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## PhD in Nursing Curriculum and Structure

Course Requirements . The core courses constituting the PhD in nursing curriculum include courses in knowledge development and theory, research methods and statistics, and specialized, related courses pertinent to the student's research interests (Table 1). Courses are designed to help students develop in-depth knowledge in a focused area of research that is important to nursing practice. This knowledge includes the state of the evidence related to their focal area as well as ways to measure and analyze individual, family, social, environmental, and organizational variables that may influence clinical outcomes in that focal area.

Table 1. Required Courses for the PhD in nursing program

Content Areas	Required Courses and Credits
Knowledge Development and Theory (6 credits)	NURS 506: Nursing Epistemology (3 credits)
	NURS 511: Strategies for Theory Development (3 credits)
Research Methods (9 credits)	NURS 518: Qualitative Research Methods (3 credits)
	NURS 530: Advanced Research Methods I (3 credits)
	NURS 531: Advanced Research Methods II (3 credits)
Statistics (9 credits)	NURS 532: Basic Statistics (3 credits)
	NURS 630: Linear Models (3 credits)
	NURS 631: Multivariate Analysis (3 credits)

Each nursing PhD student's program is tailored to meet his /her specific research interests and learning needs. Students select the NURS 615: Topical Seminar in Health Care Research courses to develop expertise in their area of research interest. Courses may also be taken from outside the FPBSON in the student's research area. Such courses are identified as substantive in nature and are selected to prepare students to ask cutting edge questions about phenomena of interest to nursing and to design independent research to answer these questions. Students can elect to take additional credits using the NURS 601: Independent Study mechanism to study a phenomenon in more depth than is possible in a classroom setting or to work with a faculty member in another discipline around a specific issue. This mechanism has been very successful for students who have wanted to learn to conduct animal studies, perform specific lab assays, and use equipment to measure pulmonary mechanics, or conduct secondary analyses with large, preexisting national databases (i.e., Census data). Students who use NURS 601 credits to work with faculty in other disciplines have had the added benefit of interacting with doctoral students in these other disciplines. Faculty members in other disciplines who supervise NURS 601 often serve as the fourth member on the student's dissertation committee.



## MSN Curriculum and Structure

The FPBSON provides several entry options to the MSN program , including the traditional path for those with a BSN. The MSN program itself requires a minimum of 36 credit hours to graduate, but the majors require an average of 40 credit hours of graduate credit for the student who enters with a BSN degree. In most cases, courses are completed in three or four semesters (which may include the summer). The MSN program offers 12 different majors / areas of clinical specialization. Courses are offered in traditional and nontraditional formats, including intensive, web-based, and weekend courses. Some majors can be completed in a semi-distance format with limited trips to campus, making the MSN program feasible for students not living in the area. Individualized study plans are designed to meet individual clinical interests, learning needs, and career goals. Students can choose either a part-time or full-time program, with full-time consisting of 9 or more credits per semester and part-time being anything less. Clinical and research experiences are an integral part of the MSN program; most majors require a minimum of 500 clinical hours, though some programs require more. To be awarded an MSN degree, the student must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 and received a satisfactory grade of B or better in all nursing courses taken for credit as a MSN student. Degree requirements must be completed within 5 years of initial enrollment.

### Course Requirements of the MSN program .

As described above, students in the MSN program choose from several different majors, but all students must take ten core courses and must complete the required number of credit hours as well as clinical hours for the major area of specialization they select. The ten core courses comprise the core areas of professional development and scientific inquiry. Three additional core courses are required for those majors that prepare students as nurse practitioners. The general curriculum pattern constituting the core requirements is









Table 9. Sample FT study plan for psychiatric and mental health nursing CNS / NP  
Fall Semester - Year 1                      Spring Semester - Year 1

Table 11





Fall Semester ðYear 2	Spring Semester ðYear 2
Management acutely ill adults (4)	Special assessment (2)
Finance issues (1)	Cardiovascular seminar I (1)
Role development (1)	Cardiovascular seminar II (1)
Health policy (3) **	Advanced internship (1-5)
Evidence-based practice (2)	
Ethical issues (1)	
Fall Semester ðYear 3	Spring Semester ðYear 3
Epistemology (3) *	Research methods II (3) **
Research methods I (3) **	Qualitative methods (3) *
Linear models (3) *	Multivariate analysis (3) *
Fall Semester ðYear 4	Spring Semester ðYear 4



### Dissertation Committee Composition

The composition of the PhD student's dissertation committee will follow the same requirements as set forth in the Graduate Studies student handbook under the heading "Dissertation Advisory Committee" (page 12-13). Therefore, the committee will include "a minimum of four members of the university faculty, including at least one whose primary appointment is outside the student's program, department or school. The chair of the committee must be a Case Western Reserve University tenured or tenure-track faculty member in the student's program. "Other committee members may be on the non-tenure track; however, all members must meet the SGS's requirements for serving on a PhD dissertation committee. All committee members should be prepared at the doctoral level.

### Program Governance

The ultimate oversight of the combined MSN- PhD program will be done by the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education in the School of Nursing, who currently has administrative oversight over the BSN to PhD nursing program.

### Student Activities

Both the Directors of the MSN and PhD nursing program will ensure that students in the combined degree program are informed by email about activities sponsored by both graduate programs. Students will be encouraged to participate in regular School of Nursing and School of Graduate Studies activities as well as those targeted to them. Activities sponsored by the MSN program include get-togethers and dinners with faculty and student colleagues. Activities in the PhD in nursing program include gold bag luncheons, luncheons each semester with the Director of the PhD in nursing program, and the annual fall faculty and student get-together potlucmi6c16 (i6n) -10 t(r)-6 ( ) -11 .



