**Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing**

**Florida Atlantic University**

**PhD Comprehensive Examination**

**Policy and Procedures**

1. **Purpose of the PhD Comprehensive Examination**

The purpose of the PhD Comprehensive Examination in Nursing is to:

1. establish that the student has sufficient breadth of the knowledge in nursing and depth in a specific substantive area of nursing to be a scholar;
2. determine that the student can write a publishable manuscript on a topic related to substantive area; and
3. affirm readiness of the student to move forward to dissertation research proposal development
4. **Exam Application Process and Chair/Committee Selection**

Prior to initiating the examination, the student is expected to have completed:

1. the research practicum
2. the plan of study with Graduate College approval
3. all coursework in the Nursing PhD program excluding one cognate that may be taken concurrently during the semester of the Comprehensive Examination
4. a meeting with the comprehensive exam committee chair (at least two months prior to the beginning of the semester in which the exam is taken) to discuss faculty expectations for the exam and develop 3 topics for the written portion of the exam
5. submission of paperwork documenting comprehensive exam committee members, chair and proposed topics for the written component of the exam. This paperwork must be approved by the PhD committee in the semester prior to enrolling for comprehensive exam credit (NGR 7978)

The student must register for a 3 credit hour course NGR 7978 Doctoral Synthesis with the Comprehensive Examination faculty chair during the semester in which the student intends to take the exam. The appropriate form must be signed by the chair.

Note: The Comprehensive Exam chair should not be the student’s dissertation chair.

1. **Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Content/Format/Administration/Evaluation**

**Format:**

1. The exam process will contain both a written and an oral component.
2. The written component consists of a scholarly paper (publishable manuscript) that includes a synthesis of the literature related to the student’s substantive area. The topic for this scholarly paper will be determined by the PhD committee using the 3 topics proposed in the semester prior the exam.
3. The oral component of the examination will consist of an in-depth discussion with the student about the content of the scholarly paper and content covering previous course work. Questions posed during the oral component of the examination will address the College of Nursing outcomes for PhD study, covering the student’s knowledge and understanding of theory, research methodology and methods related to the proposed area of study. Students should review the program outcomes and be prepared to address questions in relation to their work.

**Administration:**

1. The oral examination must be held prior to the last class day of the semester in which the student is enrolled.
2. During the Comprehensive Examination semester, the student may meet with the Comprehensive Exam faculty chair regarding the topic, process of completing the examination including the timeline. The student may also meet with the committee to review an outline and draft of the scholarly paper.
3. Outside editorial assistance is permitted.

**Evaluation:**

Students are evaluated on the quality of the scholarly paper and ability to verbally articulate cogent responses to questions presented by the committee. These responses must demonstrate the student’s ability to argue for and defend their knowledge and to generate logical conclusions.

Similar criteria are used to evaluate the written and oral examinations. The student’s written materials and verbal responses to questions reflect a broad and in-depth knowledge of theoretical perspectives and research methods relevant to the student’s substantive area of research.

1. **Committee Recommendations to the PhD Committee**

Based on the committee members’ expert judgments of the content areas and the student’s performance on both components of the exam, a majority decision will determine the outcome. The recommendation will be one of the following:

1. Satisfactory, eligible to apply for admission to candidacy with no conditions.
2. Incomplete, satisfactory progress, eligible to apply for admission to candidacy and enroll in NGR 7979 despite specific conditions to be met.
3. Unsatisfactory, eligible for re-examination within one year or less.
4. Unsatisfactory re-examination, dismiss from the graduate program.

Students who receive a grade of incomplete must complete NGR 7978 within one additional semester. If this condition is not met, the incomplete grade will be changed to unsatisfactory and the student will be unable to progress beyond NGR 7979 without retaking, and successfully completing NGR 7978.

Documentation of Comprehensive Exam Results: The committee’s majoritydecision about the exam is documented on the appropriate form. The student is responsible for completing the form and obtaining signatures. The student should also bring a completed *Admission to Candidacy for the Doctoral Degree* (Graduate College Form 8) to the comprehensive examination. Signed and completed forms are to be submitted to the Coordinator of the PhD program.