

# PhD in Nursing

GRADUATE STUDIES | UMASS DARTMOUTH

## Program Overview

This innovative program addresses the critical nursing shortage by preparing the Nurse Scientist Educator (NSE) who will:

- develop the science of nursing by conducting and disseminating theory guided research in the chronic illness experience and nursing education;
- Integrate research, teaching, mentoring and service to the organization and/or profession;
- contribute to the development of future nurses through discovery, application and integration.

The NSE who completes this program acquires substantive, meaningful knowledge in a range of areas:

- qualitative and quantitative research methods;
- the nature of, and criteria for, scientific inquiry;
- building, synthesizing and applying nursing knowledge;
- research designs and theoretical perspectives in chronic illness;
- interdisciplinary approaches to the issues of chronic illness;
- strategies for developing a program of research; and
- publication, grant development, curriculum design and evaluation

This program is designed around selected foundational concepts and values. First, Boyer's (1990) model of scholarship with its four domains of scholarship – Discovery, Integration, Application, & Teaching – was adopted. Second, respect for the human experience of chronic illness and the need for more and better nursing care for people with chronic illnesses created a commitment to research on the prevention of chronic illness and the care of people with chronic illness. Next, the growing need for qualified nurse faculty led to a commitment to prepare Nurse Scientist Educators (NSE). Finally, the belief that students require supportive structures to advance their knowledge and develop research and teaching competencies led to the development of a comprehensive curriculum that provides learning, training, and mentorship. Examples include cohort education, assigned mentors, and structured activities leading to publication and funding. The program is designed to assist the student to develop the knowledge, skills, and habits of NSE through mentoring, didactic teaching and experience.

## Faculty and principal area of expertise

- ▶ **Deborah Armstrong**, Assistant Professor; PhD, University of Massachusetts Worcester; Spinal cord injury, Pathophysiology, Chronic Illness, and Nursing education.
- ▶ **Marilyn Asselin**, Associate Professor; PhD, BC, University of Rhode Island; Reflection in practice, knowledge utilization, Leadership, reflective teaching practice, qualitative methodology
- ▶ **Maryellen Brisbois**, Assistant Professor; PhD, APHN-BC University of Massachusetts Worcester; Breast cancer, disparities, vulnerable populations, global student learning, and qualitative research.

- ▶ **Elizabeth Chin**, Assistant Professor; PhD, University of Massachusetts Worcester; COPD, self-management, symptom management, qualitative methodology, learning differences
- ▶ **Kimberly Christopher**, Dean, PhD, RN, Boston College; Quality of Life Issues related to Health and Illness, Nursing Education and Administration
- ▶ **June Andrews Horowitz**, Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and Research & Professor; PhD, RN, PMHCNS-BC, FAAN, New York University (PhD); family mental health, perinatal/postpartum mental health disorders -- specifically postpartum depression, mother-infant interaction, neurophysiologic markers for depressed mothers and their infants, intervention research, mixed methods research
- ▶ **Susan Hunter Revell**, Associate Professor; PhD, University of Rhode Island; Spinal cord injury, technology in the classroom, theory development, translation to practice, and qualitative methods.
- ▶ **Mary McCurry**, Associate Professor; PhD, RNC, ANP, ACNP, Boston College; Decision making, family care givers, technology in the classroom, Philosophy, Theory development, and Multivariate analysis.
- ▶ **Monika Schuler**, Lecturer, PhD, RN, CNE, Northeastern University; Role Development and nursing education
- ▶ **Kristen Sethares**, Professor and PhD Graduate Program Director; PhD, CNE, Boston College; chronic cardiac illness, self-care, symptom management, quantitative methodology
- ▶ **Janet Sobczak**, Associate Professor and MS Program Director PhD, Medical School of Georgia; Psychiatric and mental health care. Eating disorders, substance addiction, trauma, and women's mental health, qualitative and mixed methodology.
- ▶ **Caitlin Stover**, Assistant Professor; PhD, PHCNS-BC, CNE, University of Massachusetts Worcester, Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender health care, community program planning and evaluation.

## Degree Options

The PhD in Nursing is a research focused degree. There is substantive content and experiential learning in three areas: the conduct of research, the scholarship on chronic illness, and scholarship and leadership in nursing education.

## Program Requirements

In addition to the usual UMD admission criteria, applicants to the PhD program must complete the following pre-requisites:

- Bachelor's degree minimum GPA of 3.0 and Master's degree minimum GPA of 3.3
- For BS-PhD applicants, BS minimum GPA of 3.5
- One of these two degrees is from an accredited nursing program
- Master's level courses include nursing theory, nursing research and multivariate statistics or equivalents. For BS-PhD applicants, these will be completed in the program.
- Computer competency in word processing, spread sheets, PowerPoint, statistical software (SPSS), electronic searches, and internet resources.



## Application to the PhD program

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- Three letters of recommendation from people who have supervised the applicant in the academic, professional, or community service setting. If possible, at least one recommendation should be from a doctoral-prepared nursing professor who is familiar with the applicant's academic work and capacity. The recommendations should address the applicant's professionalism, leadership, capacity to teach, ability to do graduate work, and potential to advance the discipline of nursing through scholarship.
- Personal statement of research interest and intent. Please submit, with your application, a typed two-part essay. In the first part (up to 250 words), give your reasons for wishing to pursue graduate study. In the second part (up to 1,000 words), indicate your research interests and goals for doctoral study. Use plain paper and put your name on each page.
- All applicants are encouraged to submit supporting credentials (*curriculum vitae* and published articles) with their applications.
- An example of scholarly writing (for example, a peer reviewed publication or a paper from graduate school).
- Current Massachusetts Registered Nurse license
- One year of professional nursing experience.

## Application Review and Offer of Admission

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### Application Deadline February 15

The Admissions Committee of the PhD in Nursing Program reviews all completed applications including all supporting documentation by February 15. Applicants that meet admission criteria may be invited for an admission interview with the committee.

## Degree Requirements

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The PhD program is a 52 credit post-MS curriculum that is designed to be completed in 48 months of full-time study including summer work. The BS-PhD is 73 credit post-BS curriculum that is designed to be completed in 60 months of full-time study. After completing 39 credits, students may apply for the MS degree. There is a one-year residency requirement. A Certification Examination demonstrates the student's mastery of nursing science in promoting health, guiding the illness experience and shaping the health system for people with chronic illness and/or addressing innovations in nursing education. The Qualifying Examination consists of developing one article that is submitted to a peer-reviewed journal. Additionally, qualifying exam is given at the conclusion of year one courses. The PhD dissertation is an original body of work in which the candidate demonstrates an in-depth understanding of a substantive area in promoting health, guiding the illness experience or shaping the health care system for people living with chronic illness or in nursing education. The dissertation demonstrates the candidate's ability to effectively incorporate theoretical, conceptual, and methodological tools in addressing the influence of nursing practices and the delivery of nursing services to people living with chronic illnesses.

## Program Highlights

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A structured mentorship experience begins upon admission. Students are assigned to work with a specific faculty advisor on academic writing, writing for publication, grant writing, and completing qualifying examination requirements. The Doctoral Seminar is held three times a semester on topics of nursing research based on student needs and interests. The students' experiential learning includes writing for publication, grant writing, opportunities for research and teaching assistantships, qualifying examination, dissertation proposal hearing, and defense of the completed dissertation. There is exposure to on-line learning and other technology innovations to improve the teaching-learning experience.

## Faculty Research

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The faculty of the College of Nursing conducts research in two broad areas -- living with chronic illness and innovations in nursing education. Support for this work comes from a variety of sources -- the US Department of Health Education and Welfare, National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, and many professional groups, and community agencies. Recently, Dr. Kristen Sethares' work on heart failure and patient self-care was recognized when she was an invited presenter at the Chancellor's Colloquium.

Our faculty is recognized experts and are actively involved in service projects in southeastern Massachusetts and beyond. They serve as consultants for our practice partners and professional groups. Dr. Kerry Fater recently collaborated with several local practice partners to change their new nurse orientation programs to include more safety and quality content. Faculty are frequently invited speakers at professional meetings and give peer-reviewed poster and podium presentations throughout the US. Many faculty volunteer for local, regional, national and international health initiatives.

## Contact information

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### Questions?

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