

**UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH  
SCHOOL OF NURSING  
ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE  
GRADUATE PROGRAM**

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**TITLE OF POLICY:**                   **ADMISSION, PHD PROGRAM**

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

**LAST**                                   **MAY 2023**

**POLICY:** Applications to the PhD program in nursing are reviewed by the PhD Program Director or designee and faculty members whose research interests are appropriate to the applicant's goals. Upon review of credentials and interviews, the Director and faculty members decide upon an admission recommendation. The Ph.D. Council then acts upon the recommendation.

The University of Pittsburgh, as an educational institution and as an employer, values equality of opportunity, human dignity, and racial/ethnic and cultural diversity. Accordingly, the University prohibits and will not engage in discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information, disability, or status as a veteran. The University also prohibits and will not engage in retaliation against any person who makes a claim of discrimination or harassment or who provides information in such an investigation. Further, the University will continue to take affirmative steps to support and advance these values consistent with the University's mission.

This applies to admissions, employment, and access to and treatment in University programs and activities. Additional information on this policy is available at CS 07 Nondiscrimination, Equal Opportunity, and Affirmative Action

Applicants to the PhD program in nursing should meet all of the following criteria:

1. A baccalaureate or a master's degree in nursing is preferred. Applicants who do not have a baccalaureate degree in nursing or a master's degree in nursing as the first professional degree will be considered individually.
2. Evidence of competence in scholarly research and the ability to communicate in writing as assessed by accomplishments, recommendations, and the personal statement of the applicant addressing the reasons for selecting the University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing; one's long-term professional goals and how the PhD program will facilitate goal achievement; one's area of research interest; faculty who might be an appropriate match and why; and any professional experiences that have helped prepare the applicant for doctoral study.
3. Evidence of capacity and professional motivation for doctoral study as assessed by the personal statement, recommendations, and interviews with appropriate faculty.
4. Three letters of reference attesting to the applicant's capacity and potential for doctoral study. A minimum of two references should be from academic sources.
5. Evidence of a license to practice professional nursing if the student plans to be a TA/TF in a clinical course or if their planned area of research is based in a clinical area.
6. For applicants whose native language is not English, successful achievement on the TOEFL, IELTS, or Duolingo (see [Policy No. 201, International Student Admission](#)).

For admission to Full Graduate Status, in addition to meeting the above criteria, an applicant must have a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or above on a 4.0 scale.

For individuals who do not fully meet the admission criteria, Provisional Graduate status may be recommended.

Applicants to the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Dual Program must also meet the admission criteria for the DNP program – see [Policy 280](#).

**PROCEDURE:**

1. Application forms and materials are secured from NursingCAS.
2. Application materials for each applicant are reviewed by Student Affairs & Alumni Relations. Completed applications are reviewed by the Ph.D. Director. If needed, additional information is obtained.
  - a. A minimum of three faculty (chosen on the basis of the research fit with the candidate), will interview the candidate.
  - b. The academic advisor is chosen and an Interviewer presents the candidate to Ph.D. Council.
  - c. The Ph.D. Council acts upon the recommendation at the next regularly scheduled meeting.
  - d. Applicants considered by the Ph.D. Council are notified in writing by Student Affairs and Alumni Relations of their admission status within five (5) days of the vote and their application completion.

Reviewed/Revised 05-02, 03-04, 12-06, 11-07, 08-09, 03-14, 03-18, 04-21, 6-22

Revisions Approved by Total Faculty 3-99, 05-04, 07-08, 03/14, 6/22