

FRANCES PAYNE BOLTON SCHOOL OF NURSING PHD RESEARCH PRACTICUM GUIDELINES

To advance to PhD program candidacy, one must complete a 240-hour research practicum. The practicum is intended to immerse students in research and bridge the gap between theoretical coursework and applied scientific investigation.

We recommend that students complete their research practicum within the first year. However, it is a prerequisite for advancement to candidacy, and its timing may vary depending on the student's program plan. Students should consult with their faculty advisor to determine the most suitable timing, which should not exceed 12 months. As a prerequisite for advancement to PhD candidacy, the practicum should expose students to various domains of the research process.

Practicum Mentor Eligibility

Faculty mentors must meet the following criteria, with exceptions being subject to approval by the PhD program director:

- Possess a research doctorate.
- Hold a faculty appointment at CWRU with an active research program.
- Demonstrate a record of research productivity, including peer-reviewed publications and/or external funding.
- Be actively engaged in research at the time of mentorship.

Mentor Assignment Process

- Students will work with their primary faculty advisor to identify suitable practicum goals and determine if the advisor is an ideal practicum mentor.
- If the advisor does not currently lead an active research project aligned with the student's goals, the advisor and student are responsible for identifying a qualified faculty member to serve as the practicum mentor.
- While faculty within the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing are preferred, faculty from other CWRU departments may serve in the mentor role with approval from the PhD Program Director and advisor.
- All placements must be coordinated with the advisor to ensure alignment with the student's learning needs and program requirements. Students should not independently solicit practicum mentors.
- To ensure diverse training experiences, a student can fulfill their practicum requirements with more than one mentor.

Learning Objectives and Evaluation

- The student and mentor will collaboratively define 3–5 learning objectives that align with the student's research development goals prior to the start of the practicum.
- Objectives should be recorded on the Research Practicum Planning Form, which must be signed by the student, practicum mentor, and faculty advisor.
- Student progress should be evaluated regularly, and the mentor will complete a final evaluation at the end of the practicum to confirm successful completion.
- Successful completion of the practicum includes completion of the 240 practicum hours and achieving the defined 3–5 learning objectives.
- The practicum must be completed, and documentation must be submitted before the student may advance to candidacy.

Compensation Policy

The practicum is designed as a mentored educational experience, not an employment opportunity. Students may not receive financial compensation for hours counted toward the 240-hour requirement to ensure equity across trainees. If a practicum occurs within a funded research project, any compensated work must be separate from the activities counted toward the practicum hours.

Practicum Experience Structure

With the support of the faculty mentor, students should engage in activities across multiple domains to promote balanced research skill development. Students must include activities from at least three domains, with one domain not accounting for more than 50% of the practicum experience. The distribution of hours may vary depending on the focus and goals of the practicum. No more than 15% of practicum hours (i.e., 36 hours) may be allocated to student-initiated independent work. Student-initiated independent work must directly contribute to the support of a funding application. Activities must be conducted in collaboration with the practicum mentor and align with practicum learning objectives. The majority of practicum hours must involve direct engagement in faculty-led research projects. The table on the next page provides a suggested structure for organizing hours across five core domains.

Domain	Example Activities	Suggested Hours
Research Preparation & Design	- Conduct literature search and review (for faculty research) - Complete regulatory training for research conduct (e.g., CITI). - Develop a conceptual framework, logic model, or theory of change - Participate in stakeholder or advisory board meetings - Conduct an environmental or landscape scan - Contribute to research project or study protocol development - Assist with IRB applications or amendments - Design recruitment materials or scripts - Draft sections of a grant proposal (e.g., specific aims, training plan) - Assist with clinical trial registration documentation (e.g., ClinicalTrials.gov) - Create research study database (e.g., REDCap, Qualtrics, etc...) - Assist with drafting of data procurement and use agreements (e.g., MOU, DUA, MTA)	40–60 hours (15–25%)
Data Collection & Management	- Prepare standard operating procedures for research tasks - Coordinate study visits or research session scheduling - Pilot test surveys or tools - Conduct cognitive interviews to test survey instruments - Support study implementation (e.g., start-up activities, recruitment, consent) - Data collection - Monitor intervention fidelity - Enter data into REDCap or other databases	80–100 hours (30–40%)
Analysis & Interpretation	- Clean and prepare datasets for analysis - Assist with statistical data analysis - Code qualitative data - Calculate interrater reliability - Create data visualizations or figures - Draft analysis memos or summaries of key findings - Participate in data integration or triangulation discussions (for mixed methods) - Contribute to interpretation sessions with the research team	40–60 hours (15–25%)
Dissemination & Scholarship	- Prepare figures, tables, or appendices for publication - Prepare posters, slide decks, or conference abstracts - Assist with manuscript writing or formatting - Participate in manuscript revision and response to peer review - Co-present findings at research team meetings, seminars, or conferences - Develop plain-language summaries or community briefs - Support research-related web or social media content - Assist in writing policy briefs or stakeholder reports	20–40 hours (10–15%)
Professional Development	- Shadow IRB meetings or research oversight committees - Observe or participate in mock grant reviews or internal pilot funding panels - Attend lab meetings or interdisciplinary research team meetings - Participate in journal clubs with a research team - Participate in research writing groups - Support coordination for a special issue or invited manuscript collection - Attend seminars (e.g., implementation science, team science, or research ethics)	20–30 hours (5–10%)

Completion and Documentation

To document completion:

- The mentor will indicate that the student has met the learning objectives and completed the required hours.
- The Research Practicum Completion Form must be signed by the mentor, student, and faculty advisor and submitted to the PhD Program Office.
- Practicum completion is required for advancement to candidacy.

Research Practicum Planning Form (To be completed at the start of the practicum)

Student Name: _____

Faculty Advisor: _____

Practicum Mentor: _____

Department: _____

Proposed Dates of Practicum (MM/YYYY – MM/YYYY): _____

1. Mentor Selection (check one):

☐ Mentor is the student's primary advisor

☐ Mentor was identified by the advisor and approved by the PhD Program Director

2. Learning Objectives

List 3–5 SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound):

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

3. Planned Allocation of Practicum Hours (Total must equal 240 hours)

Domain	Planned Activities (brief description)	Planned Hours
Research Preparation & Design		
Data Management & Execution		
Analysis & Interpretation		
Dissemination & Scholarship		
Professional Development		
Student-Initiated Work (≤ 36 hours max)		
TOTAL		240 hrs

4. Signatures (Planning Approval)

Student: _____ Date: _____

Mentor: _____ Date: _____

Advisor: _____ Date: _____

Program Director: _____ Date: _____

Research Practicum Completion Form (To be completed upon practicum completion)

Student Name: _____

Practicum Mentor: _____

Practicum Dates: _____ to _____

1. Summary of Practicum Experience

(Student should briefly summarize in 1–2 paragraphs what they accomplished, learned, and how the practicum supported their research development.)

2. Mentor Verification

- ☐ The student has completed 240 practicum hours.
- ☐ No more than 15% (36 hours) were allocated to student-initiated activities (e.g., F31 drafting).
- ☐ The student satisfactorily met the stated learning objectives.

Mentor Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

3. Advisor Confirmation

Advisor Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

4. Program Review

Completion Date: _____

Program Director Signature: _____ **Date:** _____