



GRADUATE NURSING Handbook

2019-2020

HAMILTON, ONTARIO

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This document is not intended to replicate or modify the information found in the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) Calendar (available at). If there is any discrepancy between this document and the SGS Calendar, then the School of Graduate Studies Calendar shall prevail. Students and faculty are encouraged to look at the SGS Calendar for information about:

- Graduate study at McMaster;
- General regulations of the School of Graduate Studies;
- University regulations;
- Graduate fees and financial assistance;
- University regulations affecting graduate students;
- University services;
- Fellowships, scholarships, bursaries and other awards;
- University governing bodies;
- Student appeals; and
- Degree programs (including degree requirements).

1 THE NURSING GRADUATE PROGRAM

The Nursing program is one of several graduate programs that comprise the Health Sciences Graduate Studies (HSGS) in the Faculty of Health Sciences.

In this Guide to Nursing Graduate Studies, you will find information on all program requirements and general information that supplements the details provided in the Graduate Calendar.

<http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/index.php>

To remain a graduate student in good standing, pay close attention to the information and forms that are sent to you from the Nursing Graduate Program (gradson@mcmaster.ca).

Dr. Nancy Carter, Assistant Dean, Nursing Graduate Program carternm@mcmaster.ca
HSC 2J27 x22259

Carla Dawson, Administrative Assistant HSC 2J41 cvegnad@mcmaster.ca x 22099

Contact email: gradson@mcmaster.ca

ROLE OF THE ASSISTANT DEAN NURSING GRADUATE PROGRAM

The Assistant Dean for the Nursing Graduate Program has responsibilities that include an active role in promoting the recruitment, education and welfare of graduate students, and enhancing the quality of graduate education. In addition, the Assistant Dean makes important contributions to decision-making within the Faculty with respect to graduate curriculum and policy issues. The Assistant Dean provides a channel of communication between graduate students, graduate faculty and the Vice-Dean Health Sciences, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies (Health Sciences).

The particular responsibilities of the Assistant Dean towards graduate students include:

Meet with the current and newly recruited graduate students as a group early in each academic year to orient them to the Program and to facilitate the development of an identity with the Program.

Meet individually with students when needed to provide help and advice to students who encounter academic or personal difficulties that are not easily resolved by their supervisors. This includes a willingness to mediate in disputes between supervisors and their students. Program Assistant Deans should also advise students if their problems demand that they should meet with the Vice Dean Health Sciences, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies (Health Sciences).

ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

Administration of Graduate Studies in the Faculty of Health Sciences is the responsibility of the Vice-Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies (Health Sciences), while the School of Nursing, led by the Vice-Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences and Executive Director, School of Nursing has overall responsibility for the discipline of Nursing in the university. The School of Nursing is also the home department for graduate nursing faculty.

The Nursing Graduate Program has its own Admissions Committee, Curriculum Committee, Academic Review Committee and Scholarships and Awards Committee, which submit recommendations to the corresponding committees in the FHS Graduate Programs or to the Vice-Dean Health Sciences, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies (Health Sciences).

2 GRADUATE COURSES

Students are advised to take the required core courses for their degree before beginning their electives. Full details of course categories, selection, assignment expectations, terms, deadlines, etc. are provided in the **NURSING GRADUATE COURSE SCHEDULE** available on **MOSAIC** and on the Nursing Graduate Studies Communication Hub on Avenue to Learn. The following is a summary of the important general points.

REGISTRATION

All students are required to register using the online Academic Registration (MOSAIC) system. If students have completed all of their courses they must still register on **MOSAIC**.

REQUIRED COURSES FOR ALL GRADUATE STUDENTS

All graduate students, including part-time students, must complete the online **course SGS #101- Academic Research Integrity and Ethics and SGS #201 - Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)** by September 30 of the first term after their admission to graduate studies at McMaster. The AODA training is readily available through online training modules found at <http://www.mcmaster.ca/accessibility/index.html>. A graduate student may not obtain a graduate degree at McMaster without having passed these courses. Please see section 2.6.5 of the Graduate Calendar for further information.

COURSE TERM

Normally, half courses run for 12 - 13 weeks, however, they may extend by a week beyond this length and students should arrange to accommodate this schedule.

2.4 POLICY ON LATE PAPERS

Late papers or assignments will drop a grade (e.g. A+ to A) for each late day if negotiation has NOT occurred. Papers submitted more than two days late receive an F grade if prior negotiation for

late date has NOT occurred. When graded by percentage, the grade on late paper will be reduced by 5% for each day late. Papers submitted more than two days late will receive a grade of zero.

2.5 COURSE FAILURE

A student who fails to obtain at least a B-minus grade in a Graduate Course can be asked to withdraw from the Graduate Program. In some cases, the student's Supervisory Committee or Faculty Advisor may advise the Vice-Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies (Health Sciences), that, because of certain circumstances, the student should: a) take an alternative course (does not apply to PHCNP program), or b) repeat the course. Such a recommendation should be made in writing by the Supervisor or Faculty Advisor and Program Assistant Dean to the Vice-Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies (Health Sciences), within one month of the student's grade being announced, outlining the possible reasons for the failure. The Vice-Dean Health Sciences, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies (Health Sciences) will consider this request and recommend a course of action for consideration by the Faculty's Graduate Admissions and Study Committee.

2.6 ILLNESS OR UNAVOIDABLE ABSENCE DURING COURSE-WORK:

Students are expected to attend all classes of the courses in which they are enrolled. If a student is ill or legitimately absent (eg. for personal or family reasons) so they are unable to meet course deadlines, this must be brought to the attention of the Course Coordinator, so appropriate action can be determined.

2.7 COURSE ASSESSMENT BY THE STUDENT:

At the completion of each course, students are asked to provide feedback about the course (eg. relevance and quality of content, quality of instruction, workload, etc.) on the Course Evaluation Form, which will be distributed by the FHS Graduate Office electronically. The information provided is used to make changes before the course is offered again. All students' submissions remain anonymous.

2.8 COURSE GRADING

Student performance at the course level is quite straightforward. Each course has its own criteria that are usually based on assignments, papers and class participation. A letter grade is awarded by the course coordinator. The grading system is outlined below. If a student receives a grade below B-, a recommendation may be made for the student to withdraw from the program.

A+	90 to 100	consistently outstanding
A	85 to 89	overall superior quality
A-	80 to 84	high achievement
B+	77 to 79	competent, but not consistently high quality

B	73 to 76	satisfactory quality
B-	70 to 72	only marginally acceptable
F	failure	inadequate work

2.9 COURSE AVAILABILITY

Nursing students normally take graduate courses offered within Nursing and other Faculty of Health Sciences Graduate programs (for instance Public Health, Health Science Education, Rehabilitation Sciences, E-Health, Health Research Methodology, and Clinical Behavioral Sciences). Occasionally, it may be necessary for a student's progress to take a course at another Ontario university if a similar course is not available at McMaster. This requires special permission of the host institution and McMaster. In those cases the Visiting Graduate Student Plan permits a student registered at a University in Ontario to take a graduate course at another Ontario University (Host University) without completing further admission formalities. Students are limited to take one half course through OVGs. For further detail, consult the Graduate Program Office and go to the website at: <http://cou.on.ca/key-issues/education/graduate-education/ontario-visiting-grad-students/> For advanced credit and determination of course equivalency see the SGS Calendar, section 2.3 <http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=4&navoid=191#2.3 Advance Credit and Determination of Course Equivalency>

2.10 COURSE CANCELLATION POLICY

The Nursing Graduate Program has a policy of offering courses with a minimum of six registered students. In some cases (i.e., a new course) we may offer the course with fewer students; however, this decision would be made in consultation with the Assistant Dean, Nursing Graduate Program.

Process to follow: Course coordinator keeps in touch with the Health Sciences Graduate Program prior to commencement of term. If there only a few students registered (e.g. three), the following steps can be taken:

- i. The Assistant Dean's office can circulate an e-mail to Graduate Nursing students encouraging them to register (approximately one month before the course begins).
- ii. If a course continues to have low registration, the Assistant Dean's office can circulate an e-mail to Graduate Nursing students and/or other departments/via assistant deans encouraging students to register (approximately 2-3 weeks before the course begins).

Cancelling the course: If steps a) and b) do not result in sufficient numbers, the course coordinator, in consultation with the Assistant Dean will determine when to cancel the course. Consideration needs to be given to those registered students who need to find an alternate course in the event of cancellation. The Nursing Graduate Office needs to be informed so that the course is removed from MOSAIC.

3 MASTER'S DEGREE - COURSE-BASED

Students enrolled in the MSc Course Based Program must complete a minimum of eight graduate half courses, which must include the four required courses: NUR 701, NUR 711, NUR 714, and NUR 715. The remaining courses will be chosen by the student with the approval of his/her faculty advisor. Usually, NUR 714 (Scholarly Paper) is the final course taken. With the permission of the course instructor and faculty advisor, a student's minimum course requirements may include up to two 600-level graduate half courses.

PROGRAM DURATION

Students typically complete the degree requirements in two years and the permissible time for completing is limited to three years from initial registration in the Master's program. Part time students typically complete the degree requirements in three years and the permissible time is limited to five years from their initial registration.

FACULTY ADVISOR

Course-based masters' student will have a faculty advisor assigned in the fall of their first year, by the Assistant Dean, who will aid the student during their time in the program. The faculty advisor is responsible for meeting with the student at the time that the student first registers and then again on a regular basis (i.e. within a maximum of 6 months from the time that the student enters the Program and every 6 months thereafter unless the faculty advisor believes that more frequent meetings are required).

The faculty advisor's responsibilities will include:

- i. Planning and approving the student's program of courses;
- ii. Maintaining knowledge of the student's progress;
- iii. Providing the student with regular appraisals of progress or lack of it (i.e. the student and advisor have an obligation to meet regularly);

Advisors must review and sign the student's education plan on an annual basis which is submitted to the nursing graduate office electronically. This electronic form is available on the Nursing Graduate Program Communication Hub on Avenue to Learn.

Faculty members who agree to advise graduate students are responsible for the guidance of these students and are not permitted to transfer students to non-graduate faculty. If a course-based MSc student elects to change to the thesis-based MSc option, he/she would be expected to be assigned a supervisor and supervisory committee (see item 4 of this section).

EDUCATION PLAN

Each incoming student is responsible for developing, maintaining and updating a current Education Plan which is found on line on the Nursing Graduate Program Communication Hub on Avenue to Learn . An updated Education Plan should be forwarded to the nursing graduate

program office within 3 months of enrolling in their program. The Education Plan outlines the requirements of the program (required courses) and allows the student to enter details about electives, placements and preceptors. It also identifies time-lines for completion of course requirements. Please email education plans to the Graduate program office (gradson@mcmaster.ca). This electronic document should be updated when any changes occur, such as change in drop or add of course, leaves, or changes to stream. It is the responsibility of the student to keep the Education Plan updated.

4 MASTERS DEGREE / PRIMARY HEALTH CARE NURSE PRACTITIONER (PHCNP)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students enrolled in the MSc/ PHCNP program complete the three core graduate courses NUR 715, NUR 712, and NUR 714, one elective, and NP course NUR 766, and then complete the six courses offered through the COUPN NP Consortium (NUR 761-765, 767). For more information about the NP courses, see http://np_education.ca or see <https://nursing.mcmaster.ca/programs/graduate/courses>

FACULTY ADVISOR

Course-based masters' NP students will have a faculty advisor assigned in the fall of their first year, by the Assistant Dean, who will aid the student during their time in the program. The faculty advisor is responsible for meeting with the student at the time that the student first registers and then again yearly.

The faculty advisor's responsibilities will include:

- iv. Planning and approving the student's program of courses;
- v. Maintaining knowledge of the student's progress;

Advisors must review and sign the student's education plan on an annual basis which is submitted to the nursing graduate office electronically. This electronic form is available on the nursing graduate program communication hub on Avenue to Learn.

Faculty members who agree to advise graduate students are responsible for the guidance of these students and are not permitted to transfer students to non-graduate faculty. If a course-based MSc NP student elects to change to the course-based or thesis-based MSc option, he/she notify the Assistant Dean to discuss this.

EDUCATION PLAN

Each incoming student is responsible for developing, maintaining and updating a current

Education Plan which is found on at the Nursing Graduate Program Communication Hub on Avenue to Learn. An updated Education Plan should be forwarded to the nursing graduate program office within 2 months of enrolling in their program. The Education Plan outlines the requirements of the program (required courses) and allows the student to enter details about electives, placements and preceptors. It also identifies time-lines for completion of course requirements. Please email education plans to the Graduate program office (gradson@mcmaster.ca). This electronic document should be updated when any changes occur, such as change in drop or add of course, leaves, or changes to stream. It is the responsibility of the student to keep the Education Plan updated.

PROGRAM DURATION

The three core courses, elective and NUR 766 can be completed in one year, and since the six remaining consortium courses are offered every year, they can be completed in 12 months of full-time study so that it is possible to complete the program in two years. The permissible time for completion of a master's degree is limited to two years full time. Once the PHCNP courses have been completed successfully, students are eligible to write their RN (Extended Class) exams.

5 MASTER'S DEGREE - THESIS OPTION

Students enrolled in the thesis-based MSc are required to complete a minimum of 5 graduate half courses which must include the four required courses: NUR 701, NUR 709, NUR 715, NUR 745. The fifth course is an elective chosen by the student in consultation with the Supervisor, and generally chosen to complement the thesis research. In addition, students are required to complete a thesis and defend it at a final oral examination.

PROGRAM DURATION:

The typical time for completion of a masters' degree is two years from the initial registration in the program, although students may take up to three years to complete the degree requirements. For those students admitted to a part-time Master's program, and who complete all degree requirements while registered part-time, the permissible time is limited to five years from their initial registration.

THE EDUCATION PLAN

Each incoming student to the thesis-based program will develop, maintain, and update their education plan, with their Thesis Supervisor, (1) to plan the course selection for their terms in the program, (2) to name the membership of their supervisory committee, (3) to provide a brief statement of the students' intended thesis topic, and (4) to provide the date of the first supervisory committee meeting, which must take place within six months of enrolment in the program. NOTE – The Assistant Dean of Nursing Graduate Studies is invited to attend the first thesis committee meeting.

The Education Plan, available on the Nursing Graduate Program Communication Hub on Avenue to Learn must be completed within the first three months prior to the first meeting of the Supervisory Committee. Please forward completed Education Plans to the Nursing Graduate Program at gradson@mcmaster.ca. It is the responsibility of the student to maintain and update their Education Plan and submit electronically to gradson@mcamster.ca

6 MSc. THESIS REQUIREMENTS AND DEFENSE

AREAS FOR ACCEPTABLE THESIS TOPICS

The Master's degree must provide a demonstration of competence on the part of the student as an independent investigator. Students are required to explore a topic in considerable depth, to write up the findings and to defend these findings at an oral examination. The thesis will be a coherent document that provides a complete and systematic account of the research accomplished by the writer.

THESIS PROPOSAL APPROVAL PROCESS

Students select a topic of their choice for the thesis along with their thesis Supervisor. Students are encouraged to choose a topic and start working on a proposal early so they can be eligible and competitive for funding competitions. The student drafts the proposal and may choose to give it to her/his thesis supervisor initially for comments before distributing it to the remainder of the committee.

Final email approval of proposals should be documented and retained in the student file by supervisor, and the date documented on the student education plan. Students should follow the Guidelines for Thesis Proposal in Section 3 below. Once the proposal has been accepted by the Supervisory Committee it must go forward for ethical appraisal and approval. To assist with processing student research projects in a timely manner, a subcommittee of the Hamilton Integrated Research Ethics Board (HIREB) will review all proposed student projects at the Master's level. This sub-committee is through the Office of Research Services. For Terms of Reference and Instructions see: <http://fhs.mcmaster.ca/healthresearch/hireb>

For copy of the application see: <http://fhs.mcmaster.ca/healthresearch/hireb>

Please also note that students who are collecting data while a Masters student must complete and have signed the "Working Alone Policy", located on the FHS Safety Office web site. http://fhs.mcmaster.ca/safetyoffice/forms_and_records.html.

GUIDELINES FOR MASTER'S THESIS PROPOSAL

Thesis proposals should be brief, concrete, and focused. The purpose of the proposal is to set out a plan for the thesis research and for writing the thesis. The proposal also functions as a kind of contract between the student and the committee. A concrete thesis proposal, once approved, should eliminate the possibility of later conflict over the scope and nature of the thesis. Well-formulated thesis proposals should be about 15 to 30 double-spaced manuscript pages. While the specific format of thesis proposals can vary, the proposals in general should include the following elements:

- i. A clear introductory statement of the problem to be researched. The reason for proposing the particular research must be stated.
- ii. A brief, critical review of the relevant theoretical and empirical literature in the specific area of the thesis. Although students often produce literature reviews for their proposals that constitute the literature-review chapter of their thesis, this practice is not in general desirable. The focus of the thesis proposal should properly be on the proposed research, and the literature review should in general be substantially briefer than the review chapter of the thesis. (Length suggestion: 5–10 pages.)
- iii. A detailed statement of the problem to be researched, including research questions to be addressed or hypotheses to be tested. The nature of this section will depend upon the style of work of the thesis and will, for example, generally be worked out in greater detail for a statistical study than for research employing methods of participant observation. (Length suggestion: 2–5 pages.)
- iv. A description of the research methods to be employed in the thesis, and the manner in which they will be employed. It is insufficient, for example, to say that a survey will be conducted (of what population? with what questionnaire?); that data will be analyzed by regression analysis (of which variables?); or that participant observation will be employed (of what group? to what end?) It is important to keep the data-collection plan realistic and within the means of the student. In quantitative research, in particular, it is often better to use existing data sources, even when these do not precisely reflect the student's interests, than to collect inadequate data of one's own. This is the most important part of the proposal, because it concretely describes the research to be undertaken. (Length suggestion: 6–12 pages.)
- v. Research "instruments," such as questionnaires or interview schedules, should be appended to the proposal. (These are not included in the 15–30 page guideline for length.)
- vi. A tentative chapter outline, with chapter titles and one-sentence descriptions. (Length suggestion: 1–2 pages.)
- vii. A tentative schedule of work, indicating when each part of the thesis is to be completed. Be realistic. (Length suggestion: 1 page.)

MASTER'S THESIS PREPARATION

The online booklet "Guide for the Preparation of Theses", on the School of Graduate Studies website explains the style and format preferred by the School. https://gs.mcmaster.ca/sites/default/files/resources/guide_for_the_preparation_of_masters_and_doctoral_theses-december_2016.pdf. The customary format for the MSc thesis is the traditional integrated document. Many examples of successfully defended theses of this type are available for inspection in the Health Sciences Library.

The Supervisor and Supervisory Committee review the draft and make whatever recommendations they feel are necessary. It is often useful for the Supervisor, Supervisory Committee and the student to get together to obtain a common understanding of what changes in the first draft are necessary for an acceptable subsequent document. If the recommendations for change are at all contentious or detailed, the student is entitled to a written statement from his committee outlining exactly what has to be done. When the student has presented a final draft which each of the Supervisory Committee members concludes is an acceptable document, the committee will confirm this and give the student permission to book a date for the thesis defense. The final version of the thesis generally does not exceed 150 pages (type-written, double spaced, letter-size paper), including all figures, tables, references and appendices. The student may wish to hold a practice defense and arrangements can be made through the Administrative Assistant of the Assistant Dean.

The student obtains the "APPROVAL TO SUBMIT A MASTER'S THESIS" form from the Nursing Graduate Program Communication Hub on Avenue to Learn and must complete and scan and send electronically or return to the Nursing Graduate Program Office (HSC 2J21) **a minimum of three** weeks before the expected date of the defense. You should indicate on this form the date for which your committee is available for the defense. Please note that the majority of members of the Supervisory Committee must have approved the thesis by signing this form before the oral defense can be arranged. The Assistant Dean, Nursing Graduate Studies, selects the external examiner from a list of three candidates provided by the Supervisor and committee. The external examiner is usually a member of graduate faculty whose research interests may lie outside the student's immediate area of research. The student must submit an electronic copy of the thesis to the Nursing Graduate Program, which will be sent electronically to all examiners including an external examiner at least two weeks before the MSc defense.

THE ORAL DEFENSE

The Master's thesis defense is organized by the Nursing Graduate Program Office. The Examination Committee consists of a minimum of four graduate faculty members, of which at least three are members of the student's Supervisory Committee. The Assistant Dean Nursing Graduate Studies will appoint one member (not the student's supervisor or the external examiner) to chair the examination. The MSc defense will be open to the Faculty of Health Sciences community.

The Examination Chair will ask all persons except the Examination Committee to leave the room in order to discuss the format of the examination and the responsibilities of the examiners. The examination will consist of an oral overview (15 - 20 minutes) of the thesis given by the student, followed by a series of questions asked by the members of the Examination Committee in turn. All examiners are expected to ask at least one relevant question. At the end of the defense, the Examination Committee will consider their decision in closed session. The Examination Chair does not normally have voting privileges. The majority rules in case of a split vote but if there is a “tie” then the Chair must vote to break the “tie”. The Chair will then call the student into the room to give the committee's decision.

When the student has successfully completed their oral examination and has made all required revisions to the thesis as recommended by his/her examining committee, they must file an **electronic version** of their final thesis to “**Digital Commons**” <http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=4&navoid=191#2.8> Theses and forward the “Final Thesis Submission Form”, which was previously signed by the Chair of their examination committee and later by the supervisor, to the Thesis Coordinator at the School of Graduate Studies, GH 212. Additional information on thesis preparation and submission can be found on the SGS website:

<http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=4&navoid=191#2.8> Theses

A student may choose to have their thesis bound for themselves and one for their supervisor. The cost of binding is borne by the student, **not** by the University.

7 DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE (PhD)

Students enrolled in the PhD program are required to complete a minimum of 3 graduate half courses which must include one required course: NUR 700, the Philosophical Bases of Nursing Research. Students who did not complete a course equivalent to NUR 701 in the Master’s program must do so in their PhD program. The other two courses are electives and should be chosen in consultation with their Supervisor, to complement the thesis research. Students must also complete an approved research methods half course and a statistics course if such courses were not taken as part of their master’s degree. Students may choose to take additional courses and this should also be negotiated with their supervisor.

PROGRAM DURATION

Completion of the PhD degree is normally limited to six years from initial registration into the full-time program, although students typically complete the program within four years. Students who have been registered as full-time for longer than the normal period of funding eligibility (four calendar years) will automatically be assessed for discounted fees (currently equal to part-time). The time for completion of the PhD program for those admitted to a

part-time program is normally limited to eight years from initial registration at McMaster as a PhD student.

THE EDUCATION PLAN

Each incoming student to the PhD programs will develop an education plan, with their Supervisor, (1) to plan the course selection for their terms in the program, (2) name the membership of their supervisory committee, (3) provide a brief statement of the students' intended thesis topic, and (4) provide the date of the first supervisory committee meeting, which must take place within six months of enrolment in the program. The Education Plan Form, available at on the Nursing Graduate Program Communication Hub on Avenue to Learn must be completed within the first three months prior to the first meeting of the Supervisory Committee. It is the responsibility of the student to update and maintain the education plan. Please forward the Education Plans electronically to Nursing Graduate Program gradson@mcmaster.ca. Updated education plans should be submitted annually.

8 PHD THESIS WORK

SELECTION OF THESIS TOPIC

1. After careful consideration, the Student and Supervisory Committee must agree on the topic of the thesis proposal that will be of interest and value to the Student and which merits independent study. Topic selection and committee approval must be completed within the first 9 months from the start of the program for full time students and within the first 12 months from the start of the program for part time students.
2. The topic will constitute the focus of the PhD thesis-related work. The proposal can be situated within larger research programs of Supervisors but the proposal may not be identical to any of the grants held or submitted by Supervisors in the department.
3. Responsibility for ensuring that the proposed research is genuinely novel rests initially with the Student and Supervisor. If students' work is situated within a program of research of the Supervisor, clear justification for this course of action must be provided, in addition to detailed explanation about how the students' contributions will be unique.

9 The THESIS PROPOSAL for COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION (PhD students)

In the PhD program, the the evaluation of the written thesis proposal and oral defense of the proposed research forms the basis of the comprehensive exam.

PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

1. It is a university regulation that students must pass the comprehensive examination as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. Normally after the required courses are completed and normally before beginning data collection for the thesis, students in the nursing doctoral program will complete the comprehensive examination process.
2. The purpose of the Comprehensive Examination is to evaluate the doctoral student's ability to acquire and critically appraise and synthesize information on an argued thesis topic, to apply and integrate a conceptual framework or theory as a basis for examination of the variables under study, derived logically from the evidence review, to formulate a hypothesis or research question addressing an outstanding question in the field, and to design a proposal to carry out the proposed research. The comprehensive examination process should ideally result in publishable papers.
3. The comprehensive examination consists of two components evaluated together: 1) A written thesis proposal, including introduction and background, problem statement and research questions, comprehensive literature review, conceptual framing or theoretical background, research design and methods, plan for data analyses, feasibility and timeline; and 2) An oral defense of the proposal which includes an examination committee. The rationale for these two components (written and oral) is that to be successful in the PhD program, students must be able to develop a detailed proposal that is with sound logic of argument; and that is rigorous, appropriately situated or framed, conceptually; innovative; feasible; and defensible.

TIMING OF THE EXAMINATION

1. Normally, full time students are expected to complete the comprehensive examination between the 12th and 18th month, and for part time students, by the 24th to 36th month following the start of their doctoral studies. Usually, students complete the required courses before beginning the comprehensive examination process. Failure to successfully complete the comprehensive examination within 24 months for full time students, and within 36 for part time students, will require withdrawal from the program. The student must have had at least one official Supervisory committee meeting and an educational plan submitted to the Office of Nursing Graduate Studies before beginning the comprehensive process.

Timeline to Examination

2. The Supervisory committee is responsible for determining readiness of the written proposal to be put forward for examination by examiners external to the committee. Regular Supervisory committee meetings should be planned to monitor progress of proposal development and to provide regular feedback. The minimum requirement for meetings is one per term. It is

expected that students are meeting regularly with their Supervisors, between committee meetings, as they work on their proposals.

3. By the 18th month of the full time student's program, at the latest, or 24th month of the part time student's program, the Supervisory committee must propose a tentative, projected date for oral defense of the thesis proposal to the Assistant Dean of the Nursing Graduate Program. The Supervisory committee will recommend potential examiners (two are needed) to the Assistant Dean for approval. The proposal will be due to the approved examiners three weeks prior to the date of the defense, once booked.
4. Once the date of the defense has been set, if a fails to complete the proposal in time the student will be considered to have failed the first attempt at the defense. After a second failure to submit the proposal on time, the student will be considered to have failed the comprehensive exam and will be asked to withdraw from the PhD Program.

Part 1 of Comprehensive Exam: THE WRITTEN PROPOSAL

Thesis proposals should be brief, concrete, and focused. Recommended page lengths are provided for general guidance. The purpose of the proposal is to set out a plan for the thesis research and for writing the thesis. The proposal also functions as a kind of contract between the student and the committee. A concrete thesis proposal, once approved, should eliminate the possibility of later conflict over the scope and nature of the thesis.

For the purpose of the comprehensive exam, the written proposal is evaluated by external examiners only (see the Nursing Graduate Program Communication Hub on Avenue to Learn for Comprehensive Examination Forms). By putting the student forward for the oral defense, it is assumed the Supervisor and Supervisory Committee approve the proposal. Students should submit the written proposal to the Graduate Nursing Program and provide a copy to the Supervisor and Supervisory Committee.

Students will receive examiner evaluation of the written proposal and feedback to consider for the oral examination from the Graduate Nursing Program one week prior to the oral exam. This evaluation and feedback will be shared with the Supervisor and Supervisory Committee.

1. The written thesis proposal elements should include:
 - a) A clear introductory statement of the problem to be researched. The reason for proposing the particular research the role of nursing and potential impact must be stated. (Length: up to a maximum 5 pages)
 - b) A comprehensive, critical appraisal, review and synthesis of the relevant theoretical and empirical literature in the specific area of the thesis. (Length: up to a maximum 20 pages)
 - c) Application and integration of a conceptual framework or theory (Length: up to a maximum 5 pages)

- d) A detailed statement of the problem to be researched, including research questions to be addressed or hypotheses to be tested. The nature of this section will depend upon the style of work of the thesis and will, for example, generally be worked out in greater detail for a statistical study than for research employing methods of participant observation. (Length: up to a maximum of 5 pages.)
- e) A detailed description of the research methods to be employed in the thesis, with sound justification and related ethical considerations, and the manner in which they will be employed. (Length: up to a maximum of 10 pages)
- f) A tentative schedule of work, indicating when each part of the thesis is to be completed. (Length: 1 page)
- g) Identification of potential sources of funding
- h) Research "instruments," such as questionnaires or interview schedules, should be appended to the proposal. A tentative chapter outline, with chapter titles and one-sentence descriptions.

Part 2 of the Comprehensive Exam: THE ORAL DEFENSE OF THE PROPOSAL

The evaluation of the written proposal and communication about the oral defense of the proposal (including date, time, and room location) to student, Supervisory Committee and external examiners will be organized through the Graduate Nursing Program.

1. The student will be expected to present and defend the thesis proposal. This includes providing reasoned arguments in support of the area under study, a demonstration of ability to use the information acquired in the literature search and defend the hypotheses or research questions formulated, and rationalization of the weaknesses and strengths of the study methods and identify appropriate strategies to address limitations.
2. Students should plan to arrive at least 30 minutes prior to the oral examination.
3. The oral examination will consist of the following steps:
 - a) A notice will be placed on the door of the examination room noting that an examination is in progress and that no one is allowed to enter the room once the examination has begun.
 - b) Before commencing the oral examination, the Chair will brief the Examiners in closed session on the examination process and evaluations.
 - c) The Chair then brings the candidate into the room, introduces the candidate and the examination committee. The Chair reviews the guidelines about observers and consequences: they may not participate in the oral examination; they are present only as observers. Should any observer ask a question or make a comment during the examination, they will be asked to leave the room.

- d) The Chair will ask the candidate to present the proposal. This should last no more than 20 minutes. Visual aids may be used and notes consulted. The session will be closed after the presentation is delivered.
 - e) The Chair will then instruct the candidate to defend the proposal by responding to questions posed by the examiners and the Supervisory committee. The examiners and members will pose questions in sequence, beginning with the examiners. Normally two rounds of questioning will be allowed and not more than two hours, in total, should be spent on the defense process. Since the prime purpose of the examination is to assess the student's ability to synthesize and critically evaluate knowledge, the questions should reflect this purpose.
 - f) One of the Chair's roles is to ensure that the examination takes place in a constructive atmosphere. The Chair does not question the candidate but may rephrase questions asked by the Examiners.
 - g) The candidate withdraws from the examination room after the proposal has been examined so that the examiners can independently rate the presentation.
 - h) After the examination, the Chair secures the evaluations of the Examiners and committee members on the form provided; the Chair does not provide an evaluation. (Criteria for Evaluation of the Oral Presentation are in Appendix). To pass, no more than one negative evaluation is permitted; abstentions are not allowed. In the case of two or more negative evaluations, the student will be given a second opportunity to take the examination, which must occur within two weeks of the failure.
In order to receive a "Pass with Distinction", there must be unanimous agreement among all Examiners that the written proposal and oral defense of the proposal meet this criteria. Only the external examiners can provide input into whether the written proposal passed with distinction.
 - i) The candidate is invited back into the room, at which time the Chair summarizes the oral feedback.
4. Within one week after the oral examination, the Chair prepares a written summary of the evaluation of the written and oral examination and sends it to the candidate and his/her Supervisor, the Examiners, and the Assistant Dean of the Graduate Nursing Program, with a copy to the School of Graduate Studies.

COMPOSITION AND DUTIES OF THE EXAMINATION COMMITTEE (ORAL DEFENSE)

1. The examining committee will consist of two examiners external to the Supervisory committee, all members of the Supervisory committee and the Supervisor. The Assistant Dean will secure and appropriate external examiners, after taking into consideration those suggested by the Supervisory Committee. The Assistant Dean will also assign a Chair for the Oral Defense. The final selection will be based upon the expertise and availability of the

faculty suggested by the Supervisory committee. In the case of a re-examination, different external examiners will be secured.

2. Quorum will be constituted by the Supervisor plus another committee member and an external examiner.
3. During the oral examination, the examining committee is expected to ask questions related to the topic of the thesis proposal, and the strengths and weaknesses of the study plan. The examination committee should ask questions that probe the depth of the student's knowledge and require the student to use critical thinking and reasoning.
4. Only two attempts at the Comprehensive Examination are permitted under any circumstances. If a student fails both attempts at the Comprehensive Examination, the student will be requested to withdraw from the PhD Program. However, a student who has transferred from the MSc Program may be permitted to complete their MSc degree, if a petition for special consideration to permit this is supported by the Supervisor and the Assistant Dean, Nursing Graduate Program and approved by the Vice Dean Health Sciences, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies (Health Sciences).

COMPOSITION OF THE RE-EXAMINATION COMMITTEE

In the event that a candidate's first attempt is considered unsatisfactory, either the Assistant Dean, Nursing Graduate Program, or a senior faculty member delegate, must attend the candidate's second proposal defense attempt as no further attempts can be permitted. In either case, he/she will not take part in the examination and will not vote on the candidate's performance. He/she may be asked by the Examination Committee to comment during discussions of the 2nd examination outcome.

THE EXAMINATION CHAIR (ORAL DEFENSE)

1. The Assistant Dean, Nursing Graduate Program will assign a chair of the oral defense. The chair will ensure that the rules governing the conduct of the proposal defense are observed by both the examiners and the student.
2. The Chair must ensure that the defense takes place in a constructive atmosphere, and that the Examiners' questions are both pertinent (i.e. fall within the boundaries of the topic) and sufficiently probing. The Chair may also question the candidate. He/she may wish to rephrase questions/answers for clarification or bring a line of questioning to a close if the limits of a student's knowledge or understanding have been reached. The Chair also makes brief notes of the examiners' questions and of the student's responses.

Note: Once students have successfully completed the comprehensive examination, they continue to use the designation PhD (student). Since PhD students at McMaster do not undergo candidacy examinations, the designation (C) for Candidate after the title PhD is not appropriate.

10 PhD THESIS REQUIREMENTS AND DEFENSE

A PhD student is expected to prepare a thesis that embodies the results of original research and mature scholarship.

THESIS PROPOSAL APPROVAL PROCESS

See the Comprehensive Examination Process for more information about the Proposal Development and Approval process. PhD students must submit their proposal for full review by the Hamilton Integrated Research Ethics Board (HiREB).

PREPARATION OF THE THESIS

The “Guide for the Preparation of Master’s and Doctoral Theses” is found at: https://gs.mcmaster.ca/sites/default/files/resources/guide_for_the_preparation_of_masters_and_doctoral_theses-december_2016.pdf. This explains the style and format preferred by the School. Although the customary format for the PhD thesis is the traditional integrated document, students may choose to prepare a Sandwich Thesis. The Students Guide to the PhD Thesis Defense Process is found on the School of Graduate Studies website at: https://gs.mcmaster.ca/sites/default/files/resources/the_student_guide_to_the_phd_defence_process_0.pdf

The Supervisor and Supervisory Committee review the draft and make whatever recommendations they feel are necessary. It is often useful for the Supervisor, Supervisory Committee and the student to get together to obtain a common understanding of what changes in the first draft are necessary for an acceptable subsequent document. If the recommendations for change are at all contentious or detailed, the student can request a written statement from his committee outlining exactly what has to be done. When the student has presented a final draft which each of the Supervisory Committee members concludes is an acceptable document, the committee will confirm this and give the student permission to book a date for the thesis defense. As a general rule, the final version of the thesis does not exceed 300 pages (type-written, double spaced, letter-size paper) manuscript pages.

THE ORAL DEFENSE

The Oral Defense of a PhD Thesis is regulated by the School of Graduate Studies (not the Nursing Graduate Program). Please see the SGS website <https://graduate.mcmaster.ca/resources> for relevant resources, student forms and guides. For example see “Guide for Preparation of Masters and Doctoral Thesis” and “Student Guide to the Thesis Defense Process”.

- i. When the final version of the thesis has been accepted by the Supervisory Committee, the student (after consultation with their supervisor) will submit their request to defend on the on-line Thesis Defense System (TDS), https://gs.mcmaster.ca/sites/default/files/resources/the_student_guide_to_the_phd_defence_process_0.pdf The student will receive a confirmation email (to their McMaster email account) with a secure link to complete the thesis title and the estimated date to submit their thesis for examination to the School of Graduate Studies (usually four weeks from the date of the initial request to defend). Once the student has submitted this information, the supervisor will receive an email with a secure link to complete the “Nomination of an External Examiner to the Dean of Graduate Studies” electronic form. See https://gs.mcmaster.ca/sites/default/files/resources/the_student_guide_to_the_phd_defence_process_0.pdf for further information.
- ii. The supervisor (after consultation with the Supervisory Committee) will complete and submit this form on-line for the approval of all the committee members and program Chair. Potential examiners should be chosen for their expertise in the area of the student’s research and must not be recent collaborators of the supervisory committee members. From this list of recommended examiners, the School will contact an examiner and secure her/his agreement to read the thesis. Once selected the Supervisor must not contact potential examiners.
- iii. When the Nominations for External Examiners have been approved on-line by the supervisory committee and Chair, the student will receive a “Ready to Propose a Defense Date” email (with secure link) to complete the “Submission of a Doctoral Thesis for Examination and Identification of a Date for Oral Defense” form on-line. The student must submit their thesis to gthesis@mcmaster.ca. Once SGS has received the submitted thesis, the student can submit the date and time of defense, which should be pre-approved by their supervisory committee. Once submitted, the committee will receive an email that will link them to the submission form to approve the date and time of defense. In addition, each member will indicate that they have read and judged the thesis in the form in which it is to be submitted. This should occur no later than 4 weeks before the defense before the anticipated defense. The Academic Services Officer at the School of Graduate Studies (GH-212) and the Nursing Graduate program will be informed of the student’s request to defend via email and will have access to the on-line process. The School will assume that the Supervisory Committee members already have copies of the thesis. For more information concerning any details of thesis defense, please see the Thesis Defense Scheduling timetable https://gs.mcmaster.ca/sites/default/files/resources/the_student_guide_to_the_phd_defence_process_0.pdf

- iv. The PhD defense is organized by the School of Graduate Studies (GH-212). Students and supervisors may request an expedited plan for the defense. In this case, the responsibility for securing an external examiner and dates sits with the supervisor. The Examination Committee will consist of the supervisor, some or all of the other Supervisory Committee members, the external examiner (if he/she wishes to attend) and the Examination Chair plus one representative of the faculty at large (if the external attends, no representative of the faculty is required). The Chair and the faculty representative may be members of the School of Nursing, as long as they are at arm's length from the Supervisor. The School of Graduate Studies will send a copy of the thesis to each internal examiner and will also send one copy to an external examiner suggested by the Supervisory Committee. The latter is given one month to read the thesis. The external examiner will report back to the School whether or not the thesis is acceptable for defense. If it is acceptable, the School of Graduate Studies will confirm the date and time, and will arrange the location for the examination. The identity of the external examiner is not revealed to the student without that individual's permission.

- v. A PhD Examination Chair, appointed by and representing the Dean of Graduate Studies, will oversee the PhD defense; the Examination Chair does not have voting privileges. The examination is normally open to all University faculty and students. The examination is conducted in essentially the same manner as described for the MSc defense (see above). Any questions posed by the external examiner who is unable to attend the examination will be asked by either the supervisor or the Chair in proxy. When the student has successfully completed their oral examination and has made all required revisions to the thesis as recommended by his/her examining committee, they must file an electronic version of their final thesis to "Digital Commons" [http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=4&navoid=191#2.8.3 Publication of Electronic Theses at McMaster University](http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=4&navoid=191#2.8.3_Publication_of_Electronic_Theses_at_McMaster_University) and forward the "Final Thesis Submission Form", which was previously signed by the Chair of their examination committee and later by the supervisor, to the Thesis Coordinator at the School of Graduate Studies, GH 212. Additional information on thesis preparation and submission can be found on the SGS website: [http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=4&navoid=191#2.8.3 Publication of Electronic Theses at McMaster University](http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=4&navoid=191#2.8.3_Publication_of_Electronic_Theses_at_McMaster_University)

- vi. A student may choose to have their thesis bound for themselves and one for their supervisor. The cost of binding is borne by the student, **not** by the University.

11 GUIDELINES FOR PREPARATION OF SANDWICH THESES

A sandwich thesis consists of material that is previously published or prepared for publication as one or more journal articles or parts of books. Only PhD students are eligible to submit

sandwich theses. If planning to prepare a sandwich thesis, please refer to the University Guidelines for specific details. Guidelines can be found at:

<http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=25&navoid=4669>

Note These guidelines meet the requirements of the McMaster University School of Graduate Studies and have been summarized here so that all graduate faculty and students in the Nursing and Health Research Methodology are aware of the sandwich thesis option.

12 SUPERVISION AND THE SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE

THE SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE

Students in the thesis-based MSc and the PhD programs will have confirmed their Supervisor prior to admission to their Program. The Supervisor, assisted by the Supervisory Committee, provides leadership and guidance to the student throughout the time the student is registered in the Program.

The Supervisor is responsible for assembling a Supervisory Committee, and this is generally done after discussion with the student. The committee should be balanced in terms of background and experience related to the thesis topic and the student. The committee must meet with the student within a maximum of six months from the time that the student first registers in the Program. The committee consists of the Supervisor, who will chair the committee, and at least two other members of graduate faculty from McMaster University, one of whom must be an approved member of the Nursing Faculty. Additional committee members may be added as required. A non-graduate faculty member may be invited to join the Supervisory Committee (as an optional fourth member) at the discretion of the Vice-Dean Health Sciences, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies (Health Sciences). The appointment of 4th members who are not faculty members of McMaster University requires permission of the Dean of Graduate Studies.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

The Assistant Dean Nursing Graduate must attend the first supervisory committee meeting as a non-voting observer to acquaint herself/himself with the student and members of the committee. At the first committee meeting, the student should provide a brief overview of her/his background, career goals and thesis plan, since this is often the first time all members of the supervising committee will be together. It is also useful to review the particular expertise that each member of the Supervisory Committee brings to the committee. The Supervisory Committee should also review the Education Plan and discuss time lines for completion of the program requirements. After the first meeting, each student is expected to meet with his/her Supervisory Committee once every six months unless the committee believes that more frequent meetings are necessary. A Supervisory Committee meeting may

be particularly important if the student is having difficulties with the research project. On these occasions, an extraordinary meeting can be called by either the supervisor or the student.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

It is the responsibility of both the supervisor and student to ensure that Supervisory Committee meetings take place and are officially recorded using the electronic PhD committee meeting form. Please email the Nursing Graduate Program to initiate this form. The form for MSc Committee Meetings is available at on the Nursing Graduate Program Communication Hub on Avenue to Learn.

On the report, each committee member must indicate whether the progress made by the student respecting course work and thesis research has been 'excellent', 'satisfactory', 'marginal' or 'unsatisfactory' (MSc form) or 'excellent', 'good', 'marginal' or 'unsatisfactory' (PhD form). If a 'marginal' or 'unsatisfactory' rating is given by any one member, another committee meeting must be held within three months to re-assess the student's progress; the Nursing Program Assistant Dean may be invited to attend this meeting (as a non-voting member) at the invitation of either the student or the supervisor. Further action, that may include withdrawal from the program, is required if ratings continue to be unsatisfactory.

13 TRANSFER PROCESS

FROM THESIS - BASED TO COURSE - BASED MSc

Students may request to transfer from the thesis-based to the course-based MSc, after consultation with their Supervisor. The student must write a letter of request to transfer to the Assistant Dean of Nursing Graduate Program. A letter of support from the supervisor must accompany the student's letter.

FROM THE COURSE-BASED TO THESIS -BASED MSc OPTION

Transfer from the course-based to thesis-based option requires a letter of request from the student to the Assistant Dean, Nursing Graduate Program, with a letter of support from the Advisor (Course-based). Students requesting to move from course to thesis-based must also have a letter from a supervisor indicating willingness to supervise the MSc Thesis.

FROM MSc TO PhD STREAM

Students in the MSc stream with the support of the Supervisory Committee or Advisor may request transfer to PhD status without completion of the MSc Degree. The objectives of the transfer process are to: a) to assess the potential of the candidate to carry out independent,

original research and b) to consider the suitability of the candidate for direct admission to PhD program.

Students and supervisors who are interested in transfer to PhD, should contact the Nursing Graduate Program at least four months prior to potential transfer. A review of requirements and prerequisites will occur at this time. Transfer to PhD should happen no sooner than two terms and no later than 22 months after initial registration in a Master's program (as per School of Graduate Studies Calendar 2.1.2)

<http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=25&navoid=4667#2.1.2> Admission Requirements

A signed letter from the thesis supervisor, supporting the student's application and suitability for PhD level study is required. The letter must be forwarded to the Assistant Dean, Nursing Graduate Studies. The student and supervisor are responsible for initiating the petition for special consideration form

https://gs.mcmaster.ca/sites/default/files/resources/petition_june2018.pdf

The Assistant Dean of Nursing Graduate Program will make forward the request to the Vice Dean Health Sciences, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies (Health Science) in the School of Graduate Studies for approval.

14 PRIMARY HEALTH CARE NURSE PRACTITIONER (PHCNP) CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students enrolled in the PHCNP certificate program complete the seven required half course offered through the NP Consortium (NUR 761- 767). For more information about the NP courses, see http://np_education.ca or see <https://nursing.mcmaster.ca/programs/graduate/courses>

PROGRAM DURATION

The seven required courses must be completed in one year of full-time study. Once the PHCNP courses have been completed successfully, students are eligible to write their RN (Extended Class) exams.

15 GUIDELINES REGARDING, VACATION, LOA, PARENTAL LEAVE AND WITHDRAWAL

ABSENCE FROM CAMPUS

Students are expected to be geographically available and visit the campus regularly during their

period of study. Students may arrange, through the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies (Health Sciences) and the School of Graduate Studies, to be “full-time off campus” for periods of up to a year. During this time the student continues to pay fees and to be considered to be working toward completion of their degree. Students planning to be off campus must complete the form Request to be Full-time Off-campus

https://gs.mcmaster.ca/sites/default/files/resources/full_time_off_campus_request_form_-_revised_july_2017.pdf to request permission to be absent from campus.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE, MATERNITY/PARENTAL LEAVE, VACATION

- Leaves of Absence: please refer to Section 2.5.7 in the School of Graduate Studies Calendar, available at http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=25&navoid=4667#2-5-7_leaves_of_absence
- Vacations: please refer the School of Graduate Studies Calendar, Section 2.5.8, available at http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=25&navoid=4667#2-5-8_vacations
- Petitions for Special Consideration: Please refer to the School of Graduate Studies Calendar, Section 2.5.9, available at http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=25&navoid=4667#2-5-9_appeals_and_petitions_for_special_consideration WITHDRAWAL

A student wishing to withdraw from the Nursing program for personal reasons is asked to write a letter to their faculty supervisor/ advisor, the Nursing Assistant Dean, and to the Vice-Dean Health Sciences, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies (Health Sciences) detailing the reasons for withdrawal.

Students who choose to withdraw must also complete a Request for Change in a Graduate Students Status form. This form is online:

https://gs.mcmaster.ca/sites/default/files/resources/change_of_status_form_september_2017.pdf

Students are encouraged to consult the Calendar of the School of Graduate Studies for further details concerning any of the above regulations.

<https://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/index.php>

16 REVIEW OF ACADEMIC DECISIONS

The Student Appeal Procedures may be found at:

<https://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/>

17 ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

For guidance on how to proceed in the case of suspected academic dishonesty, please consult the Office of Academic Integrity and the complete policy at

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity/>. The Associate Deans of Graduate Studies are available for confidential consultations on matters related to academic integrity.

18 GENERAL INFORMATION AND ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

STUDENT ROOM:

HSC 4N70 is the student room for Health Sciences Graduate Students. This is a space where you can relax, socialize and study. Wireless internet is available. You will be given permission for electronic entry to this room activated by your FHS Student ID Card.

COMMUNICATIONS

Please note we will be using your McMaster e-mail for all communication concerning your graduate studies. Please be sure to check on a regular basis. If you have another email, link your McMaster email to it so that any message sent to you by our office will be received.

PARKING

Applications for a parking permit are available from E.T. Clarke Building (Room 102) <http://parking.mcmaster.ca/>. Further information may be obtained by phoning ext. 24232.

WHO TO ASK FOR HELP?

- i. Your supervisor or advisor is the first person to contact with academic or personal issues. She or he carries the overall responsibility for all aspects of your degree work.
- ii. If your supervisor or advisor is not able to help or is not available then, the Assistant Dean is the next person to approach with academic or personal issues.
- iii. If the Assistant Dean is not able to help, she may refer you to the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies (Health Sciences). To arrange an appointment with the Vice-Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies (Health Sciences) please contact her Administrative Assistant at ext. 21609.

- iv. For financial matters (e.g. TAs, payroll), remedial counseling, University policies and procedures, please contact the Nursing Graduate Program office (gradson@mcmaster.ca)

- v. Students with disabilities (learning, mobility, etc) that require academic accommodations may discuss their needs with their supervisor/advisor, Assistant Dean, and/or contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) <http://sas.mcmaster.ca/>, (905) 525-9140, ext 28652, McMaster University Student Centre (MUSC) Basement, Room B107. Email: sas@mcmaster.ca

- vi. For all aspects of Admissions procedures, information (including Post-Degree), all in-course program related issues, such as course registration, comprehensive examinations, MSc oral defenses and transfers from MSc to PhD, please the Graduate Program office (gradson@mcmaster.ca).

NURSING EMPLOYMENT REGULATIONS

All Nursing students may continue to work if they have discussed their timetable with their supervisor or advisor and the Assistant Dean of the Nursing Program, and all parties have agreed to an arrangement. University regulations are that students enrolled in full time studies should limit employment to 10 hours a week on average (or one 12 hour shift). (Sections 2.5.2/2.5.3/2.5.4 of the Graduate Calendar <http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=25&navoid=4667#2.5.2> Provincial Definition of Full- and Part-time Status).

VISA STUDENTS

New visa students who register in September must provide the School of Graduate Studies with photocopies of their Student Authorizations early in September. Copies should be sent to the School of Graduate Studies, Gilmour Hall Rm. 212.

In addition, returning visa students who have recently renewed their documents must submit copies to the Nursing Graduate Program Office (gradson@mcmaster.ca) in early September. Student number and Program name (Nursing Graduate Program) should be included on all copies. It is the responsibility of every visa student to make sure the School of Graduate Studies - GH-212 have a copy of his/her most recent visa documents.

ONTARIO HEALTH INSURANCE

Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) coverage is restricted to permanent residents who live in Ontario. Permanent residents are Canadian citizens, landed immigrants and convention refugees.

Visa students are not eligible for OHIP coverage. Ontario Universities/Blue Cross have instituted a Health Insurance Plan (UHIP) which is mandatory for all visa students, unless they can provide evidence of an acceptable alternative coverage. All visa students must complete a UHIP application form and return it to the International Students' Advisor in Gilmour Hall, room 104. At present, Visa students will be reimbursed for single UHIP coverage.

19 FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF STUDENTS

EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL AWARDS:

All students must provide a copy of any external funding (personal awards and research funding) to the Nursing Graduate Program (HSC 2J21 or gradson@mcmaster.ca). External Awards: A number of external awards are available from numerous agencies to declared full-time students. A limited number of awards are available to students who are not employed full-time (e.g. Registered Nursing Association of Ontario and Canadian Nurses Foundation). Students will receive a competitions calendar (September) outlining awards for which they may apply during the current academic year.

Internal (McMaster University) Awards: Only declared full-time Nursing students are eligible to apply for internal awards. These awards are made primarily on the basis of academic qualifications by the Graduate Programs in Health Sciences Scholarship Selection Committee and the Scholarship Committee of Graduate Council. Internal awards will be advertised by e-mail as they become available each year. Students will also receive notification of details by e-mail outlining procedures for applying for these awards.

STUDENT PAYMENT REGULATIONS

The following information has been compiled to assist you in understanding the graduate student payroll system:

Where handled: All aspects of payments to graduate students (including Income Tax receipts and address changes) are handled in the School of Graduate Studies Office by Dina LoPresti (ext. 23686) or Lorna Thomas (ext. 24258). Inquiries about payments, etc. should be directed to Ms. Thomas, not to the Payroll Department. Social Insurance Number: You must provide a S.I.N. as soon as possible for payroll. Forms can be obtained from and submitted in person to, Hamilton Satellite Office, 2255 Barton St. East, Hamilton.

Employee Number: Your student number and your employee number are not the same. When asked for your employee number on documents pertaining to payments, please provide your employee number.

DIRECT DEPOSIT

Student payroll will be made by Direct Bank Deposit. An “**Employee Deposit Information**” form must be completed and a **voided** cheque must be attached. A "Statement of Earnings", is available to download from MOSAIC. You may obtain an application for direct deposit downloadable from the School of Graduate Studies website at: <https://student-accounts.mcmaster.ca/self-service/enroll-in-direct-deposit/>

FINANCIAL STATEMENT:

A statement with details of the financial support for the coming academic year will be provided to all paid students in early fall. This is sent to each full-time student (with a copy to the Supervisor) detailing external or internal awards, TA support and any contribution from the supervisor's grant(s). Students who are employed full-time will not receive a financial statement.

20 EXIT SURVEY

All PhD, MSc and NP students leaving the Nursing Program are requested to take a few minutes to complete an **EXIT SURVEY**. This online survey will be sent to students by email following convocation in June and November. The contents of the Exit Interview survey are **confidential** and will be summarized by the Nursing Program Officer. Not clear of difference between exit on line survey and exit interview

The purpose of the exit survey is:

- to discover the type of employment the student will be engaged in;
- to find out the student's opinion of the Nursing Graduate Program, particularly its strengths and weaknesses

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON MANY OF THESE MATTERS SEE THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES CALENDAR, <https://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/index.php?catoid=37>