PhD in Nursing

About the PhD Program

The doctor of philosophy in nursing (PhD) program prepares clinical scholars, educators, and researchers for leadership roles in a variety of academic, industry, and healthcare settings. Because the knowledge and skills needed to produce excellent health-related research is not discipline specific, the PhD program does not require a prior degree in nursing. Indeed, we have had PhD students with academic preparation in health administration, health education, medical ethics, nursing, occupational therapy, physical therapy, public health and social work.

The MU Sinclair School of Nursing (MUSSON) offers a challenging and yet enriching PhD program with two options. The PhD curriculum, program requirements, and program outcomes are the same whether you choose the Online PhD option or the International Residential Nursing PhD option. Only the method of course delivery varies. Additional details can be found on the Sinclair School of Nursing PhD Program Options webpage (http://nursing.missouri.edu/academic-programs/phd/program-options).

- **Online PhD Program Option**: PhD coursework may be accessed online through the Online PhD program option by learning over the World Wide Web using the Canvas learning management system. This option also requires a 5 Day On Campus visit (held the first week of the summer semester on the Columbia campus) the first summer of enrollment and 4 Day On Campus Intensives every April until coursework is completed (see PhD On Campus Dates (http://nursing.missouri.edu/academic-programs/phd/on-campus-dates)). Because the program is online, students are responsible for obtaining the required technology for successful participation in synchronous online courses (see Technology Requirements (http://nursing.missouri.edu/for-students/technology-requirements)). Additionally, students are responsible for all the costs associated with travel and housing for the On Campus Intensives;

- **International Residential PhD Option**: Through the International Residential PhD option, international students attend the MU campus hybrid classes in Columbia, Missouri. The International Residential PhD student attends the hybrid classes in person, while the Online student cohort participates virtually via videoconferencing software. International Residential PhD students may also enroll in traditional residential course offerings through the MU Sinclair School of Nursing and the rest of the MU campus. Students in the International Residential PhD option must enroll in 4 credits during their first summer and maintain full-time status by enrolling in 9 credits each fall and spring term thereafter. Of the 9 credits each term, at least 6 credits must be either traditional face-to-face or hybrid coursework in order to qualify for and retain the F-1 or J-1 student visa status. The remaining 3 credits each term may be taken 100% on-line.

Degree Requirements

The PhD in Nursing at MU requires a minimum of 72 credit hours beyond the baccalaureate degree. Students entering with a graduate degree can transfer in a maximum of 30 credits from another institution. A minimum of 42 credit hours must be completed at the University of Missouri. There are two curricular options: (a) post-baccalaureate (BS-PhD) and (b) post-graduate. For both options, the PhD curriculum is divided into three categories:

- **Foundational Core** - Minimum of 26-38 credit hours (theory analysis and development, statistics and measurement, qualitative and quantitative methods courses)
- **Research Focus Area** - Minimum of 3 credit hours of research focus seminars (health behavior theories/interventions, informatics, social determinants of health, symptom management)
- **Individualized Specialty Area** - Minimum of 6-12 credit hours of interdisciplinary collateral coursework (coursework taken outside the School of Nursing that helps to support the dissertation research topic), faculty mentored research practicum experiences, specialty area applied sciences including education or leadership courses, and dissertation research.

Sample Plan of Study

Sample plans of study for the post-baccalaureate and the post-graduate options can be found on the Sinclair School of Nursing PhD Curriculum webpage (http://nursing.missouri.edu/academic-programs/phd/curriculum). Ultimately, the student's PhD program committee, in collaboration with the student, determines the student's plan of study and total credit hours necessary to adequately prepare the student to successfully complete their dissertation research.

Qualifying Process

To be officially admitted to the PhD program, the student must pass a qualifying examination or process. Students admitted with a graduate degree have completed the qualifying process.

Students admitted with a bachelor’s degree are admitted to the PhD program on a provisional basis. Following successful completion of a qualifying process, bachelor’s prepared students will be granted admission to the PhD program. To fully qualify for the PhD program, BS-PhD students must earn at least a grade of B in the following:

- NURSE 7087 Leadership and Technology Institute
- NURSE 7010 Biostatistical Foundations for Health Researchers
- NURSE 7100 Theoretical Basis for Advanced Nursing
- NURSE 7150 Research Basis for Advanced Nursing
- Nine credits in nursing applied sciences

The student initiates the qualifying process by enrolling in three credits of NURSE 8900 Research Practicum in Nursing with a member of their BS-PhD program committee. The student is officially admitted to the PhD program following approval of the written report and oral presentation for NURSE 8900 by the BS-PhD Program Committee.

Comprehensive Examination Process

Through the PhD Comprehensive Examination process, the student demonstrates his/her ability to address the theoretical, methodological and substantive issues of his/her field of study. The examination tests the breadth and depth of knowledge and the ability to integrate ideas across research focus areas. The student must be enrolled to take this examination and it may be administered only when MU is officially in session. The student is not allowed to sit for the PhD comprehensive examination until the last semester of course work or when course work is substantially completed, all incomplete grades are satisfied, and the PhD Competencies are met.

The Comprehensive Exam, which is prepared by the student’s PhD program committee, has a written component followed by an oral section. The written component of the examination is completed at
home or another site of the student’s selection during five consecutive days. The oral defense is a two-hour examination by the PhD program committee. The two sections of the examination must be completed within one month. The student is expected to complete the Comprehensive Examination within five (5) years of enrollment in the PhD program and it must be completed at least seven (7) months before the final defense of the doctoral dissertation. Additional details of the process can be found in the MU School of Nursing PhD Handbook (http://nursing.missouri.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/PhD_Nursing_Handbook_2016-17.pdf).

Dissertation Requirements
The culmination of the PhD degree is the completion of a written doctoral dissertation. The dissertation must:

- Be written on a subject approved by the candidate’s doctoral dissertation committee
- Embody the results of original and significant investigation
- Be the candidate’s own work.

Within the MU Sinclair School of Nursing, the PhD Dissertation process consists of:

- Development of a dissertation proposal
- Approval of the proposal by the doctoral dissertation committee
- Approval of the research project by the Health Sciences Institutional Review Board
- Ethical conduct of the research project
- Writing the doctoral dissertation
- Public defense of the doctoral dissertation
- Approval of the dissertation by the candidate’s doctoral dissertation committee
- Submission of the written doctoral dissertation in an approved format.

Students have five (5) years from completion of the PhD Comprehensive Exam to complete the doctoral dissertation. Additional details of the process can be found in the MU Sinclair School of Nursing PhD Handbook (http://nursing.missouri.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/PhD_Nursing_Handbook_2016-17.pdf).

Admissions
Students interested in the PhD program are encouraged to apply for admission as early as possible. All admitted students are required to start the PhD program during the summer semester.

Early Acceptance Deadline: January 15th
Recommended for applicants desiring to be full-time students who are planning to apply for a competitive fellowship(s) and international residential PhD option applicants who need time to obtain a visa and move to Columbia, MO prior to classes starting in early June.

Regular Acceptance Deadline: March 1st
Applicants are required to meet two sets of minimum qualifications for admission: the requirements of the Sinclair School of Nursing PhD program (http://nursing.missouri.edu/academic-programs/phd/apply) and the minimum requirements of the Office of Graduate Studies (http://gradstudies.missouri.edu/admissions/eligibility-process/minimum-requirements.php). Because requirements vary, you must refer to a degree program’s graduate admission page to learn about specific admission criteria, application deadlines, eligibility and application process. Your application materials will be reviewed by both the Office of Graduate Studies and the degree program to which you’ve applied before official admission to the University of Missouri.

NOTE: Applicants who do not meet the minimum GPA requirements or do not have a cumulative GPA must submit acceptable scores on the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) and the exam must have been taken within the last 5 years.

Admission Contact Information
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