and Donna Manning College of Nursing and Health Sciences at UMass Boston, any of the campuses within the UMass system, or other PhD or Master's programs on either campus that are at the **600-level or above** and focus on research methods can be taken as electives. Each course will appear on the student's transcript with the course title and grade.

Students may take graduate level courses at other universities with the approval of the director of the PhD program. The student must make the request in writing and submit a copy of the course syllabus. Only six (6) credits from other universities outside of the UMass System may be applied to this program (see section on "waivers").

International Students

International students are required to register as full-time students (9 credits) each semester and maintain a 3.0 GPA. See the International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) site below for more FAQs.

Online Credits

Visit the International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) site at (ISSS) | Current Students - UMass Boston (umb.edu) for current information.

Leave of Absence (LOA)

The University requires that a student seeking a leave of absence must petition the program director who will provide justification for the request to the Dean of Graduate Studies.

An approved LOA extends the statute of limitations for degree completion by the length of the leave. Leave of Absence Policy - UMass Boston (umb.edu)

4. Academic Regulations

Academic Standing

Upon completion of all coursework, all degree-seeking graduate students must maintain continuous registration, also known as a program fee, until the degree sought by the student is formally awarded. Students can register for program fee (CAS 600) on the WISER online registration system. Continuous registration must also be maintained even when a student is on a leave-of-absence from the program.

Continuous registration requires a fee be paid to maintain matriculation. If for any reason a student does not register for courses or dissertation credits, he/she must maintain continuous registration per semester.
Failure to register prior to the registration deadline for the semester in which the student is registering may result in late fees and classification as an inactive student.

Incompletes in Course

A grade of "Incomplete" is not given automatically. A student must request a grade of "Incomplete" and receive approval from the instructor. The program requires that the student and faculty member complete an "Incomplete Grade Form," which will specify the incomplete work and an agreed upon timeframe for completion (see Microsoft Teams Bulletin Board for PhD Nursing Students). Both the student and the faculty member must sign the form and retain a copy. A third copy is filed in the PhD program office.

University policy requires that all coursework must be completed a year to the date the incomplete was

issued, or it will automatically convert to an IF (incomplete failure) which will affect a student's GPA. After a grade of "IF" is recorded, the student must re-register, pay tuition for the course, and complete all its requirements in order to receive credit and a grade. Receiving an IF may be grounds for immediate dismissal from the program.

To change INC to a grade, faculty must fill out the paper "Change of Grade form" found at the Registrar's Office. Submit to it to the Office of Registrar for processing. *INC forms are to be submittedby faculty and NOT students.*

Students with incomplete work in more than one course will not be allowed to enroll in courses until all incomplete work has been satisfactorily completed. Students with ANY incomplete are not eligible to take comprehensive examinations (see comprehensive examination guidelines).

Code of Conduct and Academic Integrity

It is the expressed policy of the University that every aspect of academic life--not only formal coursework situations, but all relationships and interactions connected to the educational process--shall be conducted in an absolutely and uncompromisingly honest manner. The University presupposes that any submission of work for academic credit is the student's own and is in compliance with University policies, including its policies on appropriate citation and plagiarism. These policies are spelled out in the Code of Student Conduct. Students are required to adhere to the Code of Student Conduct, including requirements for academic honesty, as delineated in the University of Massachusetts Boston Graduate Catalogue and relevant program student handbook(s). UMB Code of Student Conduct

Students are encouraged to visit and review the UMass website on *Correct Citation and Avoiding Plagiarism:* http://umb.libguides.com/citations

Transfer Credit Policy

University policy states that applicants/students who have completed graduate coursework at other accredited institutions may transfer those credits towards the completion of a graduate degree at UMass Boston. Up to the equivalent of six (6) credits from courses that meet the following requirements:

1. The student received a grade of B or higher
2. The course was not used to fulfill requirements for another degree
3. Course credit must have been earned no more than seven (7) years prior to the student's matriculation at UMass Boston.

The director of the PhD program in Nursing in collaboration with the student's Advisor, determine what credits are eligible for transfer based on a review of the official transcript and course syllabus at the time of admission to the program. Once enrolled in the PhD program, students can also request transfer credit. Requests should be made to the director and include a copy of the student's transcript and a copy of the course syllabus.

The student is responsible for having official course transcripts from other universities sent to the UMB Registrar.

Course Waiver Policy

A student may seek a waiver from a required course in the PhD program in Nursing if s/he has completed a course with substantially equivalent content at another institution or in another College at UMass Boston. If a course waiver is granted, the student will receive no credits towards degree requirements

and must take additional courses to complete the credits required for the PhD degree. Normally, a maximum of 6 credits can be waived toward a degree program. Six (6) credits can be waived for non-degree courses. Courses must have been taken at an accredited institution, no more than seven (7) years prior to matriculation at UMB and received a grade of B or better.

Course waivers will be decided on a case-by-case basis, through negotiation between the student seeking the waiver and the PhD program director in collaboration with the faculty who teaches the course. All waived courses require written approval of the faculty member and the director. Waivers are completed in triplicate: one copy for the student, the faculty member, and the program director. Appeal of a denied waiver may be made to the PhD program committee.

Advanced Standing

Advanced Standing is awarded to students who are admitted to a doctoral program in the same or related field of study. Advanced Standing may waive a maximum of 36 credits for students upon admission (with the exception of license-eligible programs requiring extensive proscribed credits).

Courses are waived course-by-course based upon equivalency and relevance. Courses must have been taken at an accredited institution, no more than seven (7) years prior to matriculation at UMB and received a grade of B or better.

The award of Advanced Standing cannot reduce the number of credits below 24 credits as part of the residency requirement including research hours and dissertation credits. Students who fail to complete their doctoral program cannot apply for their Advanced Standing master's courses for an additional master'sdegree from UMass Boston (see Program Office for Application).

College Stationery

College official stationery (pre-printed) is for official college business only. Student recommendations, student communications, letters to other agencies where administrators, faculty, and staff are representing the college or department as an agent of the university are acceptable.

Stationery is NOT to be used for individual grants, personal benefits and is NOT to be used by students for any reason.

Quinn Graphics provides print services to faculty, staff, and students. Click on the link below for a description of their services. https://www.umb.edu/quinn-graphics/

5. Comprehensive Examinations

Overview

The comprehensive examination is designed to determine the student's ability to think critically and apply the content of their course work in meeting PhD program goals. Successful completion of Comprehensive examinations admits the student to candidacy for the PhD degree. The comprehensive examination consists of two parts, one written and one oral. To be eligible for the examinations, students must be in good academic standing (GPA 3.0 and carrying at least 9 credits each semester if full- time or 6 credits if part-time) and must have fulfilled any incomplete required course work prior to the examination date.

The comprehensive examinations commence when students in the MS-PhD have completed all required coursework.

There are two options for comprehensive examination format, including the option of traditional 2 paper

process and the option of research portfolio.

Traditional 2 paper option

The process for the traditional 2 paper option is outlined below:

1. Students select a chair and a secondary member (two individual faculty members) who will review the two papers: one conceptual paper and one methodological paper
2. While this is not required, the secondary member should have expertise related to the student's area of research interest and must be a member of the faculty of the Robert and Donna Manning College of Nursing and Health Sciences.
3. Prior to meeting with the chair/secondary member, students must submit a detailed outline of the paper(s). Outlines must be submitted at least 1 week prior to meeting with the chairs. Outlines must clearly indicate where the two papers will differ. One revision of the proposed outline to be submitted to the chairs for final approval is acceptable.
4. **NOTE:** *THE FACULTY CHAIR OR COMMITTEE MEMBERS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO GUIDE OR SUGGEST CONTENT TO THE OUTLINE (THIS IS AN EXAMINATION); THE FACULTY WILL ONLY VERIFY THAT THE DIRECTIONS HAVE BEEN FOLLOWED AND THAT THE OUTLINE HAS ENOUGH DETAIL (SPECIFICITY) TO GENERATE COMPLETION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION.*
5. A detailed timeline must be provided to the chair, committee members, and the program assistant (see [Microsoft Teams Comprehensive Exam Group](#)).

Timeline
Note: Timeline for initiating Comprehensive Exam procedures will be determined on an individual basis. **Step 1:** Student and Chair collaborate on creation of the outline for each paper. **Step 2:** The Chair approves each outline and shares these with the second reader; the student then writes each paper independently (four weeks). **Step 3**: Student submits papers to Committee and PhD Nursing Program Office (two-week review). **Pass** – Student works with the PhD Program Assistant to schedule oral exam. **Conditional Pass** – Revise and resubmit in two weeks; Committee determines Pass or Fail within one week.

Fail – Do not progress – if a student fails the written exam, one retake of the written component is allowed within one year at the discretion of the Chair and Committee.
Step 4: Student participates in a two-hour oral examination.
    Pass – Proceed to take NU 899.
    Conditional Pass – Retake of the oral exam will be scheduled within one week; Committee will determine pass or fail.
    Fail – Student will not proceed to NU890; student is permitted one retake of the comprehensive exams within one year at the discretion of the Chair and Committee.

6. A Stage I form needs to be submitted to the program assistant (see [Microsoft Teams Comprehensive Exam Group](#)).
7. Students will work *independently* after the meeting with their chair.
8. There are two components of the examination: a written and oral component. The written component and oral component BOTH need to be passed to successfully move forward.
9. Students have a maximum of approximately one month (5 week days X 4 weeks= 20 days PLUS 8 weekend days =28 days total) to complete the papers. One hardcopy and an electronic copy of each paper must be submitted to the PhD program Office by dates determined by the faculty chair(s) and student.
10. Papers should be of publishable quality in terms of organization, format, and clarity of writing, synthesis, and critical thinking. The student's original analytic thinking especially in the area of ability to synthesize information is emphasized over extensive compilations and summaries of other literature.
11. Once both papers have been submitted, the chair and the secondary member and Standard Reader will have 2 weeks (10 weekdays and 4 weekend days) to review each paper after which time an oral examination is scheduled if the written component is passed successfully.
12. The oral component gives students an opportunity to clarify any areas in the written component as well as correct any errors made in the written component. It is also an opportunity for the faculty committee to ask further questions about content and process to be assured of the PhD student's understanding of what they have written.
13. Students are expected to make a presentation of no more than 15 minutes for each paper. Slides and/or handouts are recommended. The remaining time of the comprehensive examination will be devoted to questions and answers.
14. At no time should any component of the oral examination be audio recorded by the faculty or students unless permission is granted by both the faculty members and student.

The Comprehensive Exam form (**Stage 1**) needs to be completed and filed in the student file, which will include information regarding agreed topic for the exam, secondary member and dates for the oral defense (see [Microsoft Teams Bulletin Board for PhD Nursing Students](#) for Stage 1 form).

An electronic copy in PDF format of each paper must be submitted to the Chair, committee members, and the PhD Program Office by 5:00 P.M. Eastern Time on the due date (agree upon on the timeline), which must be no later than 4 weeks (28 days) following approval of the outlines.

The **Stage 2** form is completed in advance by the student and is given to the program assistant so that the Chair has it available the day of the comprehensive examination (see [Microsoft Teams Bulletin Board for PhD Nursing Students](#)). The Stage 2 form is the form that indicates the pass status of the comprehensive examination.

Each paper should be no longer than 15 pages in length (not including references, title page, abstract, figures or tables and written in accordance with guidelines (6th edition) issued by the AmericanPsychological Association (APA, 2009).
**1-inch margins throughout; Font Times New Roman 12; Double-Spaced
***Any paper that does not meet these specifications will be returned to students and comprehensive examinations may be delayed.

- The first paper will be a conceptual paper: a concept analysis, policy analysis, integrative review or state of the science paper on the identified area of inquiry. The specific topic will be

determined by the student in consultation with his/her PhD advisor/mentor (chair and secondary member).

- The second paper will be a discussion of either methods or measurement to the student's area of research interest, including possible designs, measures and analytical processes that can be applied to this area.

SEE MICROSOFT TEAMS BULLETIN BOARD FOR PHD NURSING STUDENTS FOR QUICK GUIDE TO COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS AND FOR FLOW DIAGRAM OF COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION PROCESS

Research Portfolio Option

The rationale for offering option of research portfolio for the Comprehensive Exam is to give students credit for applying conceptual/theoretical and research knowledge during their student tenure and encourage dissemination of research knowledge commensurate with the AACN PhD Program Outcomes.

Examples of scholarly products include 1st author published or in-press article in a peer-reviewed journal and submitted research proposal, with faculty oversight and from a faculty approved funding source. Scholarly products are valid only when they occur after the acceptance into the doctoral program and the topic must be relevant to the student's dissertation.

We recognize that not all students have the opportunity to publish scholarly papers during their student tenure; thus, we offer the option for the traditional 2 paper process OR a research portfolio option. To ensure a fair process between the two options, a point system has been developed which should reflect a comparable amount of effort (6 points total for each option).

Scholarly products are valid only when they occur after the acceptance into the doctoral program and the topic must be relevant to the student's dissertation.	Points
1st author published or in-press article in a peer-reviewed journal – (e.g., systematic review or data-based research paper, or theory application paper)	3
Submitted research proposal, with faculty oversight and from a faculty approved funding source	3
Traditional Comps Paper (Methods)	3
Traditional comps paper (Conceptual)	3
Any combination of above for a total of 6 points	

Progression

Successful completion of the comprehensive exam advances the student to doctoral candidacy. The examination is to be passed before the student enrolls in NU899, Dissertation Research. Papers required for the written component of the exam should guide and inform the substantive content and methodology used in preparation of the dissertation proposal.

Degree credentials (e.g., AD, BS, BSN, MS, MSN, PhD, EdD, DNP, DNSc) are commonly used and indicate completion of a particular educational program.

The highest degree attained is usually placed immediately after the last name followed by certifications, licenses, and fellowships. All or some of degrees can be used. Terms used to indicate partial completion of a degree or student status such as "PhDc (PhD candidate) or "ABD" (all but dissertation) are fabricated terms and are not to be used.

PhD or DNP candidates, should use the following convention:
Joanne Doe, MSN, RN (Doctoral Candidate OR PhD/DNP Candidate). See
APA http://www.apa.org/monitor/2016/09/misuse-phd.aspx for rationale.

6. **Dissertation**

The PhD dissertation is an original body of work in which the candidate demonstrates an in-depth understanding of a population health or health care policy research question that is relevant to individuals, groups, or communities. The dissertation should demonstrate the candidate's ability to effectively meet the goals and objectives of the program.

Although dissertation planning may begin early in the program, the dissertation process normally begins after the student has passed the comprehensive examination and has been admitted to candidacy. There are five (5) dissertation process forms that need to be completed across the dissertation stages (for forms see Microsoft Teams Bulletin Board for PhD Nursing Students).

Student successfully completes comprehensive exams	(FT/PT 39 credits in MS-PhD Programs OR FT 60 credits in BS-PhD Programs).

NU899
- Taken after successfully completing comprehensive exams
- See advisor for advising on how many credits students should register for NU899 (3 credits or 6 credits).

NU899 Dissertation Research
Dissertation credits represent the work being done in developing and defending a proposal and completing the work of the dissertation. This time varies to completion of the dissertation among students.

Program Fee (CAS 600)
After all NU 899 credits are completed, student should register for the program fee until the dissertation is defended. (See Academic Standing in handbook).

Stage or action	What it means	What is required	Signature required
Stage One: Notification of Candidacy	Student successfully completes all required courses and comprehensive exams.	No action needed from student.\n\nThe program assistant submits the form to the Office of Graduate Studies.	Graduate program director (GPD); Office of Graduate Studies
Stage Two: Notification of Proposed Dissertation Committee	With the guidance and advice of the selected chairperson, the chair identifies suggested committee members to the student.\n\nThis is done prior to the committee's approval of a student's dissertation proposal.	Student provides stage 2 form completed to GPD and program assistant.\n\nThe Program Assistant submits the form to the Office of Graduate Studies.	GPD; Office of Graduate Studies
Stage Three: Notification of Proposal Acceptance	When chairperson determines, a dissertation proposal is sent to committee members (allow 4 weeks to read 28 days).\n\nIf hearing is successful – student proceeds to conduct dissertation study.\n\nIRB application is completed and approval is obtained as needed.	Once date and time are agreed upon, committee and student notifies GPD and program assistant. Student provides stage 4 form completed. If needed Program assistant will provide support in facilitating room request\n\nAfter committee members sign the form, the chairperson returns the form to the program assistant.\n\nThe program assistant submits the form to the Office of Graduate Studies.	Dissertation committee members; GPD; Office of Graduate Studies

Stage Four: Notification of Intent to Defend Dissertation	When chairperson determines, final draft of dissertation is sent to committee members (allow 4 weeks to read). When chairperson determines, after polling committee members, schedule defense 2-4 weeks in advance. It is expected that the chair and the committee members be physically present at the defense; extenuating circumstances can be considered in collaboration with the PhD program director.	Student notifies GPD and Program Assistant once date and time are agreed upon for Dissertation Defense. Student provides stage 4 form completed. Program assistant will provide support in facilitating room request. The program assistant submits the form to the Office of Graduate Studies.	Dissertation committee members; GPD; Office of Graduate Studies
Stage Five: Approval of Dissertation Defense	Report on the results of the dissertation defense. The candidate must pay particular attention to deadlines and the timing of the dissertation defense to allow enough time for a completed manuscript to be filed prior to June or December degree dates. (See below for dates.) Any recording of the dissertation defense needs to be approved by the student defending as a matter of intellectual property and privacy.	Notice of dissertation defense must be posted at the College 2-4 weeks in advance. Student provides stage 5 form completed to GPD and program assistant. Program assistant will provide form to the chair. After committee members sign the form, the chair returns the form to the program assistant. The program assistant submits the form to the Office of Graduate Studies. Y grade for NU899 converted to letter grade by chair of committee.	Dissertation committee members; GPD; Graduate Studies

Dissertation Application and Process

Students should inform the program director/assistant when they officially have completed therequirements for the degree BEFORE SUBMITTING THE DEGREE APPLICATION.

There is a difference between finishing the degree requirements and "graduating/graduation". Students will be formerly invited to commencement/graduation by the university.

It is the responsibility of the students to work with their dissertation chair to complete the signature page for the dissertation. This action needs to be completed well in advance of commencement/graduation. It is mandatory that signatures be completed on the day of the dissertation defense or at the time when all editing and changes have been agreed upon by the chair and committee.

Mid-March	All dissertation work must be completed by mid-March of the year in which the candidate plans to graduate, and a defense scheduled no later than the end of March to comply with April 20th deadline to submit a revised dissertation copy to OGS.
Mid-November	For December degree date, these dates are respectively early to comply with December 1st degree date.
July 20th for August degree date April 20th for June degree date December 1st for December degree date	The deadline for candidates to submit a copy of their defended and revised dissertation, approved in full for content by the program, to the OGS via the UMass Boston ProQuest/UMI ETD website.

The Dissertation Committee

The candidate selects a chair and consults with the chair on which individuals may be the best candidates to participate as members on the dissertation committee. ***The committee must have a minimum of three members and no more than five (5) members. At least two (2) members, including the chair, should come from the Department of Nursing at the Robert and Donna Manning College of Nursing and Health Sciences.*** The dissertation committee shall include a member who is external to the candidate's program. The external member(s) may come either from within the University or outside the University. The graduate program director will be responsible for any additional nominations of committee members where indicated. At least one member should be a nurse with a PhD degree and is explicitly asked to ensure the student work is advancing nursing science and the discipline. If the chair is a non-nurse, then they should actively seek advice and input from the nurse committee member on the salience of the student work to the discipline of nursing.

The candidate, incollaboration with the chair, should provide in writing 1) a one-page explanation of the unique contributions or expertise that will be offered by the external member and 2) a CV to the program director. The candidate must submit the names of the committee members and chair to the program director (Stage 2 of the dissertation tracking form). The program director reviews the submission and, if approved, forwards the form to the Office of Graduate Studies for review and approval. CVs for every external member of the committee must accompany the form. See appendix A. for best practices for dissertation.

Qualifications and Responsibilities of Chairs and Members of Dissertation Committees

Qualifications of faculty to chair dissertation committees:

1. To qualify to chair a dissertation committee, a department of nursing faculty member must:
    a. Hold a PhD degree in nursing or a related discipline.
    b. Have a record of distinguished scholarly publications and/or professional achievement within a period of five years prior to the formation of any dissertation committee that the faculty member chairs.

Qualifications of faculty and/or outside professionals serving as members of dissertation committees:
    To qualify to be a member of the dissertation committee, a faculty member must have
    1. An appropriate terminal degree (typically a PhD or EdD but in some instances a degree such as a JD, MD DBS, DNP, or MBA may be appropriate).
    2. A record of excellence in scholarly publications and/or professional achievement within a period of five years prior to the formation of the dissertation committee.

Responsibilities of Chairs and Members of Dissertation Committees
The dissertation committee chair holds primary responsibility for advising the student in their dissertation work. Their responsibilities include, but are not limited to:
- Work with the student to identify the dissertation topic and methods.
- Provide ongoing support to the student with proposal development and dissertation work.
- Monitor student progress and help keep the student on track.
- Review the draft of the proposal and dissertation (by section and the whole work) and make sure the accuracy, quality, and clarity of the work, and the appropriateness of the formatting.
- Assess if the proposal and dissertation draft is ready for the committee to review.
- Work with the student to address concerns and suggestions raised by the committee members.
- Work with the student to schedule the proposal hearing and dissertation defense.
- Facilitate the meeting during the proposal hearing and dissertation defense.
- Work with the student to address any further questions and concerns raised during the proposal hearing and dissertation defense.
- Make sure the revisions are made to adequately address the suggestions, questions and concerns.

The responsibilities of the dissertation committee include, but are not limited to:
- Provide conceptual and/or methodological guidance to the student during proposal development and dissertation phase.
- Review the proposal and dissertation closely and provide in depth feedback in a timely manner.
- Make sure the dissertation explicitly speaks to how the dissertation works related to the discipline of nursing.
- Determine the quality and acceptability of the proposal and dissertation. If the committee member has major concerns about the proposal or the dissertation, they should let the chair know at least one week prior to the defense date.
- Attend the proposal hearing and dissertation defense and provide critical inquiries about the work.

The Dissertation
The candidate is required to use the Standards for the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations toformat their dissertation from the moment they begin their dissertation. Failure to format dissertations before deadlines may result in delays to degree completion. Policies for dissertations are available at the UMass Graduate Students & Assistantships webpage.

HELPFUL HINTS TO FORMAT YOUR DOCUMENT

These hints are designed to help you avoid common mistakes that will take you the most time to correct. In particular, any mistakes that affect pagination can be time-consuming to fix because then you will have to redo your Table of Contents as well. So make sure you follow the margin instructions exactly. Please use the following tips to help you format your document.

PLEASE NOTE: These are not all the guidelines, and you must still read and incorporate all the guidelines in this Standards for the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations booklet.

1. Make sure you use Times New Roman 12 point font. If you use the wrong font, your page numbers will change when you correct this, and your Table of Contents will have to be redone.

2. Check your margins. They should be LEFT 1 1/4", RIGHT 1", TOP: 1", BOTTOM: 1". The left margin must be 1.25" because your document will be bound in an 8" x 11" volume. A too tight left margin will cause you to lose important data. This is a common mistake. If you need to correct margins after submission, all the page numbers will change and you will need to create a new Table of Contents.

3. Page numbers should be positioned at least 1.25" from the bottom of the page (measured from the bottom of the page number to the bottom of the page).

4. The title of each chapter must be 2" from the top of the page, and you should hit return a few times to create some space between the title and the beginning of the text. Use the same spacing between the chapter title and the text in every chapter.

5. Use the orphan/widow control found in most versions of Word. No page can begin or end with a single line of text or a single subheading.

6. Page numbering - Page numbering begins with roman numerals on the Abstract page, which should be page iv. There should be no page numbers on the title page, copyright page or signature page. Continue roman numerals until the first page of your thesis or dissertation, which should be arabic numeral 1.

7. Placement of Tables, Illustrations, and Charts can be tricky. If the table, illustration or chart fills more than half the page, then it can remain alone on the page. If you have sequential small tables, illustrations, and charts that can fit two to a page, then do so.

No landscape pages are allowed. They will not fit when the document is bound into an 8.5 x 11 volume. You may place a table or figure on its side on a portrait-oriented page to make it fit. You may also shrink it to make it fit. But the title must be at the top of the portrait-oriented page, and the page number must be at the bottom of the portrait-oriented page.

Feel free to contact the format editor with questions or samples of tables/illustrations/charts placement while you are working and before you submit your document.

8. Lists of Figures and Tables - for titles in the Lists, use only the text up to the first period of the title as the title, even if the title on the table/figure is longer than that. Make sure the text you use for your title in the List is identical, word for word, including the words you choose to capitalize, in the text and in the List.

9. All subheadings in the Table of Contents must be identical, word for word, including the words you choose to capitalize, to the subheadings in the text.

10. References - don't split references. Don't start a citation on one page and finish it on the next. Keep the entire citation on the same page.

11. Subheadings - this is a common area of difficulty for students and can be time-consuming to correct. This is how it should work.

The first time the reader sees a subheading in chapter 1 that is the first level subheading. However you format that first level subheading in chapter 1 is how you must format every first level subheading in the entire document. So for example, if the first level subheading in chapter 1 is bold, centered, the first level subheadings in all chapters must be bold, centered. Also, in the Table of Contents, the first level subheading is indented once.

For second level subheadings, these must be formatted differently from the first level subheadings, and every second level subheading must be formatted the same way in every chapter. So for example, if the second level subheading in chapter 1 is flush left, italics, then the second level subheading in every chapter must be flush left, italics. The second level subheadings are indented twice in the Table of Contents.

For subsequent levels, format each level (3rd, 4th, etc.) in a unique way and use that format in every chapter as you did for the first and second level subheadings above. Then indent the subheading one more time per level in the Table of Contents. So the third level subheading is indented three times, the fourth level subheading is indented four times, and so forth.

This can be confusing, but it has to be done this way. One way to keep track is by listing Ch 1, first level subheading, second level, etc., and the format of each one on a separate piece of paper. Then when you do chapter 2 and all other chapters, refer to that list to keep them straight. That is the method the editor will use to keep track of them

The candidate will work closely with the chair and other committee members throughout data collection, data analysis and final writing phases of the dissertation. The candidate should expect some repeated iterations of the dissertation to accommodate the committee chairs' and members' input and guidance designed to enhance the overall conceptual and methodological quality of the dissertation.

Students register for dissertation credits (NU 899) for 2-3 consecutive semesters (9 credits total), after they have completed all other coursework. No grade is assigned for the dissertation while it is in process. The students receive a "Y" grade which stands for "year-long course" each semester they are registered for dissertation credits. Once students have defended successfully, the chair of the dissertation committee is required to submit a letter grade using the Change of Grade Form for all dissertation credits to the Registrar's Office. Candidates cannot be awarded degrees if dissertation grades have not been changed to final grade(s).

The Dissertation Proposal

The dissertation research proposal may be submitted any time after the committee has been approved by Office of Graduate Studies (OGS). All dissertation work follows the format of the most current version of the American Psychological Association Manual for Publication, and any relevant OGS guidelines. Although the length of the proposal will vary with the candidate and the topic, the proposal must include the following elements:

- Format: Times New Roman Font 12, 1-inch margins all around.
- 300-400/word abstract;
- Introduction that clearly states the problem, establishes its significance and how the need for the proposed research advances science and policy, and states the research questions to be examined or the hypotheses to be tested. In addition, historical, sociological, political, and economic aspects of the dissertation should be addressed.
- Clear statement of the conceptual-theoretical-empirical structure that will guide the research if applicable
- Critical review of the literature that synthesizes the current research on the problem, explores related bodies of knowledge that contribute to the understanding of the problem, and explores the theoretical framework of the study.
- Description of the methodology including research design, the study population and sample, a plan to access the study population, human subjects, considerations, data collection methods, and the plan for data analysis.
- Work plan that identifies needed resources, indicates how they will be obtained, and presents a realistic timeline for data collection and analysis.
- References.

Three Manuscript Dissertation

Students may choose to complete the three-manuscript dissertation instead of the standard dissertation format. The three-manuscript dissertation consists of three or more related manuscripts submitted for publication in a peer reviewed journal. The three manuscripts are bookended by an introductory and concluding chapter.

Chapter 1: Introduction to the body of work Chapters 2-4: Three manuscripts prepared in publishable fashion, prepared for submission and/or submitted in appropriate peer-reviewed journals. The content of the manuscripts and the journal selection would be approved by the dissertation committee. At least two of the three manuscripts should be data-based (i.e., not methodological or conceptual). Data-based manuscripts should include aims, background, methods, results, and conclusions. Chapter 5: Summary chapter synthesizing conclusions, implications, and future directions.	Chapter 1, plus a summary of the aims, background, and methods/approach for each article.

Proposal Hearing

The candidate should work closely with the chair of the committee. Together they will decide when to forward the draft proposal to the entire committee for review. The candidate and the chair will review the committee members' recommendations and make necessary adjustments to the proposal. The chair will schedule a proposal hearing. Two weeks prior to the scheduled hearing, the final draft of the proposal will be delivered to all committee members. All members of the committee are expected to attend the proposal hearing in person or via teleconference.

Following the hearing, the committee meets in an executive session and makes one of three determinations regarding the proposal: 1) A= approve; 2) AR= approve with revisions; 3) N= do not approve. Each member must initial their vote on the Dissertation Tracking Form (Stage 3). In the case of approval, the candidate may proceed with the dissertation, after IRB approval. In the case of approval with revisions, the candidate need only resubmit the revised proposal to the chair and any other

specified committee members. Once revised, the chair forwards two (2) copies of the approved proposal to the program director with a letter stating that all revisions have been satisfactorily completed. The program director forwards one copy to Office of Graduate Studies and Research, along with the dissertation tracking form.

Human Subjects

Any study that involves human subjects must comply with relevant University and Federal requirements. The campus Institutional Review Board (IRB) must approve all research involving human subjects. Only after the dissertation proposal has been accepted by the committee may the student submit the required documents to the IRB. Data collection, subject recruitment, or consenting of potential subjects cannot start until IRB approval has been obtained. Forms and information about Human Subjects review can be obtained from the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) website, along with forms and timelines.

All research and research-related activity proposed by any member of the UMass Boston community that involves human subjects in any way must be reviewed by the university's IRB. This requirement is based upon the university's assurance given to the Federal Department of Health and Human Services that UMass Boston researchers—faculty, students, administrators, staff—are aware of and follow all federal rules and regulations concerning the protection of human subjects in research as contained in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45, Part 46 (45 CFR 46).

UMass Boston has contracted with the University of Miami to provide free online training through the

Collaborative IRB Training Initiative (CITI) for members of the UMass Boston community on issues related to the protection of human subjects in research. The CITI modules span a variety of areas including the assessment of risk, informed consent, and research involving special populations such as children or prisoners. The required modules can be completed in more than one sitting at the researcher's convenience. At the completion of the training, CITI notifies UMass Boston that the training has been completed and the researcher's name is added to a dynamic database monitored by the university's IRB administrator, Sharon Wang. See website for contact information https://www.umb.edu/research/orsp/.

To register for the CITI training, log on to http://www.citiprogram.org and click on the link "Register." Enter organization full name "University of Massachusetts Boston" from the "Select Your Organization Affiliation" section. Continue to Step 2. Students will then be asked to select a username and password. Follow the registration prompts until the main menu is reached reach the main menu and select one of 2 basic courses on protection of human subjects, the Biomedical track or the Social Behavioral track to begin the training. The selection of the focus should reflect the primary research activities of the student. Of note, if the student is conducting research at other institutions as part of their academic program or training, they should determine the training requirements of these respective institutions in deciding which course to take. For example, students working on research projects in the academic medical centers will likely be required to take the Biomedical human subjects training.

Questions concerning UMass Boston policy and procedures relating to research with human subjects, or questions concerning the CITI training and how to register for the training should be directed to Sharon Wang, IRB Administrator at (617) 287- 5374 or sharon.wang@umb.edu.

The Dissertation Defense

A dissertation defense will be scheduled only after the committee members agree that the dissertation is sufficiently complete to undergo defense. Two weeks prior to the scheduled defense, the final draft of the dissertation must be delivered to all committee members.

Final copies of the revised dissertation and completed signature page must be provided to the program director and the OGS before the candidate can be certified for the PhD degree. The final dissertation manuscript must conform to Guidelines for the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations at the University of Massachusetts Boston.
For most updated version of the guidelines as well as an update on deadlines go to:
https://www.umb.edu/media/umassboston/content-assets/admissions/graduate-students/UMass_Boston_Dissertation_Thesis_Submission_Standards_(Revised_May_2023)_1.pdf.
The program has designated the Publication Manual of theAmerican Psychological Association (6th Edition) as the appropriate format for organization, tables,illustrations, and references.

For the *initial* submission, students should turn in an electronic copy of their thesis/dissertation via the UMass Boston-ProQuest/UMI ETD website http://www.etdadmin.com/cgi-bin/school?siteId=283.

The ETD submission process streamlines the review and approval process and enhances communication with the T&D (Thesis and Dissertation) Format Editor, Carol Cullen (carol.cullen@umb.edu). The ETD makes graduate students' research immediately available with publication occurring near the point of submission rather than many months later.

All graduates are required to use the ETD submission site. For more information visit the UMass Boston-

ProQuest/UMI site http://www.etdadmin.com/umb.

7. Financial Information
Funding Opportunities
There are a wide variety of scholarships, grants, and funding opportunities available to our PhD students. These opportunities include:
1) Eligibility for university research and teaching assistantships that may include tuition remission and health insurance benefits
2) Scholarships funded by the federal government
3) Loans
4) Professional traineeship grants
5) Competitive scholarships
6) Grant funding from Sigma Theta Tau, the International, the Honor Society of Nursing*
7) Other professional societies and clinical agencies

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) offers funding for graduate students to attend conferences and to support their dissertation expenses. Students may wish to consult with the Office of Graduate Studies and Research or the Financial Aid Office regarding their eligibility for further need-based assistance.

*Department of Nursing Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International is called Theta Alpha Chapter. Leadership, Scholarship, and Dissertation funding awards are available annually and are bestowed in the Spring at the annual induction event.

MCNHS Grant/Scholarships
The MCNHS grant/scholarship proposal submission timeline must be followed by all PhD nursing students who are applying for grants/scholarships. All students must work with the Associate Dean for Research to process the budget and review criteria of grants/scholarships and create a plan to acquire the appropriate signatures in a timely manner.

Graduate Assistantships
Graduate Assistantships are in the form of research and teaching assistantships (RA/TA). The assignments may require a commitment of 9.00 (0.50 FTE) to 18 (1.0 FTE) hours per week, depending on the percentage of assistantship held, for the entire semester. You may not hold more than the equivalent of one full-time graduate assistantship appointment at any time.

All graduate assistantships receive a tuition credit waiver proportional to their level of assistantship. The tuition credit waiver is applicable only toward state tuition courses. The tuition credit waiver may not be applied to courses offered by the College of Advancing and Professional Studies (CAPS), mandatory fees, or any item not described as tuition. Payment of any remaining tuition, fees, or expenses is the responsibility of the student. You are also eligible for a contribution towards the cost of university-provided student health insurance (SHP), and dental (HMO) and vision care (HMO) as provided in the current collective bargaining agreement.

Graduate Assistantships Definition, Eligibility & Time Commitment
1. Teaching Assistant (TA) - A graduate student employed on a salaried basis who is primarily assigned to instructional support activities such as the following:

a. Coordinate, lead or assist in the instructional process in preparation and direct interaction with students in lab, discussion, quiz, examination, or problem sessions. 2. Provide tutoring and student consultation periods. 3. Grade homework, papers, reports, and other work assigned to the enrolled students of a course. 4. Grade and proctor course examinations. 5. Prepare experiments and set up/dismantle laboratory materials and equipment for lab sessions. 6. Additional related duties as assigned.

2. Teaching Fellow (TF) - A graduate student employed on a salaried basis who is instructor of record for a lecture or independent lab section of a course and has independent responsibility for its teaching and grading

3. Research Assistant (RA) - A graduate student who is employed on a salaried basis to perform work primarily related to academic research or other similar work including, but not limited to, the gathering and analysis of data, conducting bibliographical searches, the development of theoretical analysis and models, the production or publication of scholarly journal and research reports, which are for the benefit of the University, its faculty, centers, institutes, or an academic staff supervisor, or a granting agency, and is secondarily for the graduate student employee's own research. Graduate students may be employed to perform research work not directly related to their own research.

4. Administrative Assistant (AA) - A graduate student who is employed on a salaried basis to perform work of an administrative or technical nature which is not otherwise described in Sections 1.03 (a) and (b) above.

Assistantship Eligibility: 1) matriculated in PhD program, 2) good academic standing (GPA≥3.0), and 3) international students hold an F-1 Visa

FTEs for Assistantships	Number of Hours
1 FTE	18 hours
.75 FTE	13.5 hours
.50 FTE	9 hours

8. **Graduation**

Visit the Graduation Degree Requirements page for detailed information.
https://www.umb.edu/registrar/graduation/

9. **Resources**

Communication with Students

Program information will be communicated to students via UMB email. The suite is open from 8:30-5 from Monday to Friday. Students will have to bring their own laptops. It is located Quinn Administration; 2nd floor across from the Student Health Services Center.

Student with Disabilities

Students who have a disability may be eligible for accommodations available through the Ross Center for Disability Services. Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with Disability Services (CS 2-2010) or to call 287-7430.

Resources and Technical Assistance
Five Campus
http://nursing.massachusetts.edu/
This helpful e-space to gain information about courses offered, faculty, and general program information across all our PhD in Nursing Programs in the UMass System. After consulting with their academic advisers' students may choose electives from across the five campuses.

All these services are more fully described on the Information Technology website https://www.umb.edu/it and the Healey Library website https://www.umb.edu/library/help

For help with Blackboard, call the help desk at 617.287.5220. or visit https://umb.umassonline.net/.

Zotero and Mendeley are citation tools and free to all UMass Boston students, faculty, staff and alumni. They are web-based citation management tools that facilitates collecting and organizing references and formatting research papers. The library provides online documentation to help identify the features between Zotero and Mendeley.

WHO Writing House is the College of Nursing and Health Science dedicated writing assistance center. WHO offers writing tutoring on-campus and online. To book a tutoring appointment, please visit www.mywco.com/WHO. Directions to the Writing House: Take Wheatley stairs or elevator to third floor. Turn left and follow the blue and white WHO signs.

Graduate Writing Center provides on-to-one conferences for writing support to students.

IT Service Desk helps with issues related to computer hardware, software, printing or the network. (https://www.umb.edu/it/getting_help/contact/)

IT Training Portal offers workshops for the UMass Boston community. (https://www.umb.edu/training/)

Students are expected to check their university e-mail on a frequent and consistent basis to ensure that they are up to date with all official communications generated by the program, the Robert and Donna Manning College of Nursing and Health Sciences or the university.

Lounge and Study Spaces
Healey Library
- Quiet Study (6th Floor)
The sixth floor is the only designated quiet area in the library building.
- Group Study (8th Floor)
Group study is encouraged on the eighth floor. There are ten study carrels of various sizes that can accommodate groups of two to eight people.

Other Places of Interest
- Several couches and tables on the second and third floors overlook the harbor.
- The Healey Library Cafe on the second floor contains a bar and several tables.
- The fourth floor has several long tables with overhead lamps.
- The fifth floor has a large study table near the University Archives gallery displays.

Best Practices for Dissertation Advisors and Advisees
University of Massachusetts Boston
Office Of Graduate Studies
Office for Faculty Development
2019

Best Practices for Dissertation Advisors

The dissertation advisor, along with the Dissertation Committee, the Office of Graduate Studies, and the Graduate Program Director, plays a critical role in a student's completion of the doctorate. The following guidelines are intended to help dissertation advisors understand and fulfill this role.

Communication and Feedback

Provide clear, timely, and honest communication about dissertation work. Communicate frequently with advisees about expectations and responsibilities, ensuring with each communication that there is mutual understanding. Discuss the dissertation's strengths and weaknesses; offer strategies for addressing the weaknesses. *Written* feedback is especially important although it should never replace face-to-face meetings. Meet one-on-one with advisees on a regular basis. When in-person meetings are not possible, connect through email, video chat, or phone. Frequency of meetings will vary by field and the student's stage in the dissertation.

Help advisees to plan, set attainable goals, and establish a timeline for completion of the dissertation. Though a plan may change, having one ensures that an advisee sees a path forward. Support advisees during the dissertation-writing phase, and provide advice about productive writing processes, the value of writing groups, and other forms of peer support. Use OGS dissertation tracking forms to monitor each advisee's progress. (***See * below for information regarding tracking forms***.)

Assist advisees in matters concerning the dissertation committee. Help them to select their dissertation committee and assure that the committee meets at least annually to review the student's progress (A committee may meet more frequently, depending on program guidelines or student needs.)

Decode or demystify departmental and OGS policies, requirements, and terminology regarding the dissertation. Help with IRB processes and compliance. Explain ethical standards for research and authorship.

Respect for Advisee

Provide an environment that is intellectually stimulating, emotionally supportive, safe, and free of harassment. Encourage openness about any challenges or difficulties that may impact an advisee's progress on the dissertation and work with the advisee to resolve them. Create environments that foster help-seeking and more importantly, minimize barriers to honest communication. You should not require advisees to perform tasks unrelated to their academic and professional development.

Understand and respect that each advisee brings different perspectives, experiences and interests. Different

backgrounds warrant thoughtful advising approaches as well as sincere effort to understand individual experiences and interests and how these affect the advisee's progress.

Listen to and support an advisee's scholarly and professional goals. Advisors must realize that an advisee's goals will not always align with their own goals for a student. You should not place your own personal and professional goals over the advisee's goals for the dissertation.

Career Advising

Prepare an advisee to be competitive for future careers inside and beyond the academy, eg:
Recognize and promote an advisee's contributions to research in publications or presentations in conferences;
Support the development of teaching skills when relevant to career goals;
Acknowledge the advisee's service as, for example, mentors and graduate student peers, etc.
Connect an advisee to your own professional networks and support opportunities for the advisee to cultivate professional and technical skills that may open up broader career outcomes;
Be realistic, open, and honest about career prospects and options.

Best Practices for Dissertation Advisees

Along with the dissertation advisor, an advisee has responsibilities in forging a productive and professional relationship. The following guidelines are intended to help advisees understand and fulfill their role.

Communication and Feedback

Take primary responsibility for completion of the dissertation and for communicating with your advisor toward its completion. Work with your advisor to develop a project, set goals and a timeline. Strive to meet deadlines. Take advantage of resources that facilitate productive and consistent writing practices.

Communicate clearly with your advisor about questions regarding his/her feedback. Try to reach a point of mutual understanding. Be available for face-to-face meetings and use other means when this is not possible. Maintain a high level of responsiveness and professionalism in your communication with your advisor.

Work with the dissertation advisor on matters concerning the dissertation committee. Seek your advisor's help with its selection. Expect to meet with your committee at least once a year and take its advice seriously.

Be knowledgeable about dissertation policies and requirements. Read available materials and seek clarification of any unclear policies, requirements, or terms. Take responsibility for understanding and practicing high ethical standards in research and authorship.

Respectful Collaboration

Expect and contribute to a working environment that is intellectually stimulating, emotionally supportive, safe and free of harassment. Discuss promptly with your advisor any challenges you are facing that may affect your progress. If you experience an uncomfortable working environment, see: https://www.umb.edu/titleix/student_procedure

Help your advisor to understand your scholarly and professional goals. The advisor should respect your individuality in relation to your interests and topic choice. In turn, you should be open to the dissertation advisor's perspective on a scholarly topic. Try to negotiate a plan that accommodates your goals and the program's standards.

Career Preparation

Take primary responsibility for developing a career following the completion of the doctoral degree. Be open to your advisor's assistance in preparing you for a career through conference participation, contributions to publications, networking connections and guidance in basic career skills such as grant writing, oral and written communication, lab management, and animal and human research policies.

This document draws heavily on similar documents from Brown University and the University of Iowa. It was prepared by Judith Goleman, Director, Office for Faculty Development; Rita Kiki Edozie, Assoc. Dean, MGS; Corinne Etienne, GPD, Applied Linguistics; Andrea Leverentz, GPD, Sociology, Heath MacIndoe, GPD, Public Policy and Public Affairs.