

College of Health and Human Sciences

Health Sciences

Doctor of Philosophy

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Daniel Boutin, Director of PhD in Health Sciences

1. Introduction

The mission of the Doctor of Philosophy in Health Sciences program is to prepare students from a wide range of health related professions to function as inter-professional scholars and researchers within academic and practice settings. The Illinois Board of Higher Education approved the program March 2014 with the first cohort of students enrolling in the fall 2015 semester. Now in its fourth year, the program has retained its goals with only minor adjustments to the curriculum. The Ph.D. in Health Sciences is designed to prepare graduates to assume positions as faculty members and to educate health professionals needed to meet increasing societal demands for interprofessional practice and research.

Program Goals

In collaboration with the College of Health and Human Sciences, the PhD program will:

1. Foster an environment that encourages an interdisciplinary orientation within programs across the college.
2. Create policies and an academic environment that supports and rewards sustained patterns of peer reviewed scholarly work, particularly that which is externally funded.
3. Enhance engagement with the community that goes beyond clinical experience and internships to involve community-based professionals in the learning and scholarly activities of the college.
4. Foster engagement with community based agencies and professionals by collaborating to create continuing education opportunities and enhance the strengthening of evidence-based practice.

The rollout of a new program influences the assessment plan with limitations to data collection. For example, initial student progression through the program requires a delay in assessing learning that typically occurs late in the program such as independent scholarly research activities (i.e., dissertation).

Program enhancements since fall 2015 include course revisions, the development and rollout of UHHS 798 (Candidacy Examination) and UHHS 799 (Dissertation), course revisions, and the establishment of a program milestone. Specifically,

- UHHS 710 and 730. These fall courses were synchronized to better facilitate student learning of research justification (710) and methods (730).
- UHHS 720. This seminar is now a 2-credit course to improve accuracy according the amount of student work required for successful completion.
- UHHS 731. Three instructors have individually taught this qualitative research course across three years resulting in a mismatch of content that reflects instructor preferences. Efforts are underway at the time of this report to update the course by spring 2019 to meet program objectives such as expanding content while concurrently eliminating nonessential content. Credit hours increased to three (3) after discovering student workload was more rigorous than what is required for 2-credit hours.
- UHHS 740. The data analysis course, originally offered in the spring semester, moved to summer at the request of students and after deliberation by program personnel. Although the summer course is only 12 weeks, students often focus their studies to this course with few additional program requirements. Revisions to this course since it was first offered spring 2016 enable students to apply statistical concepts to their candidacy examinations and dissertations.

- UHHS 750-752. These three 1-credit courses were offered sequentially at first (5 weeks each) and eventually overlapped with 750 during the first 5 weeks and 751/752 during the last 10 weeks of the fall semester. The intention was to provide students scheduling flexibility. However, students have always enrolled in all three courses within a single semester. Content from UHHS 751 merged with UHHS 750 increasing 750 to a 3-credit course. UHHS 752 (research ethics) converted into a noncredit but mandatory program milestone, whereby, students must successfully complete before receiving approval to enroll in UHHS 798 Candidacy Examination.
- UHHS 798 Candidacy Examination. The candidacy examination was undeveloped at the time the program accepted the first students. The written examination encompasses a critical review of a societal issue/problem followed by a discussion of strategies to research the issue/problem.
- UHHS 799 Dissertation. Parameters for the dissertation were also undeveloped when students entered the program. Guidelines for the traditional format and a three publishable papers format were written and are available to students.
- Milestone. As stated above, the research ethics course was recently converted into a noncredit training module and is available on the program's Blackboard Community site. Students sequentially engage with content before taking a final test. Students scoring at least 80% on the test successfully completed the training. Students may take the test as often as necessary to pass.
- Changes to teaching faculty have occurred because of departures from NIU and to ensure multidisciplinary instruction. No faculty are assigned to the health sciences doctoral program. Therefore, course instructors are doctoral-level faculty members from NIU and other content experts external to NIU. Multiple instructors representing various academic disciplines have taught in all program courses (i.e., UHHS 710, 720, 730, 731, 740, 750, 760).

The assessment plan is designed to produce data across five learning outcomes. Data should originate from various points in the program and stem from direct and indirect measures.

2. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Graduates of the interdisciplinary PhD program in Health Sciences will be able to:

1. Apply in-depth multidisciplinary knowledge to a defined area in health and human sciences.
2. Demonstrate professional integrity in the execution of the roles of educator and researcher.
3. Design, conduct, and analyze the results of original research.
4. Disseminate new knowledge and, as appropriate, assess the application of that knowledge to professional practice.
5. Demonstrate the interdisciplinary communication skills necessary to function effectively in today's academic and professional environment.

3. Program-by-Baccalaureate Student Learning Outcomes Matrix

Not applicable to the health sciences doctoral program.

Program Student Learning Outcome	Baccalaureate Student Learning Outcomes							
	A. Global inter-connections and inter-dependencies	B. Intercultural competencies	C. Analyze human life and natural world inter-connections	D. Critical, creative, and independent thought	E. Communicate clearly and effectively	F. Collaborate with others	G. Quantitative and qualitative reasoning	H. Apply knowledge/skills creatively
Overall								
<i>Note.</i> Gauge whether each program outcome strongly supports (S), moderately supports (M), or doesn't support (leave blank) each baccalaureate learning outcome								

4. Curriculum Map

Course	Program Student Learning Outcomes				
	1. Apply in-depth multidisciplinary knowledge to a defined area in health and human sciences.	2. Demonstrate professional integrity in the execution of the roles of educator and researcher.	3. Design, conduct, and analyze the results of original research.	4. Disseminate new knowledge and, as appropriate, assess the application of that knowledge to professional practice.	5. Demonstrate the interdisciplinary communication skills necessary to function effectively in today's academic and professional environment.
UHHS 710	B			B	
UHHS 730		B	B	D	B
UHHS 720	D	B			B
UHHS 731			B		
UHHS 740			B		
UHHS 750				D	D
UHHS 760	P	D			P
Individual Program of Study	D			D	
Milestone		D			
UHHS 798	P	P	D		
UHHS 799		P	P	P	P

Note. Course supports the outcome at the B=beginning, D=developing, or P=proficient level.

5. Assessment Methods

Assessment Method	Explanation					
	Description	Student-Level Achievement ^a	Program-Level Target ^b	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible	SLOs
Research Prospectus assignment in UHHS 710.	Students are assigned a research project in which they are to: (1) review published scholarly literature on a health topic; (2) generate a research question related to the literature review; and (3) develop a thesis statement.	A student will receive a score of <i>Exemplary</i> on each of the three performance criteria on the rubric.	90% of all students will meet the student-level target (i.e., receive a score of <i>Exemplary</i> on each of the three performance criteria on the rubric).	During the last week of Fall semester	Course instructor	1
Conceptual Research Project in UHHS 720.	Students develop a topic of interest into a conceptual research project addressing the: (1) significance of the problem, (2) existing knowledge, (3) purpose statement, (4) significance of the study, and (5) theoretical framework.	A student will receive a score of <i>Meets 2</i> on each of the three performance criteria on the rubric.	90% of all students will meet the student-level target (i.e., receive a score of <i>Meets 2</i> on each of the five performance criteria on the rubric).	During the last week of Spring semester	Course instructor	1

Assessment Method	Explanation					
	Description	Student-Level Achievement ^a	Program-Level Target ^b	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible	SLOs
Self-Report Survey in UHHS 760.	<p>Students report on the extent their professional integrity in the role of educator increased in the program regarding:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Knowledge of ethical conduct, (2) Awareness of resources, (3) Reflective observations of teaching practices, (4) Problem-solving skills, and (5) Execution of the position of educator with professional integrity. <p>Students also complete three statements each beginning, “Good educators should show professional integrity by_____.”</p>	<p>A student will report <i>some</i> or greater (e.g., high, very high) increase across at least 3 of 5 areas.</p> <p>At least one statement by a student will include 1 of the 5 areas.</p>	<p>80% of all students will meet the student-level target (i.e., At least one statement by a student will include 1 of the 5 areas).</p>	<p>Middle of the Fall semester.</p>	<p>Course instructor</p>	<p>2</p>
Narrated Virtual Presentation in UHHS 710.	<p>Students disseminate research findings virtually with emphases on content organization, delivery, and time management.</p>	<p>A student will receive a score of <i>Exemplary</i> on each of the three performance criteria on the rubric.</p>	<p>90% of all students will meet the student-level target (i.e., receive a score of <i>Exemplary</i> on each of the three performance criteria on the rubric).</p>	<p>During the last week of Fall semester</p>	<p>Course instructor</p>	<p>5</p>

Assessment Method	Explanation					
	Description	Student-Level Achievement ^a	Program-Level Target ^b	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible	SLOs
Live Virtual Presentation in UHHS 730.	Students communicate research projects with a live presentation and attention to: (1) Organization, (2) Delivery, (3) Time management, (4) Presentation of literature, (5) Presentation of research methods.	A student will receive a score of <i>Exemplary</i> on each of the five performance criteria on the rubric.	90% of all students will meet the student-level target (i.e., receive a score of <i>Exemplary</i> on each of the five performance criteria on the rubric).	During the last week of Fall semester	Course instructor	5
Research Ethics Milestone.	Students engage with research ethics philosophy, theory, history, and application before taking a multiple-choice examination.	A student will receive a score of 80% or greater on the Final Test.	90% of all students will meet the student-level target (i.e., receive a score of 80% or greater on the Final Test.	Ongoing availability.	Program director	2
Candidacy Examination – Analysis of Issue/Problem	Students critically examine a societal problem according to six criteria: 1. Main issue/problem 2. Stakeholders 3. Evaluation of issue/problem 4. Theory 5. Solutions to issue/problem 6. Consequences.	A student will receive a score of <i>Met</i> on each of six performance criteria on the rubric.	90% of all students will meet the student-level target (i.e., receive a score of <i>Met</i> on each of six performance criteria on the rubric).	Twice per academic semester and once during the summer semester.	Examination Committee.	1

Assessment Method	Explanation					
	Description	Student-Level Achievement ^a	Program-Level Target ^b	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible	SLOs
Candidacy Examination - Research	Students identify and describe three research designs to address a societal problem with attention to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research question/hypothesis, 2. Research design, and 3. Justification for a selected design. 	A student will receive a score of <i>Met</i> on each of three performance criteria on the rubric.	90% of all students will meet the student-level target (i.e., receive a score of <i>Met</i> on each of three performance criteria on the rubric).	Twice per academic semester and once during the summer semester.	Examination Committee.	3
Dissertation	Students independently conduct and disseminate a rigorous and original scholarly research project.	A student will receive a score of <i>Successful</i> upon favorably defending the dissertation and subsequent revisions.	90% of all students will meet the student-level target (i.e., receive a score of <i>Successful</i> upon favorably defending the dissertation and subsequent revisions).	Each semester.	Dissertation Committee.	3, 4
<p><i>Note.</i> ^a Student-level target is the score or performance an individual student must demonstrate to say the student met the student learning outcome.</p> <p>^b Program-level target is the percent of all students that must demonstrate they meet the student learning outcome.</p>						

ASSESSMENT METHODS-BY-OUTCOMES MATRIX

Assessment Method	Program Student Learning Outcome				
	1. Apply in-depth multidisciplinary knowledge to a defined area in health and human sciences.	2. Demonstrate professional integrity in the execution of the roles of educator and researcher.	3. Design, conduct, and analyze the results of original research.	4. Disseminate new knowledge and, as appropriate, assess the application of that knowledge to professional practice.	5. Demonstrate the interdisciplinary communication skills necessary to function effectively in today's academic and professional environment.
Research Prospectus assignment in UHHS 710.	F, D				
Conceptual Research Project in UHHS 720.	F, D				
Self-Report Survey in UHHS 760.		F, I			
Narrated Virtual Presentation in UHHS 710.	F, D				F, D
Live Virtual Presentation in UHHS 730.	F, D				F, D
Research Ethics Milestone.		S, D			
Candidacy Examination – Analysis of Issue/Problem	S, D				

Assessment Method	Program Student Learning Outcome				
	1. Apply in-depth multidisciplinary knowledge to a defined area in health and human sciences.	2. Demonstrate professional integrity in the execution of the roles of educator and researcher.	3. Design, conduct, and analyze the results of original research.	4. Disseminate new knowledge and, as appropriate, assess the application of that knowledge to professional practice.	5. Demonstrate the interdisciplinary communication skills necessary to function effectively in today's academic and professional environment.
Candidacy Examination - Research			F, D		
Dissertation*	S, D	S, D	S, D	S, D	S, D
Annual Review of Student Progress			F, I	F, I	F, I
Alumni Survey*	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I
<i>Note.</i> F=formative assessment, S=summative assessment, D=direct assessment, and I=indirect assessment. See the paragraph above for an explanation of each type of assessment.					

*Assessment method not yet implemented because no students have yet to complete the dissertation or graduate from the program.