Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing (PhD)

Distance Accessible

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Nursing is designed to prepare professional nurses as scholars, leaders, and researchers who will make a substantive contribution to the body of knowledge for the discipline of nursing and thereby improve health outcomes for those who receive nursing care. The program of studies builds on preparation at the master’s or baccalaureate level. Graduates are prepared for culturally effective leadership roles in research, education, health policy, and health care. Doctoral students have the opportunity to develop expertise and conduct research in a selected content area. In addition to structured coursework, the program builds upon a mentorship model which recognizes that research skills are learned most effectively by working with a faculty research mentor, who provides opportunities to practice the use of research techniques and the design and execution of original research within a focused program of research. Graduates of the PhD program will be able to:

Outcomes

Examine models, concepts and theories for their application in expanding the body of nursing and health care knowledge.
Contribute to nursing science and health care through research that is disseminated in professional publications and presentations to the scientific communities and health care consumers.
Conduct health care investigations based upon scientifically sound conceptual and methodological decisions about research designs, measures, and analytic methods.
Reflect a consistent commitment to scientific integrity in the design, conduct, and dissemination of research.
Initiate and collaborate in interdisciplinary research and scholarly endeavors that contribute to health outcomes in a culturally effective manner.
Assume leadership roles in research and scholarship.

Is the program online?

This is a distance accessible PhD program, not an online program. All core courses are offered in an online format; however, cognates or electives taken outside the School of Nursing may not be available in an online format. In addition, students will be required to attend a two-day orientation at the beginning of the program and a one week summer intensive session between their first and second year of enrollment in the program. The orientation and intensive are both held on the UAB campus. Students should also expect to spend time on campus in a more concentrated way to accomplish the objectives of their research practicum hours and to work with their research mentor on their dissertation proposal, as well as to attend other not-for-credit offerings to enrich their study. Examples of these activities include Center for Nursing Research “Brown Bag” lunches, presentations by Visiting Scholars, and research sessions within various campus Centers.

Can you be a part-time student?

Yes, but you should plan to take six credits a term as a part-time student in order to progress and keep your knowledge base current throughout the coursework. Six credits are usually equal to taking two 3-credit courses.

How long does it take?

If you are a full-time student (9 or more credits per term) and begin studies in the fall term, you can typically complete the coursework and other requirements for admission to candidacy in six terms. If you allow four to five terms on average for completion of the dissertation, the total program can be completed in approximately three and a half to four years. If you are enrolled part-time, it may take an additional year or more to finish the program. Students must complete all degree requirements within seven years.

Can you enter other times than fall?

Fall begins the normal sequence of coursework for post-master’s students. Post-baccalaureate PhD students may be admitted in any term, and often enter before fall to begin taking their required 15 credits of master’s level coursework.

Can you enroll before you are admitted?

No, students must be enrolled in a degree-seeking program to enroll in PhD courses.

Can you take courses elsewhere?

Yes, you can transfer in up to twelve semester credits of equivalent coursework from another accredited university. You should have the courses evaluated by the PhD Program Coordinator before taking them to ensure the courses will be considered equivalent coursework for the PhD degree. To do so, you must obtain the course syllabus and catalog description and send them to the PhD Program Coordinator (see below) for consideration.

UAB is an equal education opportunity institution.
Can you work full-time?
We have no stipulation that you cannot work full-time, unless you are a UAB employee. However, during the interview process, the faculty will determine what plans you have made to balance the various aspects of your life in order to be successful in the completion of the program. We have found that some individuals working full-time, commuting, and with major family responsibilities withdraw early in the program. However, there are examples of dedicated, motivated individuals who work and commute and are successful, although it can be quite stressful.

Must you have a research focus/interest when you enroll?
Yes, we accommodate students who show a close match to our faculty's research programs. Please review the list of faculty and their research and determine whether your research interests fit within those areas.

Do you prepare graduates to teach?
The required PhD course credits prepare you for research. Some students already have or have had a teaching career and coursework on teaching is not required in the basic program of studies. However, coursework is provided to prepare you for the faculty role should you desire teaching as a career goal. Teaching courses are then added to the basic program of study. Adding these courses may lengthen the time to degree completion by one or more terms.

Are there funds to support doctoral students?
A listing of School of Nursing scholarships is available on the School of Nursing web site. Information about applying for these scholarships can be obtained from the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs at the School of Nursing. In addition, several fellowships are available that provide stipend support. Some of these also provide tuition and fees. Fellowships are awarded to individuals who are enrolled in a full-time program of studies. There are numerous other sources of funds that are competitively awarded. Students can apply for funding once they are admitted to the program or during their program with the assistance of their faculty mentor. Dedicated individuals can usually acquire the funds necessary to support their study.

What does the program prepare you to do?
You will have a solid background in an area of research and be well connected with researchers in your area of interest, both nationally and internationally, through the mentorship of your advisor. You will learn to publish and present scholarly work in regional, national, and international forums. With the support of faculty researchers, you will gain hands on research skills, develop research proposals, execute research, disseminate findings, and learn to be part of an interdisciplinary community of researchers and scholars. If you do not have a teaching background from your previous education and experience, you may take courses to prepare you for the teaching aspects of the faculty role. Our program prepares you for a faculty position in a nationally recognized research intensive or extensive university such as UAB, where research is an important and visible aspect of the university's mission. In addition, it prepares you for positions in the private or public sector where intervention programs are evaluated and research is conducted. A PhD positions you to be a national leader in the profession.

How do I apply?
The application for the PhD in Nursing program is available online through the UAB Graduate School, using a program called Apply Yourself. The link to the page is: https://app.applyyourself.com/?id=uab-grad

**Post-Baccalaureate PhD Option**
The School of Nursing offers an innovative opportunity for BSN nurses to prepare for careers in research and academia by completing the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Nursing degree. Students in this option complete 15 credits of designated master's level coursework in addition to the required PhD coursework described in program materials. This program of study allows students to go from a baccalaureate degree in nursing directly to a PhD degree. Thus, this option facilitates preparation of nurse researchers who are early in their career trajectories and who will have more years to build knowledge within a specific focal area. Requiring only 15 credits of master's level work within our program and placing baccalaureate prepared individuals immediately on research teams and with a mentor, will allow a student in this option to earn a PhD in approximately four years of full-time study or five and half years of part-time study.

To be considered, applicants must have, or be in the process of completing, a baccalaureate degree in nursing from an accredited institution in the United States. Admissions to the Post-Baccalaureate PhD program are competitive. Fellowships are available to support study, and are also awarded on a competitive basis. Applicants are required to submit all application materials required for the PhD program admission.

For additional information, visit our website at: [http://main.uab.edu/Sites/nursing/](http://main.uab.edu/Sites/nursing/) or contact:

Jennifer Frank, PhD
jfrent@uab.edu or
205-975-9423

General information about the application process:
Peter Tofani, MS, LTC(R) Assistant
Dean of Student Affairs (I) (205)
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