



*SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES, FACULTY OF HUMAN AND HEALTH SCIENCES
3333 UNIVERSITY WAY, PRINCE GEORGE, BC; V2N 4Z9*

Health Sciences PhD Program Guidebook

(Revised Draft, January 2023)

University of Northern British Columbia

3333 University Way
Prince George, British Columbia V2N 4Z9

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1. TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The UNBC Health Sciences Program acknowledges that its programs and students are located and situated on territories of many Indigenous Peoples, UNBC has a main campus and regional campuses. Our Prince George campus is situated on the unceded traditional territory of the Lheidli T'enneh Nation. Our South-Central campus in Quesnel is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the Lhtako Dene Nation, Nazko First Nation, Lhoosk'uz Dené Nation, and ?Esdilagh First Nation. Our Northeast campus in Fort St. John is situated in Treaty 8 territory on the traditional lands of the Dane-za peoples of the Doig River First Nation, Blueberry River First Nation, and Halfway River First Nation. The Northwest campus in Terrace is situated on the unceded traditional Tsimshian territory of the Kitsumkalum First Nation and Kitselas First Nation. Our satellite campus in Prince Rupert is situated on the unceded traditional Tsimshian territory of the Lax Kw'alaams Band and Metlakatla First Nation. In addition to these campus locations, UNBC has a federated agreement with the Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a Institute (WWNI). Established by the Nisga'a Lisims Government in 1993 and located in the Village of Gitwinksihlkw, WWNI is a fully accredited university-college serving all people in northwestern British Columbia.

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 Innovation. Refer to the current UNBC Graduate Calendar for these policies, and for descriptions and requirements of PhD Health Sciences graduate programs.

2. ABOUT THE PROGRAM

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 and Human Development focuses on meeting the needs of rural, remote, and Indigenous peoples and communities, although its applications are global. The PhD program in Health Sciences is meant to fulfill the mandate and Academic Vision of the University.

Credential Recognition

Successful completion of the PhD program is recognized by granting the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Health Sciences or PhD in Health Sciences for short.

Learning 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, and potential publication

4. Demonstrate a strong base in research methods relevant to their 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 providing advanced training opportunities to 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, which 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 methodologies, and making informed judgments and arguments based on fundamental concepts. The public defence of the dissertation provides necessary step for the student to demonstrate the quality of their work and scholarly contributions 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.

3. HEALTH SCIENCES PHD PROGRAM COMMITTEE (HSPPC)

A. Composition

Studies in the PhD Health Sciences are currently administered by the Health Science PhD Program Committee of the School of Health Sciences, under the authority of the Dean of the Faculty of Human and Health Sciences (FHHS) and the VP Research and Innovation. 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 who, among them, will have experience with graduate student supervision in the PhD Health Sciences
 - A maximum of six elected faculty representatives will serve at one time, with a minimum of four
 - All representatives must be eligible supervisors of the program
 - No more than one 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, who will normally be elected by and from the body of graduate students in the PhD Health Sciences program, will be engaged where possible

- The Graduate Studies Officer, Office of the Registrar, who shall be invited as a guest as needed, to contribute as a non-voting member.

All terms of service will be for three years with possibility of a one term renewal (with the exception of the Chair [who will serve for the length of Chair appointment] and graduate student representative [normally 1-2-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 by 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 (HSPPC) 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 degree requirement, 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 curricula across UNBC Faculties
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. Archiving minutes from the Health Sciences PhD Program Committee for review by the School of Health Sciences and Dean of FFHS, as required
10. Sharing key decisions and seeking confirmation from the School of Health Sciences, Dean of FHHS, or the VP Research and Innovation as required
11. Providing eligible supervisors updates about the PhD Program, and opportunities to provide feedback and suggestions on the development and quality of the Program (annually or as required).

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 Dean of FHHS, 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.

4. APPLICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS

The Admission Committee will be made up of the Chair and faculty members of the 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 the PhD Health Sciences Program are located on the Graduate Programs website http://www.unbc.ca/graduateprograms/programs/health_sciences.html, with reference to this Guide Document, that will be available on the School of Health Sciences website.

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. An application to the program includes the following documents preferably to be submitted as one PDF file:

1. A description of the proposed project, that must include a statement of how the proposed project is a good fit with a PhD in Health Sciences specifically. This document will also include the name of the prospective supervisor with whom the student has engaged and received permission to list as a potential supervisor.
2. 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. One of the referees can be the prospective supervisor.
3. Transcripts of previous institutions, with a GPA of 3.67 or higher from the last 30 SCH of alphanumerically graded academic coursework. If the previous Master's degree did not include a thesis requiring an independent research project, the student must submit a one-page description of equivalency in independent research.
4. English language scores from approved testing agencies (for students who have English as other than a first language)
5. Application form and fees

Submitted by the supervisor (after receipt of the full package):

1. A letter of agreement from the proposed supervisor, confirming that the full package (including all reference letters) has been reviewed, and including a signature from the proposed supervisor's

administrative Chair indicating her/his agreement for the proposed supervisor to supervise the student

NOTE: Final confirmation of supervision cannot be completed until the full package of materials has been reviewed. Agreement by a prospective supervisor to be listed does not indicate a final commitment to supervise the applicant. Commitment to supervise will be confirmed when the prospective supervisor reviews the package and provides their letter.

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), support letter from supervisor, 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 Dean of FHHS.

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. The priority deadline for applications for admissions to PhD Health Sciences programs will be as outlined in the UNBC calendar and will be the date required for any applicant to be considered for UNBC Awards and Scholarships. Late application deadlines will be posted by the UNBC Office of Graduate Programs and may vary between years. Late applicants will be considered for entry into the program but will miss deadlines for some university awards/scholarships.

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 of 3.67 or greater.

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 to determine eligibility and application deadlines of Graduate Scholarships and Awards available to UNBC students.

5. 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 their supervisor, to ensure that a supervisory committee is formed preferably during the first semester of their PhD Program. 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 to completion, with a demonstrated link to Health Sciences as a discipline in any academic institution, and have a completed PhD. Faculty members 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 must meet the criteria to be a PhD 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:

- A copy of their CV noting their 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)

In addition, the Chair of the HSPPC may also request:

- A demonstrated plan for adequate support of students during their programs of study
- Approval of administrative Chair
- Agreement to contribute to the PhD Seminar classes, or to contribute to ad hoc PhD committees during the period their student is enrolled

Upon approval by the Chair of the HSPPC, requests to become an approved supervisor will be updated on the School of Health Sciences PhD webpage and the list sent annually to the Dean of FHHS. Faculty members will be made aware of the status of their application via confirmation from the Chair of Health Sciences.

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, with justification for external status provided to and approved by the Dean of FHHS.) Additional external committee members may be appointed, subject to needs of the discipline or specialty in which the student is working. The membership of the student's committee and the planned program of study must be reported to the Dean of FHHS through the Office of Graduate Administration (OGA) 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 OGA.

<https://www2.unbc.ca/sites/default/files/sections/graduate-administration/2022-05-18supervisorycommitteeform.pdf>

B. Committee Meetings

The supervisory committee must meet at least once a year with the and submit a Progress Report Form available online from the OGA at the following link:

[2021-10-08unbcprogressreportafinal301.pdf](https://www2.unbc.ca/sites/default/files/sections/graduate-administration/2021-10-08unbcprogressreportafinal301.pdf)

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 1st and June 30th each academic year.

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 OGA.

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 OGA. During the transition, the Dean of FHHS 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 is available at the following link:

D. Student Grievance/Appeals

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

6. CURRICULUM AND PROGRAM CONTENT

Students must complete six 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 six 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. A summary of the program curriculum is listed below.

- HHSC 800-6 Graduate Seminar: 6 Credit Hours (formerly HHSC 800-3 and HHSC 801-3)
- Elective Courses: 6 Credit Hours
- HHSC 820-0 Qualifying Examination and Dissertation Proposal Defense: 0 Credit Hours (as detailed on pp. 12-14)
- HHSC 890-9 PhD Dissertation: 12 Credit Hours
- Total minimum requirement for completing the degree is 24 Credit Hours

Following completion of the graduate seminar (HHSC800), 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 defense, students are granted *candidate* status, and embark upon the thesis work under the supervision of their faculty advisor.
3. On completion of their research and write-up of their dissertation, candidates must **submit their dissertation for examination**, a process that concludes when they 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 with three hours of instruction per week. The dissertation is assigned 12 credit hours and is assigned a grade of INP (in progress) until the defence is completed; the final grade is Pass (P) or Fail (F).

7. PROGRAM DELIVERY AND LEARNING METHODOLOGIES

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

During the first two regular semesters (Fall and Winter), students take a mandatory interdisciplinary seminar course: HHSC 800-6 Graduate Seminar. The examination of the HHSC 800-6 will be based on the core graduate seminar material and will take place during the normal exam period, usually in April, at completion of the Winter semester.

During the first semester in consultation with the supervisor, **elective courses** should be planned and documented using the **Program Approval Form**. Elective Courses can be taken in the Summer, Fall and Winter semesters of First and/or Second Year (as required).

At the end of their course work (normally HHSC 800-6 and both electives), PhD students are eligible to complete their **qualifying exam** which consists of written and oral components. Completion of the qualifying exam requires registration in **HHSC 820-0** (Qualifying Examination and Dissertation Proposal Defense) as well as **HHSC 890-12** (dissertation) in order to maintain full-time student status.

The **qualifying exam** is defined by the Supervisor Committee to assess the student's background knowledge and familiarity with the theory and methodology associated with their field of research. This is described further in Section 8, below.

Once the course work and qualifying exam are completed, students work toward preparing and finalizing a **dissertation proposal**, which should demonstrate academic rigor and be of publishable quality and is described further below. The student should remain registered **HHSC 820-0**, until the completion of the Dissertation Proposal.

Second Year: Area of Concentration, Dissertation Proposal Defense.

Students are expected to present the **dissertation 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 the qualifying exam. This can be completed at the end of the first year or, normally, early in 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. The student should remain registered **HHSC 820-0**, (Qualifying Examination and Dissertation Proposal Defense) until the completion of the 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 dissertation proposal defence, the student has completed the requirements for **HHSC 820-0**, and is officially designated as a PhD candidate upon approval by the Dean of FHHS.

Third to Fifth Year: PhD Dissertation (Thesis).

Once designated as a PhD Candidate, the student is now eligible to register for **HHSC890-12** (dissertation) in order to maintain their student's status. The candidate then proceeds to work on the PhD Dissertation 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 Dissertation within three years of becoming a doctoral candidate.

8. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES RELATING TO THE QUALIFYING EXAMINATION

The **Qualifying examination** is comprised of two components: the Written part and the Oral part as explained below. This examination is defined by the supervisory committee to assess the student's background knowledge and familiarity with the theory and methodology associated with their field of research.

Normally the Qualifying Exam requirements will be completed in the students' fourth term in the program (i.e. September term).

The Written Part of the Qualifying Exam:

After completing the required and elective courses, the supervisory committee provides the student with a set of questions for the **qualifying exam** and allows the student to provide written answers to those questions within a reasonable time period determined by the supervisory committee. The time period is typically 1-2 weeks, however, this may vary according to the norms of the discipline and field of research. The expected format and length of written answers will be determined by the supervisory committee. Examination questions and expectations should be clearly communicated to the student.

The Oral Part of the Qualifying Exam

Upon submission of the written part of the qualifying examination, the student will be asked to present and defend their answers in the oral part of the qualifying examination (normally scheduled within 10-14 days of submission of the written part). Students may be asked further questions by the supervisory committee to assess their depth of knowledge as demonstrated in the written part of the qualifying exam.

Following the student's oral presentation and discussion period, the supervisory committee will meet without the student to deliberate and decide on the outcome of the qualifying exam. The supervisory committee may request further clarification or elaboration of the written answers through a supplementary written submission after the oral part of the examination.

Grading of the Qualifying Exam:

At the conclusion of the oral part of the qualifying exam 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, or specific members of the supervisory committee as agreed during the committee deliberations

- 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 the student is unsuccessful on the second attempt, the student will receive a fail grade and will be unable to progress with their doctoral studies.

- 4) Failure of the Exam - If the student does not successfully pass on the second try they will be withdrawn from the program. 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 a Pass grade for HHSC 820-0 for a successful completion of their qualifying examination. Upon successful completion defence of the qualifying paper and questions, he/she would normally incorporate the paper and question responses into the dissertation proposal as appropriate. The student should remain registered HHSC 820-0 ((Qualifying Examination and Dissertation Proposal Defense), until the completion of the Dissertation Proposal.

9. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES RELATING TO THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION PROPOSAL DEFENCE

Following completion of 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 as approved by the supervisory committee.

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 with the criteria and procedures established by the PhD Health Sciences Graduate Program Committee. Briefly, these criteria 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).

Upon submission of the dissertation proposal to the supervisory committee, the student should prepare for an **oral defence** of their dissertation proposal, (normally scheduled within one month of the submission to the committee). The oral defence will consist of a presentation by the student to the committee and any relevant discussion and follow-up questions. Following this, the supervisory committee will meet without the student to deliberate and decide on the outcome of the oral defence. The oral defence of the dissertation proposal will be graded on the same basis, with the same possible outcomes, as the qualifying examination (see Section 8).

Following a successful completion of their dissertation proposal, 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. This needs to be submitted by completion of the **Result of Doctoral Candidacy Examination (Health Sciences) form** and the **Graduate Capstone Grading Form**.

The PhD Supervisory Committee's responsibilities for the Qualifying Exam:

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

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

PhD Candidacy Status

Upon completion of the course work, the qualifying exam, and the defence of the dissertation proposal the student is officially designated as a PhD Candidate upon approval by the Dean of the Faculty of Human and Health Sciences. Documentation of completion of the Qualifying Exam and Proposal Defences is available on the OGA website (see: '**Result of Doctoral Candidacy Examination (Health Sciences)**' and '**Graduate Capstone Grading Form**'). 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.

10. 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 defence 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.

11. 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.

12. RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT

This is a full-time program such that students are normally 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 four years.

13. 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 Dean of FHHS. 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]