

**UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH  
SCHOOL OF NURSING**

**ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE  
GRADUATE PROGRAM**

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**TITLE OF POLICY:**                    **DISSERTATION FOCUS APPROVAL**

**ORIGINAL DATE:**                    **SEPTEMBER, 1993**

**LAST REVIEWED/REVISED:**    **FEBRUARY 2017**

**POLICY:**                                Dissertation focus must be approved by the Student's Dissertation Committee before the student can proceed with the selected research. This approval will be based on the appropriateness of the study topic to the science of nursing, the match of the research topic with the School of Nursing's research foci, and the Dissertation Committee.

The Dissertation Chair will inform the PhD Council of the student's approved dissertation focus.

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**PROCEDURE:**

1. The approval of the dissertation focus should occur after the student has met with the dissertation chairperson, they have agreed on a topic and a general method to approach the proposed study, and the Dissertation Committee has been selected and approved.
2. The dissertation focus must be approved before the Overview.
3. The student will complete the dissertation focus form which includes the following:
  - a. Student's name
  - b. Name of the dissertation chairperson
  - c. Dissertation title
  - d. A one page abstract of the proposed research which must include purpose or specific aims, research design, sample, instrumentation, and analysis plan
  - e. Signature of the dissertation chairperson
  - f. Committee members
  - g. Completed and planned cognate courses
  - h. Nursing courses yet to be completed
4. After the Dissertation Committee approval is received, changes in the proposed research design, etc. can be made. If the student significantly alters the content of the research proposal, the student must again receive approval from the Dissertation Committee.
5. The presentation of the student's dissertation focus by the Dissertation Chair may be requested for any regularly scheduled PhD Council meeting. The student will receive written notification that the topic was presented to the PhD Council.