Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing Degree
Application Process & Instructions

Academic Year 2018 – 2019

APPLICATION DEADLINE
The School of Nursing welcomes applications to its Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Nursing program. If you have additional questions after reviewing the following instructions please contact the School as detailed at the end of this document.

The School of Nursing admits students for the fall semester each year. Admission consideration is extended to those applicants who complete and submit the online application and all required documents (outlined below) by the posted deadline. The PhD Doctoral Admissions Committee will only evaluate and review complete applications containing all required materials. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure the entire application (including reference letters) is received by the posted deadline.

Fall Semester
Final Deadline: December 12, 2017, is the final deadline for University Scholarship consideration.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION
The PhD program is a research-focused doctoral program in Nursing. At the end of the PhD Program students are expected to meet the following terminal objectives:

- Evaluate, critique, and synthesize research conducted in nursing and related disciplines.
- Understand and utilize multiple modes of inquiry in the design and conduct of nursing research.
- Use conceptual models and theories from nursing or related disciplines to design and implement nursing studies.
- Conduct research in a culturally competent manner using appropriate design and analysis techniques.
- Demonstrate scientific integrity and the protection of human subjects in the design, conduct and analysis of research studies.
- Translate research findings through multiple modes of dissemination for the purposes of improving health and health care systems.

Preference is given to applicants who will enroll in full-time study, which is defined as at least nine credit hours (typically three courses) per semester. Like the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the School of Nursing regards the PhD program as requiring full-time effort. In accordance with School of Nursing policy, PhD students who are not supported by T32 funding and who are employed by the University may work no more than 50 percent (20 hours/week) while actively engaged in coursework. PhD students supported by T32 funding are restricted to a maximum of 10 hours per week of outside work. Part-time study requires enrolling in six credit hours per semester.

APPLICATION PROCESS
Our goal for admissions is to select promising students who are a good fit to our program and who desire a research career upon program completion. To support PhD student-faculty engagement in the mentoring process, applicants must have a research topic that aligns with the research area (i.e., the scientific expertise in content, methods, and/or population) of one or more faculty members in the School of Nursing (examples of this can be found [here](http://nursing.unc.edu/academics/doctoral-program-2/faculty-student-matches/)).

The first step in this process is to carefully review the web page of faculty members who conduct research, and identify two faculty members whose scientific work reflects your research interests. Brief descriptions of faculty areas of research can be found [here](http://nursing.unc.edu/doctoral-program/faculty-advisors-research/), where there are links to individual faculty member’s web page(s). Once you have identified two potential faculty members, please complete a brief online survey that can be accessed [here](https://unc.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1SNGEpjF8tB6BElh). In this survey, you will identify the two faculty members of interest and submit a 200-300 word (2,000 character maximum) description of how your research interest aligns with the ongoing work of each faculty member identified. Completion of this survey alerts the faculty member to your interest in the possibility of working with them. You will receive an email response from that faculty member. Taking the time to determine student-faculty match is a crucial part of the admissions process, as a clearly articulated match, or “fit” with faculty members will strengthen your application.
Please be mindful that faculty members accept new students each year based in part on the faculty member’s capacity to commit to additional students. Each faculty member strives to provide a wide variety of guided research experiences and ample advisement time for each student accepted into our program. We only admit students for whom there is an appropriate research faculty match, and when a faculty member identified as an appropriate match has the capacity to work with you upon admission.

**PROGRAM PREREQUISITES**

**Education Requirement:** The minimum education requirement for all applicants is the Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing earned from a CCNE or NLNAC accredited School of Nursing in the U.S. or an international equivalent. The bachelor’s degree in nursing degree must have been conferred prior to matriculation in the PhD program. In addition to the BS degree, applicants may have earned a masters degree in nursing or a master’s degree in another field, but a master’s degree is not required. Applicants who have completed an RN to MSN program and are without an earned bachelor’s degree in any field may need to submit additional documentation about the curriculum of their specific RN to MSN program (please contact Office of Student Affairs for details, at either son_gradapp@unc.edu).

**Readmissibility:** All applicants must be admissible to all previously attended colleges/universities. If you have been declared academically ineligible and as such are unable to return to any previous institutions, you must contact that institution and seek documentation that reinstates your eligibility or your application cannot undergo review. Copies of ALL correspondence regarding your reinstatement request must be submitted in the application. Additionally, if your final institutional cumulative GPA at any previously attended college/university is below 2.0 (on a 4.0 scale), please provide documentation of your eligibility to return to that particular institution.

**Statistics Requirement:** Applicants who have not successfully completed (i.e., earned a passing grade) a credit-bearing, graduate level statistics course prior to admission, must complete a course prior to matriculation or in the first fall term of the PhD program in addition to a full-time course load (total thirteen credits).

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICATION**

This document contains instructions for the integrated online application process; the UNC-Chapel Hill Graduate School and School of Nursing Supplemental Application have been combined for user-ease and processing efficiency. Be sure to read the information regarding Graduate School requirements: [http://gradschool.unc.edu/admissions/instructions.html](http://gradschool.unc.edu/admissions/instructions.html). Please carefully read and meticulously follow the School of Nursing application instructions below; each element described is a required facet of the online application.

1. **Transcripts of Undergraduate and Graduate Education:** If the document does not clearly state the name of the institution, PLEASE write the name at the top of the transcript prior to scanning and uploading. Collectively, documents must reflect all college-level course work you have taken. Transcripts must indicate the date degree was conferred. Competitive applicants will present a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) in the major courses of their undergraduate nursing program. Applicants with a master’s degree in nursing are expected to have earned a 3.5 cumulative grade point average in graduate coursework.

   - **Failure to upload a transcript for each school attended will render the application incomplete.**
   - **Uploading transcripts is the responsibility of the applicant.**
   - Transcripts must be uploaded in the correct form and size. This may take some time and effort. Please do not leave document upload to the last minute as it may prevent you from submitting the application on time. Follow the instructions in the application for uploading unofficial transcripts and review the additional information on transcript upload provided at the end of this document.
   - **NOTE:** If you will be completing a course or a degree after you submit the application, please upload the final transcript for the course or degree into the application portal or email to son_gradapp@unc.edu
   - **Paper transcripts are not accepted for the admission application** (except for Fall 2017 courses as noted above); **only legible documents are accepted for application evaluation.**
   - If a college/university you’ve attended has changed its institutional name, please indicate the name change under academic history within the application.

*International Students, please review additional requirements in the Critical Information for International Students*
2. **Letters of Recommendation:** Three recommendation letters are required. Favorable recommendations should be submitted by at least three academicians whose class(es) you have taken. Faculty must be familiar with your intellectual ability, academic achievement, research potential, and professional commitment and address these areas in their letter. At least one of these individuals should hold an earned doctorate. Additional references from employers may be submitted. Letters from relatives, family friends, fellow staff members, clients/patients or religious/spiritual leaders will not be accepted. The online application will prompt you to submit the email addresses for your three required recommenders. The recommender will then receive an email request for recommendation and must upload the letter into the application. Note: The Letters of Recommendation are traditionally the most challenging for applicants. To insure that your application is reviewed, please follow these guidelines explicitly.

3. **Statement of Goals and Research Interests:** You are asked to write and upload into the application, a two-part essay. It is most important that you address each bulleted item noted and format the document as requested. **Each part** of the essay should be approximately 3 double-spaced, typed pages. Please include APA-formatted references on a separate page and upload all documents into the application.

   **In part A,** describe your background, including:
   
   - Why are you pursuing a PhD at this time?
   - What particular experiences in the professional, clinical, and/or research realms have contributed to your decision to pursue a PhD?
   - How will having a PhD contribute to meeting your career goals?
   - What challenges do you expect to face in making the transition to PhD study, and how do you plan to handle them?
   - What are some of the personal and/or academic strengths and weaknesses that may affect your PhD studies?

   In addition, if there is anything in your application that you believe may need further explanation, please elaborate here.

   **In part B,** discuss your research interests. Selecting a research topic is something you need to do prior to entering the program. You may modify or enlarge your topic during your studies, but having a research idea is the first step toward a successful PhD education. Provide a brief review of the literature about your research topic that supports the area as one in need of further study (include citations from the scientific literature to support your point). Describe how your academic and/or personal background has prepared you for the area of research you wish to pursue. Provide detail concerning your research experience in this area, if any, and how you plan to build on this earlier effort during PhD study.

   Within part B of the application, identify the two School of Nursing faculty members your research interests align with, as directed under the Application Process section above. Provide a brief description of the outcome of your interaction with the faculty members, and write a more detailed, description of how your interests align with the ongoing scientific work of the faculty members, including citations from the scientific literature. You can find contact information as well as a description of faculty research areas [here](http://nursing.unc.edu/doctoral-program/faculty-advisors-research/)

4. **Current Curriculum Vitae or Resume.** Use the CV/resume page within the online application to detail your career path, explaining any gap in employment greater than one year. Full disclosure of your complete education background including a list of all colleges and universities you’ve attended is required. [http://nursing.unc.edu/admissions/applications/](http://nursing.unc.edu/admissions/applications/)

5. **Upload a Manuscript or example of scholarly work for which you are first author:** Manuscripts may include a published paper, unpublished paper, a completed research project, or a thesis. Submission of one full-length manuscript or report of completed or ongoing research is encouraged, although a course paper is acceptable. If these are not available, a 2-5 page paper examining a clinical problem or issue critical to the profession may be submitted.
Manuscripts will be evaluated on the importance of the topic, the appropriateness of the approach taken, flow, clarity, and correct use of formatting. Acceptable file formats include .docx, .doc, .txt, .pdf, .rtf, .wps, .xlsx, .wrd.

6. **Application fee:** $87.50 (may be paid by check, money order or online by credit card to The Graduate School; instructions are available on the final screen of the application)

**INTERVIEW**

Competitive applicants will be interviewed by faculty members selected by the PhD Admissions Committee. The interview is conducted in person, by telephone or by Skype depending on the applicant’s geographical location. The interview is an opportunity for both parties to clarify information submitted in the application portfolio and further explore applicant fit with the program.

**Critical Information for International Applicants:**

**Admissions Requirements:** This PhD Program is available to international students. It is essential that international students be fluent in English. Presently, the University (including the School of Nursing) does not offer ESL programs or an English language institute. For this reason, candidates interested in attending the University must be able to understand rapid, idiomatic English as spoken in lectures, group discussions, and clinical settings by individuals of widely varying accents. Students from non-English-speaking countries must be able to communicate quickly and clearly in spoken and written English.

**Transcripts:** International students must provide a full credit evaluation of all courses completed at a foreign institution. The National Association of Credential Evaluation Services provides a list of organizations that offer this service at the link below. Applicants may also choose to have credit evaluated by faculty members in the various departments on campus. Please submit the credit evaluation report and an official copy of your transcript with your application for admission. These documents may be scanned into the transcript section of the application. Submission of this credit evaluation with degree validation will allow us to view your transcripts in a US transcript format on a 4.0 GPA scale.

Related URL: [http://www.naces.org/](http://www.naces.org/)

A note on foreign degrees: As part of the transcript submission, degree credentials are also reviewed by the Graduate School. Assessment of a foreign degree, including those conferred from institutions participating in the Bologna Accord, is based upon the characteristics of a national system of education, the type of institution attended, its accreditation and the level of studies completed. The following guidelines indicate the level of study expected of international applicants prior to graduate enrollment:

- British patterned education bachelor's degree with honours
- French patterned education degree of diplome requiring four years of post baccalauréat study
- Germany university Diplom preferred. Applicants with very strong academic records may be considered if they have completed the Staatsexamen, a bachelor’s degree after a 13-year Abitur, or at least one year of full-time study beyond Vorprüfung, Zwischenprüfung, Vordiplom, or any other bachelor’s degree
- Other European countries: university degree requiring a minimum of four years of study
- Canada three year bachelor’s degree from Québec; four-year bachelor’s degree from all other provinces
- Latin America university degree requiring a minimum of four years of study
- India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal bachelor’s degree in engineering or medicine; master’s degree in all other fields
- Philippines five year bachelor’s degree or four year bachelor’s degree plus one year of graduate course work
- Other Asian countries: university degree requiring a minimum of four years study

**TOEFL or IELTS:** The UNC Graduate School Institution Code is 5816 (no department code). Standardized test scores must be official and are reportable for a period of two years from the date of the exam. Exam results more than two years old cannot be considered. Standardized test scores that are submitted to this institution are kept on file for only one year. Refer to The Graduate School for more information [http://gradschool.unc.edu/admissions/instructions.html#toefl](http://gradschool.unc.edu/admissions/instructions.html#toefl) This is not a requirement of applicants who are residents of a country where English is the sole official language of instruction or if applicants hold a degree from an accredited United States institution of higher education.

Meeting the minimum total score on TOEFL does not guarantee admission to the School of Nursing. Admission decisions are made on the basis of multiple factors including: scholastic performance; English proficiency; essays; letters of recommendation; the appropriateness of the requested advanced practice area to the applicant’s goals and clinical experiences; and verification of financial support to insure proper visa status.
Letters of Recommendation: In addition to the three current letters of recommendation meeting the specifications outlined above, applicants for whom English is a second language (non-native language), must submit at least one additional letter of reference that addresses your ability to communicate fluently in the English language.

Financial Certificate with supporting documents will be required upon admission http://gradschool.unc.edu/admissions/instructions.html#fincert

Information concerning visa, U.S. Immigration, or financial certificate matters can be obtained from the UNC Office of International Student and Scholar Services. http://oisss.unc.edu/

ONLINE APPLICATION PORTAL
It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the online application is submitted prior to the posted deadline, all requested documents are uploaded properly into the application, and that your application is complete. You can check the status of your application review by logging on to the application to see if any required items are missing. The Admissions Committee only considers COMPLETE applications. It is your responsibility to check your application in the online application portal, and follow up with your recommenders and schools. The School of Nursing will contact you directly, if we need additional documents or information.

BASIS FOR DECISIONS
Admission to the PhD program is necessarily a selective process. Meeting the posted criteria does not ensure admission. The Committee considers a myriad of factors including: the quality of performance in previous undergraduate and graduate study (as applicable), success in previous employment and related experiences, and personal qualifications including suitability for advanced study. The Admissions Committee weighs the applicant’s accomplishments and potential for success in the program. Diversity in student backgrounds and scholarly interests is desired. Using an objective review procedure, the Admissions Committee recommends selected candidates to the Dean of The Graduate School.

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Nursing is committed to equality of educational opportunity and does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, national origin, age, religion, sexual preference, or handicap. Members of racial or ethnic minority groups and males are encouraged to apply.

NOTIFICATION OF DECISION
The School of Nursing and Dean of The Graduate School will notify you in writing of the outcome of your application review as soon as decisions are rendered. Therefore, please modify your information in the Update Profile section of your application if you change your address prior to notification.

FOLLOWING ADMISSION ACCEPTANCE:
Admitted applicants are required to pay a $250 deposit and submit official transcripts to the Graduate School (not the School of Nursing). Instructions on how to submit official transcripts will be included in the admission offer letter from the Graduate School. Admitted students seeking to establish North Carolina residency for tuition purposes, shall submit an online application located at this site: http://gradschool.unc.edu/student/residency/

As noted in the pre-requisite section of these Instructions, those applicants offered admission who have completed a master’s level statistics course, will be contacted by the PhD Program Office with additional information concerning the Statistics Placement Exam. Those without a graduate statistics course must have one prior to spring semester of the first year in the program.

Link to the application: https://applynow.unc.edu/apply/
QUESTIONS:
Questions regarding the instructions, or application requirements should be directed to the Office of Student Affairs in the School of Nursing at (919) 966-4260 or via email to son_gradapp@unc.edu.

TECHNICAL HELP:
If you have any technical problems, such as browsers or login issues, contact the UNC Help Desk at (919) 962-HELP (4357).

Transcript Specifications
• Applicants should either upload the document directly if it is in an accepted format or scan each unofficial transcript into a file that can be uploaded.
• Scan multiple page transcripts from one institution into one file; however, only one back page is required from each school.
• Preview the uploaded transcript(s) to ensure legibility so that the processing of your application is not delayed. If you cannot read the file clearly, please try another scanner or different settings and upload again.
• A transcript from each institution is always required.

Thank you for your interest in the School of Nursing at UNC-Chapel Hill. Good luck with your application!