REGULATIONS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF NURSING

(See also General Regulations)
These regulations apply to candidates admitted to the Doctor of Nursing in the academic year 2025-26 and thereafter.

N30 Definition

The degree of Doctor of Nursing (DNurs) is a professional doctorate degree awarded for the satisfactory completion of the programme in the School of Nursing, Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine.

N31 Admission requirements

To be eligible for admission to the programme leading to the degree of Doctor of Nursing, applicants must:

(a) comply with the General Regulations;
(b) hold a master's degree in nursing or equivalent disciplines from this University, or a comparable university accepted for this purpose;
(c) currently hold a Registered Nurse license;
(d) have English proficiency as specified by the University's admission requirements; and
(e) satisfy the application evaluators with (i) a statement of overall career goals and specific research interests and (ii) an oral justification of their suitability for doctoral education.

N32 Qualifying examination

(a) A qualifying examination may be set to test candidates' formal academic ability or their ability to follow the courses of study prescribed. It shall consist of one or more written papers or their equivalent and may include a project report.
(b) Candidates who are required to satisfy the examiners in a qualifying examination shall not be permitted to register until they have satisfied the examiners in the examination.

N33 Award of degree

To be eligible for the award of the degree of Doctor of Nursing, candidates

(a) shall comply with the General Regulations; and
(b) shall complete the curriculum and satisfy the examiners in accordance with the regulations set out below.

Advanced standing may be granted to a candidate who has successfully completed one or more of the following courses in the Master of Nursing programme offered by the School subject to the following conditions: (a) such course(s) should be completed no more than 5 years prior to the candidate's commencement of the Doctor of Nursing; and (b) up to three courses may be granted to each candidate:

NURS6001 Scientific Progress in Nursing
NURS6003 Naturalistic and Interpretive Approaches to Nursing Research
NURS6004 Health Policy for Advocacy in Health Care

Application for advanced standing shall normally be made prior to the candidate's admission to the curriculum. Academic transcript and relevant course syllabus should be submitted.

N34 Length of curriculum

The programme shall begin in September each year. The curriculum shall normally extend over three academic years of full-time study, or four academic years of part-time study. Candidates shall not be permitted to extend their studies beyond the maximum period of registration of four academic years of full-time study, or six academic years of part-time study, unless otherwise permitted or required by the Board of the Faculty.
Advanced standing may be granted in accordance with N33.

N35 Completion of curriculum

(a) To complete the curriculum, candidates shall:
  (i) follow instruction on the syllabuses prescribed and complete all specified work as required;
  (ii) satisfy the examiners in the coursework requirements for the degree as set out in the syllabuses;
  (iii) complete, to the satisfaction of the examiners, a thesis as specified in regulation N41 below; and
  (iv) satisfy the examiners at the oral examination.

(b) Candidates who fail to fulfill the requirements within the prescribed maximum period of study shall be recommended for discontinuation under the provision of General Regulation G12, except that candidates who are unable because of illness or circumstances beyond their control to complete the requirements within the prescribed maximum period of study, may apply for permission to extend their period of studies.

(c) Part-time candidates who exit the programme after completing all the core and track courses may, subject to approval, be allowed to return within two years and complete the remaining part of the programme within the maximum period of study.

N36 Course Selection

Selection of study patterns shall be made in consultation with the candidate's Academic Advisor and be subject to the approval of the Director of the Doctor of Nursing programme.

N37 Coursework requirement

Candidates shall be required to take courses and satisfy the coursework requirements as agreed in the Doctoral Plan of Study. The objective of the coursework component is to aid research work and preparation for writing the thesis.

N38 Supervision and progress

(a) Candidates shall be required to submit a progress report at six-monthly intervals, and may be required to give one or more seminars on any part of their course of study and research;
(b) Candidates may be discontinued if satisfactory progress is not being made.

N39 Probation and confirmation of candidature

(a) Candidates whose applications are accepted shall be subject to a probationary period, which shall not normally exceed 24 months. By the end of the probationary period, candidates must have
  (i) completed the required proportion of coursework as prescribed;
  (ii) completed a detailed research proposal; and
  (iii) presented at a confirmation seminar.

(b) At the end of the probationary period, a decision shall be made on whether the candidature shall be confirmed or terminated.

N40 Discontinuation

A candidate may be discontinued
(a) if academic progress is not satisfactory; or
(b) if the student has failed to meet the requirements as stipulated in this set of Regulations.

N41 Thesis

(a) The thesis should be between 50,000 and 60,000 words long (exclusive of tables of cases and statistics, notes, appendices containing material and bibliographies). The thesis must represent an original scientific study grounded in practice and contains material worthy of publication.

(b) Thesis should have been submitted by the end of the candidature. Candidates shall serve written notice of intention to submit a thesis for examination at least 3 months prior to the expected date of submission. The notice shall be accompanied by a provisional thesis title. No modification of the title shall be made thereafter without further approval.

(c) Candidates shall not be permitted to submit a thesis until all coursework requirements have been satisfied.

(d) Candidates shall be examined by internal and external examiners appointed for this purpose both on the thesis itself, and at an oral examination on the subject of the thesis and/or the approved course of study and research. Candidates may also be examined by other means.

N42 Thesis examination results

(a) Candidates who have satisfied the examiners shall be recommended for conferment of the degree of Doctor of Nursing.

(b) Candidates who have not satisfied the examiners in the thesis components:
  (i) may be required to resubmit the thesis after making corrections and amendments as required by the Board of Examiners, without a new examination; or
  (ii) may be required to revise and resubmit the thesis for a new examination within a specified period, and may also be required to satisfy the examiners at a new oral examination, or any other examination as appropriate, on the subject of the revised thesis and/or the approved course of study and research; or
  (iv) may be required to attend a new oral examination, or any other examination as appropriate; or
  (v) may be deemed to have failed, without the option of resubmission.

N43 Coursework assessment results

(a) Coursework, excluding the Research Ethics course(s) offered by the Graduate School, shall be assessed on letter grades according to the scale as follows:

Grade	Standard
A+	Excellent
A	
A-	
B+	Good
B	
B-	
C+	Satisfactory
C	
C-	
D+	Pass
D	
F	Fail

(b) The Research Ethics course(s) shall be assessed on a pass/fail basis.

(c) Candidates who have not satisfied the examiners in respect of the coursework requirements at the first attempt shall normally be permitted to present themselves for re-examination in the same course. Candidates who do not satisfy the examiners in such re-examination may be required to discontinue their studies.

N44 Publication based on work approved

Any publication based on work approved for a higher degree should contain a reference to the effect that the work was submitted to The University of Hong Kong for the award of the degree.

SYLLABUSES FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF NURSING

The Doctor of Nursing (DNurs) Programme includes 4 DNurs core courses (26 contact hours per course totaling 104 contact hours), 3 DNurs track courses (26 contact hours per course totaling 78 contact hours), and a thesis (104 contact hours), and 2 courses on Research Ethics as required by the Graduate School.

CORE COURSES

There are 4 core courses designed to advance students' theoretical, methodological and analytical foundations for knowledge discovery, advanced practice and research application. Students must complete all of the prescribed core courses.

Syllabuses are as follows:

NURS6001 Scientific Progress in Nursing

Through directed readings and seminar discussions related to selected topical areas, students develop knowledge of the historical evolution of nursing research and the current state of science in nursing and other selected areas of research interest. Scientific breakthroughs in nursing between 1960-1999 are identified and characterized as to trans-disciplinary change in thinking. In addition to becoming acquainted with selected funded research programs conducted by members of the School of Nursing, the students also identify a topical area/s for their research and synthesize the literature relevant to their identified research topic/s and/or specific research questions, which will advance their progress toward the thesis. Assessment will be based on continuous assessment and coursework.

NURS6002 Advanced Quantitative Research Designs and Methods

Building on master's level competence in research methods, this course offers advanced understanding of methods of testing the effectiveness of nursing interventions. Research ethics, including scientific integrity, protection of human subjects, and animal welfare, are integrated throughout the course. Students examine experimental and quasi-experimental research designs in terms of their validity for assessing effectiveness of nursing interventions in specific situations. The concept of statistical power is introduced, and students learn not only how to estimate power, but also how to increase it via research design, sampling and sample size, measurement, and construct validity. Assessment will be based on continuous assessment and coursework.

NURS6003 Naturalistic and Interpretive Approaches to Nursing Research

This course is designed to introduce a sample of naturalistic and interpretive approaches to the study of phenomena of interest to nursing science. The epistemological principles that underlie interpretive and naturalistic research will be covered as well as techniques for data collection, data analysis, and control of systematic bias. Assessment will be based on continuous assessment and coursework.

NURS6004 Health Policy for Advocacy in Health Care

This course introduces students to health policy issues in the clinical practice, research and teaching environments as well as to translate nursing practice issues to policy issues. The focus is on providing students with the knowledge and skills to identify new health policy issues, critically analyse laws,

regulations and policies at institutional and higher levels, and utilise research findings to examine policy questions. Assessment will be based on continuous assessment and coursework.

TRACK COURSES

These track courses prepare students for their selected leadership tracks. Students must complete all of the prescribed track courses.

The Educational Leadership Track courses prepare students to utilize an evidence-based approach in the education of nurses in clinical and academic settings. Students are also required to complete a teaching practicum.

The Educational Leadership Track courses are:
NURS6005 Introduction to Clinical and Classroom Teaching in Nursing
NURS6006 Curriculum Planning and Development
NURS6007 Assessment and Evaluation

Exceptionally, for one of the track courses, students may be allowed to take an equivalent course in the Doctor of Education Programme offered by the Faculty of Education of The University of Hong Kong, subject to approval by the DNurs Programme Committee (DNursPC). For approval, students have to provide justifications for electing to take an equivalent course including its relevance to their chosen track and practice-oriented inquiry study (thesis). To meet the criteria for approval, the course chosen as "equivalent" should be: (i) relevant to the student's track and practice-oriented inquiry study; and (ii) of equivalent standard and intensity compared to that of the replaced track course.

The Clinical Leadership Track courses prepare students to lead evidence-based practice and effectively advance the management of individuals, families and populations. Students are also required to complete an evidence-based practice project.

The Clinical Leadership Track courses are:
NURS6008 Advanced Practice Nurse (APN) Role Acquisition
NURS6009 Health Behavior and Health Promotion Research
NURS6010 Concepts and Methods in Health Services Research

Exceptionally, for one of the track courses, students may be allowed to take an equivalent course in the Master of Public Health Programme offered by the School of Public Health of The University of Hong Kong, subject to approval by the DNursPC. For approval, students have to provide justifications for electing to take an equivalent course including its relevance to their chosen track and practice-oriented inquiry study (thesis). To meet the criteria for approval, the course chosen as "equivalent" should be: (i) relevant to the student's track and practice-oriented inquiry study; and (ii) of equivalent standard and intensity compared to that of the replaced track course.

Syllabuses are as follows:

NURS6005 Introduction to Clinical and Classroom Teaching in Nursing

This course introduces graduate students to the role of nurse educator in the classroom and clinical teaching setting. The course reviews applicable teaching learning principles and presents a variety of classic and contemporary teaching methods and strategies for instruction and student evaluation. Challenges for nurse educators related to student diversity, active learning, use of technology, and student evaluation are explored. The focus is on the acquisition of practical knowledge and skills to begin teaching students in a college of nursing. Assessment will be based on continuous assessment and coursework.

NURS6006 Curriculum Planning and Development

The course is designed to help students understand and enact the principles of curriculum design, development and evaluation, as they apply to the context of nursing education. Curriculum issues encountered in the broader educational contexts are also reviewed and their relevance to the education of nurses is critically examined. Assessment will be based on continuous assessment and coursework.

NURS6007 Assessment and Evaluation
This course aims to provide an advanced understanding of the principles and practices of assessment and evaluation in relation to general and nursing education. The effects of assessment on student learning and the implications of evaluation for curriculum development are also examined. Assessment will be based on continuous assessment and coursework.

NURS6008 Advanced Practice Nurse (APN) Role Acquisition

This APN course is an introduction to the history, competencies, and roles of advanced practice nursing with an emphasis on role acquisition. Trends and issues which shape advanced practice nursing are also addressed. In addition, students are given the opportunity to develop a team project to experience and evaluate the process of collaboration. Through the team project, students will explore in depth one issue relating to advanced practice nursing. Assessment will be based on continuous assessment and coursework.

NURS6009 Health Behavior and Health Promotion Research

This course focuses on developing theory-based and evidence-based knowledge for health promotion and health behavior. Through critique of theory and research, applications for health promotion and health behavior interventions will be explored. Multidisciplinary perspectives and issues related to health and health behavior will be examined for the advancement of health promotion through nursing and public health practice. Assessment will be based on continuous assessment and coursework.

NURS6010 Concepts and Methods in Health Services Research

This course builds on knowledge that is essential to conducting services research including social, economic, ethical, and political issues that influence health policy decisions. Students develop conceptual and methodological competencies related to research on the organization, financing, and delivery of nursing services in a variety of health care settings. Empirical investigations of the impact of nursing interventions on outcomes of care such as quality and cost are provided. The role of databases and nursing informatics in services research is also articulated. Assessment will be based on continuous assessment and coursework.

RESEARCH ETHICS

Students must complete 2 Research Ethics courses as required by the Graduate School.
GRSC6101 Responsible Conduct of Research

The aim of this course is to reinforce the importance that the University places on the preservation of the values and principles of research integrity in all research conducted at the university. This course equips students with essential vocabulary, principles, and practices conducive to the promotion of

responsible conduct of research in general and in their relevant disciplines. The students will also encounter terminology, texts, and tenets that relate to good conduct in the teaching and research professions. Key research-related issues, including principle of research integrity, mentor-mentee relationship, publication ethics and data management, as well as pressing RCR topics, will be discussed in view of the University's Policy on Research Integrity (https://www.rss.hku.hk/integrity/rcr/policy). This course delivers its content via talks delivered by faculty members/external speakers/Graduate School Programme Director and case discussions facilitated by faculty members. To complete the course, students are required to complete the web-based learning modules.

GRSC6102 Stream-based Responsible Conduct of Research

The aim of this course is to provide opportunities for students to further examine and discuss responsible conduct of research in their own disciplines, thereby enabling them to apply the principles and practices as emphasised in GRSC6101 in their research fields. This course addresses responsible conduct of research in a number of topics germane to different disciplines, and students are required to take one three-hour class to complete this module. Possible topics of the class include, but are not limited to:

- Working with Human Participants (Humanities)
- Working with Human Participants (Medicine)
- Working with Animals
- Lab Safety
- Working on Big Data
- Working on Texts

Completion of the course is assessed on a pass/fail basis by coursework assessment.

THESIS (NURS6011)

Candidates will complete a thesis of 50,000 to 60,000 words. The thesis will be assessed on the basis of being (i) an original scientific study grounded in practice and, (ii) containing material worthy of publication. Candidates will also participate in thesis seminars commencing after confirmation of candidature which will contribute to their research programmes and will serve as forums for presenting their work in progress on a regular basis.