



## THE REVISIONING PROCESS

In the fall of 2013, the PhD Working Group came together to review and propose potential revisions to the doctoral program. Our most pressing concern was that in the 22 year history of the program, there had only been two comprehensive reviews, and it had been 8 years since the most recent; faculty were saying that “nothing in the program has changed, but the world is different now”. We were also aware that some students were feeling that the program was not always meeting their needs as well as it could, and there was increasing interest at the university level and across Canada in examining the role of the PhD more broadly.

We began by reviewing various documents (historic and recent) describing the goals and structures of research intensive PhD programs (UBC, Canada, and the US). Then, through the fall and winter terms we conducted a series of consultations with faculty, students, and adjunct faculty, asking people to consider the roles, contributions and competencies of the PhD nurse for the future. From these wide-ranging conversations, the following two ideas emerged as points of important consensus:

1. Expanded spheres of influence: The PhD should prepare nurses for roles in academia, and in policy and practice arenas.
2. Crosscutting competencies: The PhD is about learning the research and leadership skills needed to generate, integrate and translate knowledge aimed at improving health and health care.

This boiled down to the view that our current program did well at training people for academic roles with research skills to generate new knowledge, but there was enthusiasm for thinking beyond that. Everyone agreed that we wanted to have a program that can also prepare PhD nurses to work in policy and practice settings, and to have the research and leadership skills to integrate and translate existing knowledge. The program goal statement was revised to reflect these ideas, and was discussed and approved at a graduate faculty forum in April, 2014.

The first draft of program outcomes was completed in the fall of 2014, being the result of a thematic analysis of information garnered from three sources: (1) the stakeholder consultations; (2) two meetings of the CASN working group on *Nursing PhD Education in Canada* (Oct-Nov, 2014); and (3) a one-day UBC symposium *Re-imagining the PhD* (June, 2014).

The PhD working group further developed and revised the program outcomes and competencies, which were discussed and approved in a graduate faculty forum in February, 2015.

Finally, a curriculum mapping exercise was completed in the spring of 2015, which revealed particular gaps and areas of overlap in the existing course structure. After consultation with faculty who had extensive teaching experience in the program, curricular revisions were proposed by the working group, and were approved by GPC and caucus in October, 2015.

We were guided by three principles in revising the required coursework: (1) re-focus courses on what we consider to be current and core to the discipline of nursing; (2) ensure required courses are aligned with program outcomes; and (3) reduce the *required* credit load, freeing students to choose electives meeting their individual needs, thus maximizing the potential for individualizing the program.



Starting September 2016, students take three required courses (9 credits). The first term course on the philosophy of nursing knowledge was retained, while significant revisions were made to the second term course to address current philosophies, theories, and praxis in the application of nursing knowledge. Two advanced methods courses were removed as requirements and revisions were made to the remaining methods course to focus on advanced issues in research design. Also retained was the doctoral seminar (0 credits), which students take in both first and second term.

In summary, through this “revising” process, we revised the goal statement, developed a new set of program outcomes, re-structured the coursework, and identified a set of research and leadership competencies. No changes were made to the other curriculum components (comprehensive exam, candidacy exam, and dissertation research).

### **PhD Working Group**

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## GOAL STATEMENT

The purpose of the PhD Program in Nursing is to prepare graduates who demonstrate excellence in providing leadership to generate, integrate and implement new disciplinary knowledge aimed at improving nursing, health and health care. The PhD program prepares outstanding nurse leaders to have expanded spheres of influence through leadership roles in academic institutions, practice settings, and policy arenas.

Students work in collaboration with their research supervisor to develop a research training program that will meet their particular interests and needs, and foster their scholarly engagement with the discipline. Beyond completing the required coursework, students are expected to acquire research and leadership competencies by taking additional course electives and participating in a range of scholarly activities (e.g. seminars and conferences; independent studies and practicums; research and teaching assistantships).

## PROGRAM OUTCOMES

### **Graduates will:**

- A. Understand and critically analyse the epistemological, historical, and theoretical foundations of nursing scholarship.
- B. Command a substantive body of knowledge that is at the forefront of the discipline.
- C. Lead the conceptualization, design, and conduct of research to generate new knowledge or new applications that will make a substantial contribution to the discipline.



- D. Critically analyse, synthesise, and apply complex information that is relevant for practice and policy development.
- E. Effectively communicate complex and/or ambiguous ideas within and across practice and scholarly disciplines, and in society at large.
- F. Be prepared to influence and lead change aimed at improving nursing, health and health care.

## PHD PROGRAM: CORE CURRICULAR COMPONENTS

### 1. COURSEWORK

The required coursework comprises nine credits (NURS580, NURS581, and NURS554), plus two terms enrolled in the doctoral seminars (0 credits). Students are also encouraged to seek suitable electives with guidance from their supervisor.

#### **NURS 580 - The Philosophy of Evidence**

Prerequisite: NURS 511 or equivalent

This course introduces the philosophy of science and evidence as it is understood in the context of nursing scholarship. The learning activities provide an opportunity for critical appraisal of: the ways in which scientific activity within the applied health sciences, and particularly nursing as a practice discipline, is distinguished from other forms of scientific activity (which may not be practice or action oriented); the nature of discovery and exploration in the development of nursing knowledge; and the value of scientific inquiry in the context of the larger projects of an applied health discipline. It creates the philosophical foundation upon which students can create informed claims about knowledge, theory and evidence regarding phenomena of concern to the discipline.

#### **NURS 581 - Leadership in Knowledge Application and Translation**

Prerequisite: NURS 580

Through an examination of philosophies, theories and praxis in the application of nursing knowledge, this graduate level course will prepare students to lead innovative research, education and practice in knowledge application and translation. Learning activities will focus on theoretical and practical issues around developing and applying knowledge to improve health or health care systems. The course will provide an introduction to basic principles, conceptual frameworks, research design, and interventions used in knowledge translation, and students will develop capacity to engage with an array of knowledge users and stakeholders.



### **NURS 554 - Advanced Research Methods**

Prerequisites: NURS 580, and NURS 548 and NURS 549 or equivalent

This course involves intensive inquiry into research design issues relevant to nursing and health research, including the conduct of interdisciplinary research. It addresses issues in quantitative and qualitative research, and extends the discussion to consider the design and conceptual complexities of mixed methods. The course offers an integrated approach to considering the relationships between research questions, design, methods, and reporting of data from multiple sources. The course is designed to be an interactive seminar.

### **NURS 601 - Doctoral Seminars**

Prerequisites: None

This course is designed as a set of student-centered seminars to provide an ongoing opportunity for students to discuss phenomena relevant to nursing science, academia, and the process of undertaking doctoral thesis research.

## **2. PORTFOLIO OF RESEARCH AND LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES**

To be prepared to assume leadership as a nursing scholar, students will develop a portfolio of relevant experiences that show how they have achieved the following set of competencies. These will be accomplished through a range of learning experiences that each student will plan (with guidance from their supervisor) according to their individual needs.

1. Writing for peer-reviewed publication
2. Writing competitive research funding proposals (e.g. SoN Internal Research Grants)
3. Conducting peer reviews (e.g. manuscripts, grant proposals)
4. Conference & seminar participation (e.g. presentations, networking, planning)
5. Research teamwork (e.g. participation, management)
6. Interdisciplinary collaboration (e.g. committee work, project leadership)
7. Knowledge application (e.g. KT planning, implementation, policy innovation)
8. Community engagement (e.g. leading a clinical research team)
9. Teaching (e.g. planning, leading)
10. Mentoring & consulting skills (e.g. advising a clinical research team)



### 3. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

Students must complete their comprehensive exam within the first 24 months in the doctoral program. After completing required coursework (plus electives as determined in collaboration with the supervisor), students prepare an annotated bibliography. This serves as the foundation for the comprehensive exam, which comprises two essays in the form of a take home exam and an oral defence. Further details are available [here](#) on the SoN website.

### 4. CANDIDACY EXAM (PROPOSAL DEFENSE)

Students must complete their candidacy exam within the first 36 months in the doctoral program. After completing the comprehensive exam, students establish their supervisory committee and proceed to develop their proposal. The written proposal is approved by the committee, and is followed by an oral defence. Further details are available [here](#) on the SoN website.

### 5. DISSERTATION RESEARCH

Students complete their dissertation research under the supervision of their committee. They must submit the written dissertation (in either traditional or manuscript style) and complete the final oral examination no later than 72 months of their admission to the doctoral program. This process is coordinated through the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. Further details are available [here](#) on the SoN website.