



*SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES, COLLEGE OF ARTS, SOCIAL AND HEALTH SCIENCES  
3333 UNIVERSITY WAY, PRINCE GEORGE, BC; V2N 4Z9*

**Health Sciences PhD Program  
Guidebook**

3333 University Way  
Prince George, British Columbia V2N 4Z9

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### **DISTRIBUTION LIST**

When this document is revised, changed sections will be circulated to the attached list, and then posted on the Research and Graduate Programs' website:

1. All members of the Health Science PhD Program Committee
2. Registrar
3. Executive Assistant - Registrar
4. Graduate Studies Officer, Office of the Registrar
5. Dean, CSAM
6. Dean, CASHS
7. Executive Assistant, CSAM
8. Executive Assistant, CASHS
9. VP Research and Graduate Studies
10. Executive Assistant, VP Research and Graduate Studies
11. Provost
12. Graduate Student Society

Procedures of the PhD Health Sciences Graduate Program Committee as outlined in this document stand in addition to UNBC policies and admissions standards as set by the Office of Research and Graduate Studies. Refer to the current UNBC Graduate Calendar for these policies, and for descriptions and requirements of PhD Health Sciences graduate programs.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Improving the emotional, intellectual, spiritual, and physical health of individuals and collective human development in all communities, from the local to the global, is vitally important to the mandate of the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC). In the University's Academic Vision, the theme of Health & Human Development focuses on meeting the needs of rural, remote, and indigenous peoples and communities, though its applications are global.

## **CREDENTIAL RECOGNITION AND NOMENCLATURE**

Doctor of Philosophy in Health Sciences; PhD Health Sciences

## **OUTCOMES**

Upon completion of the doctoral program at UNBC, the student will:

1. Work effectively with practitioners and researchers from a variety of disciplines;
2. Critically review, appraise and synthesize health science literature, research proposals and reports;
3. Justify and complete original health science research from question development to knowledge translation, including publication;
4. Demonstrate a strong base in research methods relevant to her/his own field of inquiry, and a familiarity with the scope of other disciplines and methods used across the spectrum of health related disciplines;
5. Demonstrate competency in oral, written, and electronic modes of communication using scholarly and technical formats; and,
6. Possess the understanding and skills necessary to deal with problems of relevance in northern British Columbia and other regions, and be able to work toward achieving better health, and more stable and harmonious living and working conditions for individuals and groups.

## **DEGREE LEVEL STANDARD**

The PhD (Health Sciences) is interdisciplinary in nature with the intent of addressing the needs of health science researchers and professionals in BC and beyond. The student completes coursework and undertakes research demonstrated with a dissertation of original and innovative research in health sciences; the research is at the forefront of their chosen area. Through their dissertation, students will demonstrate their knowledge of developing and carrying out independent research, synthesizing information using qualitative and/or quantitative skills, and making informed judgments and arguments based on fundamental concepts. The public defense of the dissertation is a key stage for the student to

demonstrate the quality of their work through a rigorous oral examination. The original research will be of sufficiently high quality to satisfy rigorous peer review and merit publication in scientific journals.

## **TIMING**

Students are expected to complete the degree requirements in 3 to 6 years, with a time limit of 7 years as outlined in the UNBC Graduate Calendar.

## **HEALTH SCIENCES PHD PROGRAM COMMITTEE (HSPPC)**

### **A. Composition**

Studies in the PhD Health Sciences are administered by the Health Science PhD Program Committee, under the authority of the Deans of the Colleges and the VP Research and Graduate Studies. The Health Sciences PhD Program Committee consists of:

- Representative faculty members from Schools, Programs and/or Departments from study areas related to the PhD Health Sciences and having a history of student participation in the PhD Health Sciences
  - A maximum of 6 elected faculty representatives will serve at one time, with a minimum of 4
  - All representatives must be eligible supervisors
  - No more than 1 representative from any School, Program or Department will participate, with the exception of the School of Health Sciences from which both the Chair and a representative faculty member shall participate
  - A balance of representatives from appropriate areas will be sought
- One graduate student, elected by and from the body of graduate students in the PhD Health Sciences program
- The Graduate Studies Officer, Office of the Registrar, who shall be a non-voting member.

All terms of service will be for 3 years with possibility of a one term renewal (with the exception of the Chair [length of Chair appointment] and graduate student representative [normally a 1 year term]). If renewal is requested, other interested committee members from the respective School, Program or Department must also be given an opportunity to be considered and decisions shall be made secret ballot within the respective School, Program or Department, or the PhD Health Sciences student body if the representative is a student. Quorum is set at 50% of voting members.

The committee reserves the right to hold in-camera sessions exclusive of the graduate student representative.

The Chair of this committee is the Chair of the School of Health Sciences.

### **B. Mandate**

The PhD Health Sciences Graduate Program Committee is responsible for:

1. Recommending and applying standards for admission to graduate studies in the PhD Health Sciences Graduate Program
2. Recommending students for admission

3. Maintaining and monitoring the integrity of academic standards of the PhD Health Sciences Graduate Program
4. Coordinating development and maintenance of the PhD Health Sciences Graduate Program, such as new course and degree-requirement proposals, changes to existing courses and degrees, etc.
5. Regularly reviewing the PhD Health Sciences Graduate Program, including methods of graduate student assessment and training and making recommendations to address overlaps in Colleges and University curricula
6. Evaluating and ranking entrance scholarship candidates, as required
7. Making recommendations for the creation of ad-hoc sub-committees of the Health Sciences PhD Program Committee, or other standing committees, to deal with specific issues related to the PhD Health Sciences
8. Safeguarding the interests of graduate students and supervisors within the Health Sciences PhD Program
9. Reporting minutes from the Health Sciences PhD Program Committee to the Dean of Graduate Programs.

### **C. Chair of Health Sciences PhD Program Committee (HSPPC) Responsibilities**

The Chair is responsible for the ongoing operation of the Health Science PhD Program, overseeing the mandates outlined above, and for issues related to enrolled graduate students. The Chair is responsible for recommendations to the VP Research and Graduate Studies, including recommendations on admissions, supervisory committee membership, and programs of study for PhD Health Science graduate students.

A Co-Chair arrangement can be applied to the Chair position whereby the responsibilities can be assigned to Co-Chairs.

## **APPLICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS**

The Admission Committee will be made up of the Chair and four additional faculty members of the PhD HSPPC who are elected onto the Admission Committee by the full representation of the PhD HSPPC.

### **A. PhD Health Sciences Admissions Committee Responsibilities**

1. Safeguarding the interests of students and supervisors with respect to admissions
2. Recommending candidates to the PhD Health Sciences Program
3. Ensuring that students have access to information about their rights and responsibilities as graduate students entering UNBC
4. Ensuring that PhD Health Sciences and UNBC admission criteria are met

Each applicant accepted to the PhD Health Sciences Program must be approved by majority vote of the Admission Committee members. If the applicant's proposed supervisor is on the Admission Committee, the proposed supervisor will excuse her/himself during deliberations and voting process, and will be made aware of the outcome using the same timeline and process as proposed supervisors who do not sit on the Admission Committee.

### **B. Application Materials**

Application materials for PhD Health Sciences Graduate Programs are located on the Graduate Programs website [http://www.unbc.ca/graduateprograms/programs/health\\_sciences.html](http://www.unbc.ca/graduateprograms/programs/health_sciences.html).

Applications and accompanying documents are submitted directly to the Office of the Registrar. Original documentation is kept on permanent record in the Office of the Registrar.

1. Assessment Reports to be completed by three referees. At least two of the referees must be able to speak directly to the student's academic and research capacity.
2. PhD Health Science Checklist  
[http://www.unbc.ca/assets/graduateprograms/programs/phd\\_health\\_sciences\\_application\\_checklist\\_dec\\_22\\_2010.pdf](http://www.unbc.ca/assets/graduateprograms/programs/phd_health_sciences_application_checklist_dec_22_2010.pdf)
3. The name of the prospective supervisor from whom the student has acquired agreement to supervise as well as a description of the proposed project, including a statement of how the proposed project is a good fit with a PhD in Health Sciences specifically
4. A letter of agreement from the proposed supervisor, including a signature from the proposed supervisor's administrative Chair indicating her/his agreement for the proposed supervisor to supervise the student
4. Transcripts of previous institutions, with a GPA of 3.67 or higher from the last 30 SCH of alphanumerically graded academic course-work. If the previous Master's did not include a thesis requiring an independent research project, the student must submit a one-page description of equivalency in independent research.
5. English language scores from approved testing agencies (for students who have English as other than a first language)
6. Application form and fees

### **Admission Criteria**

Admissibility will be decided by the PhD Health Sciences Admissions Committee on a case by case basis, taking into account such criteria as academic and other related experience, letters of reference, statements of interest, academic standing (i.e., GPA), suitability of the student and student's background for the proposed research (e.g., relevant field and/or laboratory experience, interest in the specific topic), fit with supervisor and PhD Health Science Graduate Program, and other criteria as may be established.

An entrance admission GPA standard of 3.67 (in a related Master's degree) is required. While not mandatory, the inclusion of GRE scores may be particularly helpful in evaluating applicants whose transcripts cannot be easily compared to Canadian admission standards or in those cases where students may have completed their formal course work many years previously (e.g., applications from mature students).

Admission to graduate studies in the PhD Health Sciences will be subject to majority vote and the subsequent recommendation of the Admissions Committee, through the Chair of the Committee, to the VP Research and Graduate Studies.

If the student is admitted to the doctoral program, s/he will be required to fulfill the requirements and evaluation process for doctoral students in the PhD Health Science Graduate Program.

NOTE: Meeting all admission criteria is not a guarantee of acceptance into the Ph.D. Program.

### **Application Deadlines**

The PhD Health Sciences Program Committee will accept applications for entrance in the September semester only. Deadlines for graduate applications to the University of Northern British Columbia are contained in the current UNBC Graduate Calendar. Final deadline for applications for admissions to PhD Health Sciences programs to the VP Research and Graduate Studies for admission are as outlined in the UNBC calendar. No late applications will be accepted.

## **Financial Support of Students**

Until further notice, successful applicants to doctoral programs receive UNBC Doctoral Tuition Scholarship. This Scholarship allows for a waiver of tuition fees for eligible doctoral students for two years, renewable for two additional years. The scholarship is available to full-time students entering a doctoral program for the first time. Students must remain in satisfactory academic standing and all other criteria outlined in their letter of offer in order to maintain the scholarship. To be renewed, a student must be judged to be making satisfactory progress by the student's Supervisory Committee. The criteria include an academic proficiency, which is a GPA equivalent to or greater than 3.67.

## **UNBC Graduate Scholarships**

UNBC Graduate Scholarships and Awards are annual awards provided to incoming graduate students in recognition of academic excellence. Students should review the Financial Aid and Awards website [www.unbc.ca/finaid](http://www.unbc.ca/finaid) to determine eligibility and application deadlines of Graduate Scholarships and Awards available to UNBC students.

## **SUPERVISORY COMMITTEES**

[please view <http://www.unbc.ca/calendar/graduate/general/admissions.html> Section 7.8 Academic Supervision]

### **A. Formation**

It is the responsibility of the student, in cooperation with his/her supervisor, to ensure that a supervisory committee is formed. The supervisor must be an approved supervisor for the PhD Health Science Graduate Program, have successfully supervised at least two thesis-based Master's (or Doctoral) students with a demonstrated link to Health Sciences as a discipline in any academic institution, and have a completed PhD. Faculty with degrees lower than PhD and/or adjunct faculty are restricted to service as committee members.

It is not necessary that PhD Health Sciences supervisors be formally assigned to the School of Health Sciences; however, all primary supervisors must hold a tenure-track or tenured faculty appointment with UNBC. In every case, all primary supervisors (including co-supervisors) must meet the criteria to be a sole primary supervisor.

In order to be approved as a supervisor for the PhD Health Science Graduate Program, faculty will write a letter of request to the Chair of the PhD HSPPC outlining:

- Previous supervisory experience
- Confirmation of completed PhD
- Statement of interest in and fit with Health Sciences research
- Supervisory intentions (e.g., long-term interest in PhD Health Science supervision or request for a single student)
- A demonstrated plan for adequate support of students during their programs of study
- Approval of administrative Chair
- Agreement to present at least two seminars in a three year period

Upon approval by the Chair of the HSPPC, requests to become approved supervisor will be forwarded for approval by the VP Research and Graduate Studies. Faculty members will be made aware of the status of their application via a letter from the VP Research and Graduate Studies.

PhD Health Sciences supervisory committees will consist of the student's supervisor/co-supervisor and three others. At least one committee member must be considered "external" (i.e., outside of the School of Health Sciences as well as the student's direct area of study), with justification for external status provided to and approved by the VP Research and Graduate Studies.

Additional external committee members may be appointed, subject to needs of the discipline or speciality in which the student is working. The membership of the student's committee and the planned program of study must be reported to the VP Research and Graduate Studies as soon as possible. Identification of the committee is preferred by the end of the first semester of study; however, this process recognizes that committee membership is dependent on dissertation topic, and firm identification of topic may not be completed during this first semester. Committee membership should be listed on the appropriate form and provided to the Office of the VP Research and Graduate Studies

([http://www.unbc.ca/assets/graduateprograms/current/process\\_forms/gr\\_202\\_supervisory\\_committee\\_approval\\_form.pdf](http://www.unbc.ca/assets/graduateprograms/current/process_forms/gr_202_supervisory_committee_approval_form.pdf)).

### **B. Committee Meetings**

The supervisory committee must meet at least once a year with the student and must annually rate the student as "Satisfactory", "Needs Improvement", or "Unsatisfactory" on the Progress Report available on from the Office of Research and Graduate Studies.

If an "Unsatisfactory" rating is indicated, another committee meeting must be held within two months to further evaluate the student's progress.

The graduate student must sign the Progress Report form acknowledging its contents. Student signature only denotes reading of the document and does not imply agreement with the contents; students may note their disagreement and reply separately. Graduate students must maintain academic performance consistent with the requirement of the UNBC Academic Graduate Calendar. Progress Report forms are linked to continued funding (i.e., scholarship renewals, etc) so it is important that students submit a Progress Report between September 1<sup>st</sup> and June 30<sup>th</sup> each academic year. Link to form

[http://www.unbc.ca/assets/graduateprograms/current/process\\_forms/gr\\_203\\_2\\_phd\\_progress\\_report\\_june.pdf](http://www.unbc.ca/assets/graduateprograms/current/process_forms/gr_203_2_phd_progress_report_june.pdf)

### **C. Supervisors' Absence**

If a PhD supervisor is absent on leave, or is required by the University to perform other duties that would impair effective supervision, the supervisor must make formal written arrangements for an interim supervisor. If leaving UNBC on a permanent basis, arrangements must be made for an alternate supervisor, or a co-supervisory relationship must be created with a current UNBC faculty member as outlined above in "Formation of Committees". Copies of this arrangement (e.g., change of supervisory committee form) must be completed and submitted to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies.

### **D. Change of Supervisor and/or Dissertation topic.**

The initial selection of a supervisor is usually considered a stable arrangement between the student and professor. If however, interpersonal or other situations result in a request to change supervisor, the request should be made via the supervisory committee change form and submitted to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies. During the transition, the VP Research and Graduate Studies may request that the respective student take a one-semester leave of absence.

If change of supervisor is accompanied by a change of research topic, or if research topics change without a change of supervisor, the student will be responsible for relinquishing deliverables (data, background research, etc) for grant-funded projects up to the point of the request. In the case of a change of supervisor, this data should be relinquished to the original supervisor. If the project changes without change of supervisor, the student, supervisor and committee will determine whether relinquishment of collected data is necessary and who is to be the recipient of this. Depending on the terms of supporting grants, stipends or scholarships held under the previous supervisor/project may have to be relinquished rather than transferred. In all cases, issues of intellectual property including data stewardship and publication should ideally be negotiated in advance and in writing; this pre-planning should include planning for possible situations whereby a supervisory relationship is unsuccessful.

Form to revise a Supervisory Committee

[http://www.unbc.ca/graduateprograms/current/process\\_forms/supervisory\\_committee\\_approval.html](http://www.unbc.ca/graduateprograms/current/process_forms/supervisory_committee_approval.html)

### **STUDENT GRIEVANCE/APPEALS**

All student grievances/appeals should be undertaken according to the procedures outlined in the UNBC Graduate Calendar.

### **CURRICULUM AND PROGRAM CONTENT**

Students must complete 6 credit hours of a mandatory interdisciplinary seminar series:

HHSC 800-6 Graduate Seminar; HHSC 820 – Qualifying Exam; and HHSC899 – Dissertation. In addition, they must also take a minimum of 6 credit hours in elective courses relevant to their area of concentration as determined by their supervisor. Students may be required, at the discretion of their supervisory committee, to take additional courses within their area of concentration. Additional courses required must be identified and recorded on the Program of Studies form by the end of the student's second semester of study.

- HHSC 800-6 Graduate Seminar 6 Credit Hours (formerly HHSC 800-3 and HHSC 801-3)
- HHSC 820-0 Qualifying Exam 0 Credit Hours
- Elective Courses 6 Credit Hours
- HHSC 890-12 PhD Dissertation 12 Credit Hours
- Total Required 24 Credit Hours

Students must pass three separate checks on their academic progress towards a PhD:

1. The qualifying exam is tailored to ensure a cross-disciplinary aptitude, and tests the student's grasp of the core interdisciplinary materials presented in the seminar series as well as core concepts of their area of concentration derived from elective course work.
2. The dissertation proposal defence is tailored to ensure students have a grasp of their area of concentration, and therefore examines the level of knowledge within the area of concentration. Upon successfully passing both the qualifying examination and the dissertation proposal defence, students are granted candidate status, and embark upon the thesis work under the supervision of their faculty advisor.
3. Following completion of the research, candidates must defend their dissertation before an examination committee.

Course credit hours are assigned by standards and practices used by UNBC. A 3 credit hour course is normally one that is completed in one semester and associated to 3 hours of instruction per week. The dissertation courses are assigned 12 credit hours and are assigned a grade of INP (in progress) until the defence is completed; the final grade is Pass (P) or Fail (F).

## **LEARNING METHODOLOGIES AND PROGRAM DELIVERY**

### **First Year: Mandatory Interdisciplinary Seminar, Elective Graduate Courses, Qualifying Exam.**

During the first two semesters, students take a mandatory interdisciplinary seminar course: HHSC 800-6 Graduate Seminar. The general part of the qualifying examination will occur following HHSC 800-6 as an examination of the core seminar material and will occur during the normal exam period, usually at completion of the January semester. Based upon initial review of the student's application prior to entry into the PhD program, or during the first semester in consultation with the supervisor, elective courses should also be taken in the Fall and Winter semesters of First and/or Second Year (as required).

At the end of their course work, PhD students take a qualifying exam consisting of written and oral components (students normally take the qualifying exam upon completion of the 12 credit hours of required courses). The general part of the exam assesses the student's ability to synthesize and extrapolate from the core interdisciplinary materials presented in the seminar program (described in previous paragraph). The specialty part of the exam assesses the student's background knowledge and familiarity with the theory and methodology associated with his/her thesis topic.

Also, once the course work is completed, students work toward finalizing a dissertation proposal, which should demonstrate academic rigor and be of publishable quality. Students are expected to present the proposal to their supervisory committee, and to demonstrate their knowledge within their area of concentration. Normally, this proposal defence is scheduled following successful completion of both the general and specific components of the qualifying exam, either at the end of the first year, or at the beginning of the second year of study. Once the dissertation proposal has been approved by the committee, any major changes made to the proposal require further approval of the committee.

### **Second Year: Area of Concentration, Defense of Dissertation Proposal.**

If students are required to take additional courses to address deficiencies within their area of concentration, they may select courses from relevant course offerings within the UNBC programs, or from other accredited graduate programs in other post-secondary institutions. In addition, students normally conduct some exploratory research in their area of concentration. Students in their second and third year are expected to make a presentation on their area of concentration to the interdisciplinary seminar series as an exercise in communicating their research field to a more general audience.

Upon successful completion of the course work, the qualifying exam and the defense of the thesis proposal, the student is officially designated as a PhD candidate upon approval by the VP Research and Graduate Studies.

### **Third to Fifth Year: Thesis.**

The candidate then proceeds to work on the thesis under the direct supervision of the advisor and any other designated committee members. Under normal circumstances, students are expected to complete their research and the writing of the thesis within three years of becoming a doctoral candidate.

### **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES RELATING TO THE CANDIDACY (QUALIFYING) EXAMINATION**

The Candidacy (Qualifying) examination is comprised of three parts: Part 1, the General examination; Part 2, the three-step Dissertation-specific Exam; and Part 3, the Dissertation Proposal Defence..

Students may register in HHSC 820-0 when all 12 credits of course work has been successfully completed (i.e., for September and January semesters). When students register for HHSC 820-0 following successful completion of the General exam component, they must also register for HHSC 890-12 (dissertation) in order to maintain their student status.

The Qualifying Exam is a three-part process:

1. **Part One – General Exam** involves an examination of the core interdisciplinary health sciences seminar material. The General component of the examination is completed as part of HHSC 800-6, and is undertaken during the exam period following HHSC 800-6.
2. **Part Two – Dissertation-Specific Examination** involves a three-step process: Qualifying Paper, Qualifying Questions, and Oral Defence of Qualifying Paper and written responses. The dissertation-specific component of the qualifying exam must be taken by all PhD students.

PhD students register in HHSC 820-0 “Qualifying Examination and Dissertation Proposal Defence” in the semester(s) in which their Part Two: Qualifying Exam components will be written and orally defended. Normally the Qualifying Exam requirements will be completed in the students’ fourth term in the program (i.e., at the beginning of September term).

#### **Step 1, Qualifying Paper**

The student submits a paper addressing a research question or topic that is chosen in collaboration with his/her Supervisory Committee. In most cases this research question or topic will encompass the student’s proposed PhD research topic. The Qualifying paper must include a critical review of the literature relevant to the research question, discussion of the theoretical frameworks used to understand or frame the research question, or an in-depth analysis of a specific content area.

#### **Step 2, Qualifying Questions**

The Supervisory Committee prepares written questions or comments on the student’s paper to which the student must respond in writing (i.e., typically 5-7 questions generated by the committee on areas requiring more concentration or knowledge from the examinee; 5-10 pages required to answer each question). The Supervisory Committee’s questions and comments posed in response to the student’s paper will address the broad field encompassing the student’s proposed research, such as methodologies used and interdisciplinary aspects of the research.

#### **Step 3, Oral Defence of Qualifying Paper and written responses**

In the Qualifying Exam defence the student must orally defend both the paper and the written responses to the questions posed by the Supervisory Committee.

**Grading:**

At the conclusion of the oral defence the Supervisory Committee will issue one of four judgments using the Qualifying Examination Results form:

- 1) Pass without comment or requirement for revision
- 2) Pass, but with a request for revision to be reviewed by the supervisory committee
- 3) Failed on some, but not all, dimensions of the Exam, in which case the students will be asked to rewrite and re-defend the failed portion of the Exam, and may also be required to complete additional coursework or directed study to fill in areas where they were deemed academically weak.

If a student fails a portion of the Exam and must re-write or re-defend, they may only do so once. If they do not successfully pass on the second try they will be withdrawn from the program in accordance with Graduate General Regulations.

- 4) Failure of the Exam - a recommendation to withdraw the student will go forward to the PhD HSPPC for review in accordance with Graduate General Regulations.

The students will receive an INP (In progress) grade for HHSC 820-0 for a successful completion of their Qualifying Examination.

Upon successful defense of the qualifying and paper and questions, he/she would normally incorporate the paper and question responses into the dissertation proposal as appropriate.

**3. Part Three – Doctoral Dissertation Proposal:**

Subsequent to the Qualifying Examination, the students will prepare a research Dissertation Proposal that integrates theory, current research, and methods in fields related to the selected research problem.

PhD students will normally submit the Dissertation Proposal in their second year (i.e., in the September term).

The students will prepare a written research proposal that should demonstrate academic rigor and be of publishable quality. The proposal will be organized and evaluated in accordance to policies and procedures established by the PhD Health Sciences Graduate Program Committee. Briefly, these policies specify that the proposal:

- 1) Reviews the relevant research literature
- 2) Reflects original work
- 3) Describes methodology and methods appropriate to the principal research question(s).

The Oral Defence of the Proposal will be graded on the same basis, with the same possible outcomes, as the Qualifying Examination.

Following a successful completion, the Supervisor will notify the student formally, using the Qualifying Exam and Dissertation Proposal Notification form. The students will get a grade of P (Pass) for HHSC 820-0.

**The PhD Supervisory Committee's responsibilities for Parts 2 and 3 of the Qualifying Exam:**

The Supervisory Committee should adopt a process for the Qualifying Exam and Dissertation Proposal that is in line with disciplinary norms. From the onset, the students and their Supervisory Committee will establish a time line for the Qualifying Examination process. The Supervisory Committee will also determine the timeline that the students can expect the Committee to respond to the students' Qualifying Examination paper and Dissertation Proposal.

All Supervisory Committee members will be involved in all steps of the Qualifying Exam and Dissertation Proposal Defences, and be present in person (or via phone or other media if not possible) at the oral examinations.

The mechanism by which the members of the Supervisory Committee conduct the Qualifying Examination and Dissertation Proposal defences should parallel recommended best practices for oral examinations as detailed on the Dean of Graduate Programs website [http://www.unbc.ca/graduateprograms/current/defence/comprehensive\\_exams.html](http://www.unbc.ca/graduateprograms/current/defence/comprehensive_exams.html).

### **PhD Candidacy Status**

Upon completion of the course work, the qualifying exam, and the defense of the dissertation proposal HHSC 820-0, the student is officially designated as a PhD Candidate upon approval by the VP Research and Graduate Studies. Documentation of completion of the Qualifying Exam and Proposal Defences is available on the the Office of Research and Graduate Studies website. This documentation must be completed in full by the supervisor, with description of the process, in order for the student to proceed to Candidacy Status.

### **DISSERTATION**

A Doctoral program requires a broad and comprehensive knowledge of the field or fields of study, with such knowledge to be demonstrated through a qualifying examination. It also requires the completion of a research project culminating in a dissertation which meets the requirements and standards of Graduate Programs. This dissertation must contain original work, and must be a significant and original contribution to knowledge in the candidate's field(s) of study. It must contain evidence of broad knowledge of the relevant literature, and must demonstrate a critical understanding of the works of scholars eminent in the field(s) related to the dissertation. The dissertation should, in the opinion of scholars in the field(s), merit publication, in whole or in part.

The general style and form of dissertations may differ, but all dissertations must be presented in a form which constitutes a connected and continuous text. The dissertation may contain material previously published by the candidate, whether alone or in conjunction with others. Such previously published material must be fully integrated into the dissertation. In such cases, the candidate's own work must be clearly distinguished from that of other researchers. The candidate is responsible at the final oral examination for defense of the entire contents of the dissertation.

Before beginning to write the dissertation, the candidate should obtain a copy of the Formatting Guidelines For Graduate Dissertations, Theses, Projects & Practicum Reports from the Office of Research and Graduate Studies; this document specifies the academic and technical requirements necessary to ensure that the work is acceptable to the University and to the National Library of Canada.

### **LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS**

A Doctoral program may require a reading knowledge of one or more languages other than English. Language requirements will be set for individual students by their supervisory committees according to the regulations of the Programs, and shall, as a rule, be geared to the individual research requirements of each candidate. Where language requirements are set, they shall be considered part of the student's program, and must be met, at the latest, before the student defends the dissertation.

### **RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT**

This is a full-time program such that students are required to be on-campus during their first year of study, and normally expected to be on-campus throughout the length of their degree. Completion of the PhD Health Sciences is expected to require full-time studies/hours for a period of 4 years.

### **TIME LIMIT**

The maximum time for completion is not intended to be the normal time for completion. It is intended to take into account a wide variety of extraordinary circumstances and events that may delay completion. Normally, a student proceeding to a Doctoral degree must complete all the degree requirements within seven consecutive years (84 consecutive months) from the date of first registration in the program.

If a degree is not awarded within seven years of the first registration, the student will be withdrawn from the program. Under exceptional circumstances, time extensions may be granted by the VP Research and Graduate Studies. Such requests for time extension must be made in writing to the VP Research and Graduate Studies prior to the end of the semester in which the student's time limit expires. The request must include a timeline for the completion of the degree, accompanied by supporting documentation from the student's supervisor.

[All provisions in the calendar regarding dissertation defences are applicable to the PhD Health Sciences and, as such, are not repeated here]