

PROGRAM MILESTONES

Preliminary Examination

When students have successfully completed the seven first-year courses above, they are eligible to sit for the Preliminary Examination. The purpose of the Preliminary Examination is to evaluate students' retention, application and integration of the foundational courses of the Doctoral Program and to use the results in subsequent advising.

Candidacy Examination

Qualifying for candidacy. All students in the Ph.D. in Nursing Program are required to successfully complete a qualifying candidacy examination. The candidacy exam allows faculty to systematically evaluate the student's ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate research and substantive knowledge in nursing. The successful completion of a qualifying examination permits the student to proceed to conduct dissertation research.

To be eligible for candidacy, students must have completed 42 hours of required course work (excluding dissertation) and have maintained a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale in the doctoral program. The examination consists of two parts, a one day written examination and post-satisfactory completion of the written examination, a 2 hour closed session oral examination. When the student successfully completes the candidacy examination and has been approved by the appropriate administrative bodies of the program, they may begin the dissertation and proudly use the designation of PhD_c.

Dissertation

The dissertation is based upon original investigation and demonstration of mature scholarship and critical judgment in the theoretical and methodological approaches to development of nursing knowledge. The dissertation is expected to be the first step in the development of a program of research and scholarly activity. Students are eligible to begin the dissertation after successfully passing the candidacy examination and obtaining the approval of the dissertation committee. Although Year 3 is designated for the dissertation, it is possible that the student's research topic and time management may extend the work of the dissertation beyond the third year. A minimum of 30 dissertation credit hours are required.

Dissertation Proposal. The dissertation proposal is a document that normally includes an outline of the parameters of the projected dissertation topic with a rationale and statement of the problem to be researched, the methodology and design of the study, a preliminary review of the literature substantiating the need for the study, and the principle sources of information for the dissertation. The proposal must be in writing. Approval of the proposal permits the student to proceed with the dissertation.

Dissertation committee. The doctoral dissertation committee will guide and approve the acceptability of the dissertation. The Committee will consist of a minimum of five (5) members, four from the doctoral nursing faculty and at least one outside member. Although the doctoral faculty is viewed as one body, the committee will have representation from nursing faculty whose appointments are located at both Kent State University and at The University of Akron. At least one dissertation committee nursing faculty member will be from each campus. Other qualifications of members will be consistent with the

student's area of research and with the requirements for doctoral committees as stated in the policies and general catalogs of both universities.

Oral defense. When the dissertation is completed a meeting will be scheduled for the student's defense of the dissertation. The candidate is expected to respond to substantive and methodological questions related to the dissertation.