

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY: APPLICATION INFORMATION

Updated September 2026

How to apply to the 2027-2031 PhD cohort

This document outlines essential information needed to complete your application to the Doctor of Philosophy program at the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at UC Davis. Please follow the detailed instructions below and note the helpful tips. Please note, the online UC Davis application does not include the critical information listed in this document. It is essential that you use this document to guide you while completing your application.

The Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at UC Davis application is available online through the Graduate Studies application management portal located at <https://apply.grad.ucdavis.edu/apply/>.

General deadline

Applications received by 11:59 p.m. (PST) on Tuesday, January 5, 2027, will be considered for review and admission to the program, with interviews in February/March. Letters of recommendation, transcripts, and test scores must be received by January 5, 2027 to be considered for the general deadline.

Space-available deadline

Applicants may also apply by the space-available deadline of 11:59 p.m. (PST) on April 1, 2027. There is no guarantee that applications received by the space available deadline (between January 6 to April 1) will be reviewed. Applications received by the space available deadline will only be reviewed if it is determined there are additional spaces available after reviewing general deadline applications. If applicable, space-available admissions decisions will be announced in June.

Application fee

There is a \$135 UC Davis graduate application fee (\$155 for international applicants) per application that can be paid online. Applicants who choose to apply to more than one graduate program must pay an application fee for each program. The application fee is non-refundable upon submission of the application. Instructions for payment will appear when you submit your online application.

If you are re-applying, you must complete the entire process anew, including transcripts, letters of recommendation and the online application fees.

Note: Your application will not be considered until it is completed and submitted in full.

Before beginning your application

Familiarizing yourself with the application

Go to the [online application](#) to create a log-in name and familiarize yourself with what will be asked of you. Parts of the application require additional time and preparation, such as letters of recommendation and official transcripts. The system will automatically save your progress as you work through the application.

Transcripts and academic records

UC Davis graduate programs are no longer accepting paper transcripts as part of the application process. Instead, all applicants must upload PDF versions of their transcripts or academic records directly to the application system. UC Davis requires academic records from each college-level institution you have attended. Please visit the [submitting unofficial transcripts webpage](#) to learn how to prepare your transcripts and academic records for upload. If admitted to the program, you will need to mail official transcripts from each institution. Instructions to submit these transcripts will be provided at the time of admission.

Letters of recommendation (three letters)

Recommenders are required to submit letters of recommendation through an online system. You will be asked to list their first name, last name, organization, position/title, relationship, telephone number, and email address. As soon as you submit the information on this page, your recommenders will receive an e-mail instructing them to log-in to the online system with a unique user ID and password.

Give your recommenders as much advance notification as possible. You should alert your recommenders of the [school's vision and mission](#) so that they may prepare your recommendation accordingly. Letters of recommendation must be submitted by uploading a PDF or Word document through the online portal. Hard copy letters will not be accepted. Plan to follow up with each recommender weekly to ensure the letters are completed and uploaded by the deadline. You can track letters of recommendation in your account in the online application system.

Letters of recommendation for the PhD program should describe the applicant's strengths and potential, as well as major weaknesses, for completing the PhD program and moving forward with a successful research career in nursing. They should include:

- a reference who can comment on your academic performance
- a work or research supervisor
- a reference that is either academic or professional

Letters should not be submitted by peers, those you manage, or people that have no work or academic relationship with you.

Resume or Curriculum Vitae (C.V.)

Prepare your resume or C.V. as a PDF or Word document. Include any leadership roles, professional activities, consultation work, research, teaching experiences and special achievements. You will be asked to expand on many of these items in other sections of the application; thus, you can keep the resume information brief.

The School of Nursing is interested in knowing about a wide spectrum of relevant experience, both formal and informal. You should include the following:

- Examples of leadership, teaching (formal and informal), community service and volunteer work, special projects or consultations, and research involvement at any level
- Note independent decision-making skills and responsibilities
- Explain any breaks in employment or education
- Give more than position titles by providing specific responsibilities involved in experiences
- Any published work listed using American Psychological Association (A.P.A.) style - provide complete references, including publisher and date of publication

- Significant unpublished work (theses, papers presented at conferences, other professional writings)

Tips:

- Be sure to proofread for errors, including your phone number and e-mail. Ask someone else to proofread your resume/C.V. to catch errors that you may have missed during your own review
- Your resume/C.V. should not exceed four pages
- Use your full name, address, and phone number at the top of your first page. If your resume is longer than one page, make sure your name is at the top of any additional pages
- Always include dates of employment/activity for each position listed
- To ensure readability both electronically and printed, we recommend you use fonts that are easy to read (i.e. 10 pt. font or greater) and black

Other

Make sure you have met the admission requirements.

- Cumulative undergraduate G.P.A. of 3.0 or above
- For international students: Refer to the [Graduate Studies website](#) for specific English language requirements

You will be asked to share specific details for the following:

- G.P.A. and graduation dates from undergraduate degree granting institutions
- UC Davis student or employee I.D. number (if applicable)
- Courses you have completed or will complete that are not on a transcript, including course, institution, grade, units, quarter/semester, term, and year
- English language testing scores, dates taken, and ETS registration number (if applicable)
- Publication, awards, honor societies, prizes, special distinctions

During the application process, you will need to complete sections online, as well as upload documents from your computer to the online application using a PDF reader, such as Adobe Acrobat Reader, as well as PDF-writing software.

As noted in the online application instructions below, the application process requires candidates to write several small essays. Applicants may write their essay answers in a separate text document in advance and then copy and paste into the appropriate fields of the online application once the application process opens. Please limit each response to the maximum number of characters specified in the application. Consider saving these files for your own records. Please refer to the essay guidelines and note that these are not restated in detail in the online application system.

Completing your application

Important: To supplement information in the online application, additional information requested by the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at UC Davis is noted below. This information does not appear in the UC Davis online application system.

Creating an account

Go to the [Graduate Studies website](#) to begin the application process. You will click Start Your Application. This will take you to the application home page where you are able to create an account, as well as track the status of your application.

Basic information

In this section, you will list your basic personal information such as name, date of birth, contact information, citizenship and prior UC Davis affiliation, if applicable.

Biographical data

List all additional personal information for tuition purposes.

Plans for graduate study

(NOTE: This section also includes a required essay)

- Graduate Program Objectives: Select the graduate program to which you are applying: Select Nursing Science and Health-Care Leadership (Ph.D.) from the drop-down list. Then select Ph.D. as your degree objective.
- Areas of Research or Professional Interest: Indicate your research area(s) of interest or desired area(s) of specialization in order of preference.
- Essay Describing your Research or Professional Interest (4,000 characters, including spaces): Please use the space below to describe your research area(s) of interest or desired area(s) of specialization in detail. This essay should complement but not duplicate the content in the Statement of Purpose or Personal History Statement.
 - **ADDITIONAL School of Nursing items to address in your response:**
 - *Describe in as much detail as possible your primary research interest. If you have secondary areas of research that interest you, describe those as well. Elaborate on what draws you to these topics and the importance of these areas to you.*
 - *Of the available mentors for your entrance year, which mentors would you like to work with? For each mentor, please describe what has drawn you to want to work with them, and how their research, mentorship style, content expertise, and/or methodological expertise align with your academic and professional goals? The list of available PhD mentors can be found [here](#). Please scroll down to “Available PhD Mentor” tab.*
- Preferred Faculty Mentor(s): In order of preference, indicate up to six faculty members with whom you wish to work in this program. Faculty names and bios can be found on the [School of Nursing website](#). NOTE: The Grad Studies application may link to the full list of SON faculty. Please use the list of available PhD mentors that can be found [here](#) under the “Available PhD Mentor” tab.

Academic history

List all college or university-level institutions you have attended or are currently attending (including community college, study abroad, summer sessions, etc.) and any courses in which you are currently enrolled or in which you plan on taking in the future. You will be instructed to upload scanned copies of your transcripts as you add each institution in the [Academic History](#) section or the [Status Page](#) after you have submitted your application. Before preparing your documents you must visit the [submitting official transcripts page](#) for specific instructions. Transcripts will be rejected if uploaded incorrectly or without required information and applications will be considered incomplete until corrections are made. Transcripts must be uploaded by January 5, 2027 to be considered for the general deadline.

Statement of purpose (4,000 characters, including spaces)

This section requires applicants to complete a statement of purpose. The online application provides basic essay prompts, but PhD applicants must also address the nursing specific information in the essay response.

Statement of Purpose Prompt: Describe your academic preparation, relevant experience, motivation for applying, research interests/intended focus of your studies, and professional goals as they relate to the graduate program and major field.

- **Academic preparation** refers to educational background, practical learning, extracurricular activities, self-directed research, and academic accomplishments/qualifications that demonstrate your potential for success as a master's or doctoral student in the graduate program
 - Examples: related coursework, academic research and writing, fieldwork, internships, laboratory activities, scholarships/awards, independent study, presentations, publications, teaching, faculty or peer mentorship, studio projects, organizational membership, and study abroad.
- **Interests, specializations, and career goals** may include your research interests, disciplinary subfields, area/s of specialization, and professional objectives.
- **Alignment** may include how your preparation, experiences, and interests match, specific faculty or resources and characteristics of your graduate program at UC Davis. Please include specific faculty within your desired graduate program with whom you would like to work and how your interests align with the identified faculty member/s.

ADDITIONAL School of Nursing item to address in response: Please highlight your academic preparation and motivation; interests, specializations and career goals; and fit for pursuing graduate study at UC Davis.

1. *How does your career vision align with the distinct scholarly contributions and expectations of a PhD (e.g., generating original research, advancing theory, contributing to the scientific literature, and preparing for academic or research-intensive careers), as compared to a practice- or leadership-focused goals of a DNP or DrPH?*
2. *What motivated you to choose the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing for your PhD studies? Please describe specific aspects of our School and PhD program—such as faculty, research opportunities, curriculum, vision and mission, core values, or other features—that influenced your decision.*

Personal Statement (4,000 characters, including spaces)

This section requires applicants to complete a personal statement. The online application provides basic essay prompts, but PhD applicants must also address the nursing specific information in the essay response.

Personal Statement Prompt:

All applicants are required to submit a Personal Statement as part of a complete graduate admissions application. While the Statement of Purpose is primarily focused on academic preparation, research interests/concept, and alignment with the graduate program, the Personal Statement is an opportunity to share the unique background, experiences, perspectives, and abilities that you will bring to a graduate program.

Please describe how your background and life experiences shaped your academic and/or professional path and influenced your decision to pursue a graduate degree. This may include formative experiences, environment, values, motivations, interactions, decisions, etc.

We encourage you to consider these potential scenarios when developing your Personal Statement:

- Commitment to overcoming significant obstacles despite economic disadvantage, challenging social environment, or other specific experiences of hardship.
- Unique talents, abilities or skills relevant to personal growth.
- Employment experiences, extracurricular activities, or community participation that inspired further education.
- Evidence of growth, maturity and commitment to graduate study or a graduate degree.

ADDITIONAL School of Nursing item to address in response: *The Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at UC Davis was founded to advance health and ignite leadership through innovative education, transformative research, and bold system change. As part of a public, land-grant university, we are committed to partnerships with the communities we serve and to educational practices and research that promote high-quality health care and optimal health for all. We recognize that addressing health disparities and improving outcomes for underserved populations requires inclusive collaboration, clinical excellence, and policy advocacy. Reflecting on our mission and values, please respond to the following:*

How do you envision using your education and experiences at the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing to address health disparities and improve health outcomes for the communities we serve? In your response, consider how you will engage in clinical practice, community partnerships, and research or policy efforts to advance optimal health care for all.

Test score requirements

The Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing does not require GRE scores. If you are an international graduate who has not earned a bachelor's or graduate degree from an accredited US institution, you will be required to submit English language examination scores on the following "Test Scores" page.

Test scores

International graduates are required to submit English language examination scores as part of the application process. Scores must be received by January 5, 2027, to be considered for the general deadline.

- TOEFL scores - Order an electronic score report from ETS to be sent to UC Davis. The correct institution code is 4834 - you do not need to list a specific department code.
- IELTS scores - Review the reporting instructions for your specific IELTS exam on the [Graduate Studies website](#).

Please note, TOEFL, IELTS, and Duolingo scores are valid up to two years after the test date. For more details about the English language exam criteria and score reporting requirements, refer to the [Graduate Studies website](#).

Domestic graduates are not required to submit any test scores as part of the admissions process for the Nursing Science and Health-Care Leadership doctoral program.

Other information

Select any graduate preparation program(s) you have participated in.

Supporting materials

- Curriculum Vitae or Resume: Upload your Curriculum Vitae or Resume as a required component of the application.
- **Future Interests and Goals (3,000 characters, including spaces):** Please describe your future professional interests and goals and how you believe this degree will help you achieve them.
 - **ADDITIONAL School of Nursing item to address in response:** *In this essay, please be sure to address your leadership goals, and how you think your future leadership in nursing science will have an impact on nursing and healthcare. Strong responses will include concrete examples of past leadership and thoughtful plans for future contributions.*
- Noteworthy Academic Achievements (1,500 characters, including spaces): List any academic achievements you feel are noteworthy (e.g. awards or honors, professional or academic memberships, publications, presentations, inventions, or other accomplishments).
- Website links: This section is not required for applicants to the Nursing Science and Health-Care Leadership programs.

School of Nursing

Select any environmental indicators that apply to you and select the geographic area that best describes that area where you were raised.

Applicant fellowships

Using this application for admission, UC Davis awards a select few (approximately 30) prestigious fellowships to prospective students. [Click here for details and descriptions of each of the fellowships.](#) Applicants to the Nursing Science and Health-Care Leadership graduate programs are welcome to apply for the applicant fellowships; however, this section is not required. Please also note, this is separate from any financial support provided by the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing.

Recommendations

Three letters of recommendation are required as part of your application. Please read the instructions carefully. For each recommender, you will be asked to include their first name, last name, organization, position/title, relationship, telephone number, and email address. Letters must be received by January 5, 2027, to be considered for the general deadline.

Applicant agreements

Please read through the applicant fee agreement and applicant's statement. When ready, enter your digital signature and click confirm.

Review

If all required questions have been completed, you will be prompted to finalize your application and pay the application fee by credit card.

Next steps

Save a final copy of the application for admission to Graduate Studies for your own records.

You may log onto the application website to track the status of your application. Reviewing your application status regularly is strongly encouraged. You are responsible for ensuring that all application materials are submitted before the final deadline. Please do not contact the School of Nursing to check on your application's status. Instead, login to your application account and check for status updates.

Once a decision has been made on your application, you will receive notification of the recommendation for admissions from the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at UC Davis, Nursing Science and Health-Care Leadership Graduate Group. You will also receive formal e-mail notification from the Office of Graduate Studies and be provided with instructions on how to access that decision.

Thank you for your interest in the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at UC Davis Nursing Science and Health-Care Leadership Doctor of Philosophy program.

