

Doctor of Philosophy

Nursing Science (PhD)

The PhD in Nursing Science program at Old Dominion University prepares students to lead research that advances health outcomes and informs nursing practice. Designed for individuals with a background in nursing or a related health discipline, the program emphasizes the development and application of new knowledge to drive innovation across healthcare systems.

Graduates of the program are equipped to:

- Conduct independent and collaborative research addressing complex health challenges
- Apply implementation and dissemination science to improve population health
- Advance nursing theory and contribute to scientific inquiry
- Teach and lead in academic settings
- Direct research initiatives in hospitals, laboratories, and healthcare organizations
- Influence healthcare policy through evidence-based insight

The program builds the foundation for careers in academia, healthcare leadership, research institutions, and public policy.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

1. Master's degree in nursing or a related field from a regionally accredited college or university with a minimum of 3.0 grade point average.
2. Three letters of recommendation from individuals who can speak to the candidate’s intellect, drive, motivation for advanced education, and commitment to completing projects. Preferably the letters will come from current or former employers, and/or from current or former instructors.
3. A 500–700-word essay that should speak specifically to the area of research to be pursued and one’s background in that area of research.
4. Current resume or curriculum vitae

The PhD in Nursing Science program will start Fall 2026, and students can start in Fall or Spring.

Application Deadlines:

For fall start: July 1

For spring start: November 15

PhD in Nursing Science Course of Study

Core Courses		24
NURS 820	Philosophical Basis of Nursing Science	
NURS 821	Theoretical Basis of Nursing Science	
NURS 822	Nursing Research Methods I (Quantitative)	
NURS 823	Nursing Research Methods II (Qualitative)	
NURS 824	Informatics for the Nurse Scientist	
NURS 827	Statistics for the Nurse Scientist I	
NURS 828	Statistics for the Nurse Scientist II	
NURS 869	Research Practicum in Nursing Science *	
Cognates		15
Choose 5 courses (minimum of 15 credit hours): **		
NURS 825	Data Science for Nursing Research	
NURS 826	Human Computer Interaction Research for the Nursing Scientist	
NURS 830	Health Policy: Analysis and Evaluation for Nurse Scientist	
NURS 831	Leadership in Nursing Educational Research	
NURS 832	Behavioral Change, Program Planning, and Evaluation for the Nurse Scientist	

NURS 833	Designing Advanced Nursing Educational Research	
Dissertation & Candidacy Exam		10
NURS 899	Candidacy Exam and Dissertation ***	
Total Credit Hours		49
*	Can be divided across semesters.	
**	Courses from other Graduate programs that fit the student's chosen dissertation research can be used (with advisor approval).	
***	Includes proposal exam, conduct of research and final exam.	

Credit for Prior Learning is available in the PhD in Nursing Science for qualified applicants. Please refer to the Graduate Catalog or <https://www.odu.edu/prior-learning-assessment> (<https://www.odu.edu/prior-learning-assessment/>) for guidelines.

Contact the Program Director, Dr. Elizabeth Reifsnider, ereifsn@odu.edu for questions, additional information or clarification. This can apply to DNP graduates as well as other health professionals with documented doctoral level activities in their professional lives.