



PhD & DHSc Programs FAQs

General

Q: Are the doctoral programs delivered online or in-person?

A: Both the PhD in HS and the DHSc programs are offered fully online, are fully asynchronous, and require NO on-campus visits.

Q: What is the mission or orientation of these programs?

A: The programs at Faulkner integrate rigorous academic standards with a Christian worldview. Graduates are taught to lead with a strong Christian faith compass while contributing to healthcare scholarship.

PhD (Health Sciences) vs. DHSc — Key Differences & Similarities

Q: What is the main distinction between the PhD in Health Sciences and the DHSc?

A:

- The **PhD in Health Sciences** is primarily based on “original research”, designed to prepare graduates for careers in academia, research, or higher-level organizational leadership.
- The **DHSc**, by contrast, is a professional post-professional doctorate intended for experienced health professionals seeking to advance practice, leadership, or teaching roles (in clinical or academic settings) while developing research skills to solve problems with research-based solutions.

Q: Can you compare curriculum structure (credit hours, courses, dissertation/capstone) between PhD and DHSc?

Feature	PhD (Health Sciences)	DHSc
Credit hours (core + research)	45 hours (including dissertation)	36 credit hours (didactic + capstone)

Feature	PhD (Health Sciences)	DHSc
Didactic coursework	10 courses covering evidence-based practice, bioethics, statistics, leadership, qualitative & quantitative methods, instruction, etc.	Same as the PhD
Research / dissertation	Includes dissertation proposal, research design, defense	Capstone over two consecutive courses culminating in an Applied Research Project.
Time to completion	As little as 18 months (solid students) depending on dissertation speed	As little as 14 months (rolling entry, accelerated format)
Entry points / scheduling	Rolling admission; classes begin every five weeks	Same as the PhD
Ideal candidate / career focus	Aspiring scholar, researcher, academic faculty	Experienced clinician/leader aiming for advanced practice, organizational leadership, teaching roles

Q: What are the advantages or trade-offs of one versus the other?

A:

- **PhD:** Stronger emphasis on original research, better preparation for research-intensive careers.
- **DHSc:** shorter total time, more emphasis on applied/practice-based research
- **Trade-off:** The DHSc may be less common in purely academic (tenure-track) contexts than a PhD, depending on institutional expectations and discipline norms.

Admission Requirements & Process

Q: What are the admission criteria for the PhD in Health Sciences and the DHSc?

A: Admission criteria are the same for both programs, and include:

- Master's degree from a regionally accredited institution (in health sciences or closely related field)
- Minimum cumulative GPA (commonly 3.0 or above)
- Official transcripts from all prior institutions
- A resume or curriculum vitae with relevant professional experience
- Statement of purpose (research interests, goals)
- Letters of recommendation (academic and/or professional)

Q: Are test scores (GRE, MAT, etc.) required?

A: No

Q: When can students begin the programs?

A: Both the PhD (Health Sciences) and the DHSc offer **rolling admission** and start new classes every **five weeks**.

Q: Is there a limit on transfer or prior credits?

A: Yes, we accept a maximum 15 transfer credits, but those have to be from a doctoral-level program. Master's level credits will not transfer.

Program Duration, Milestones & Assessment

Q: How long will it take to complete each program?

A:

- **PhD (Health Sciences):** The minimum is about **18 months**, assuming full-time enrollment and timely completion of the dissertation.
- **DHSc:** The program is designed to be completed in as little as **14 months** under an accelerated schedule.

Actual time depends on the student's pace, whether they are full-time or part-time, and speed of capstone/dissertation work.

Q: What are the program milestones and assessments?

A: Key milestones generally include:

- Completion of didactic core courses
- Proposal defense (dissertation or capstone)
- Execution of research (dissertation or capstone)
- Final defense / presentation / publication or dissemination
- Evaluation by faculty and committee oversight

Q: What format does the DHSc capstone take?

A: The DHSc capstone is typically a two-course sequence (Doctoral Capstone 1 & 2) culminating in an applied research project.

Costs, Financial Aid & Accreditation

Q: What is the cost for these programs?

A: For the most accurate tuition and fee costs, check our website. Textbook costs vary, as some are included digitally within the program. A rough estimate for texts would be \$500-700.

Because these figures may vary by cohort or year, you should refer to the university's official tuition schedule.

Q: Are scholarships, assistantships, or financial aid available?

A: We accept FAFSA, but we do not have any scholarships or assistantships at this time.

Q: Is Faulkner University accredited?

A: Yes. Faulkner is regionally accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award associate, baccalaureate, master's, and doctorate degrees.

Q: Are the doctoral programs (PhD / DHSc) accredited by discipline-specific bodies?

A: No. Because it is under the accreditation by SACSCOC, and is not discipline-specific, or required for licensure by a state board, it is not programmatically accredited.

Career Outcomes & Prospects

Q: What careers or roles do graduates of these programs pursue?

A: Graduates of the **PhD (Health Sciences)** often pursue:

- University faculty or adjunct roles
- Research positions (in healthcare, public health, academia)
- Higher administrative or leadership roles in healthcare or education
- Publication and scholarly contribution roles

Graduates of the **DHSc** often move into:

- Advanced clinical leadership or executive roles
- Academic teaching positions (especially in practice-related courses)
- Applied research or quality improvement roles in health organizations
- Policy, administration, or consultancy roles

Q: Does the DHSc qualify one for a tenure-track academic role?

A: It depends on the institution and discipline. Some academic institutions expect a PhD

for tenure-track roles, while others may accept a professional doctorate (like DHSc / DNP / DrPH) when combined with research and publication output. Candidates should check norms in their discipline and prospective hiring institutions.

Q: What is the value of obtaining a PhD or DHSc from Faulkner?

A: Some of the value propositions include:

- Accelerated format suitable for working professionals
- Fully online delivery with flexible start dates
- Integration of Christian worldview and ethical leadership
- Ability to contribute original scholarship or applied practice solutions in healthcare settings
- Credential that can strengthen leadership, teaching, or research career trajectories

Common Questions & Concerns

Q: Who is the ideal candidate for each program?

A:

- **PhD (Health Sciences):** Candidates with strong research interest, aptitude for independent scholarship, and aspiration toward academia or research-intensive leadership roles.
- **DHSc:** Experienced health professionals who want to elevate their practice, lead in clinical or educational settings, solve clinical/practical problems using current evidence, and engage in scholarly work without a full traditional dissertation burden.

Q: If someone enrolls in a DHSc, can they later “upgrade” to a PhD?

A: If a student wishes to switch programs or pursue a PhD later, they would need to request this transfer (via the Program Director) to the PhD program and satisfy its requirements. There is no pathway to complete the DHSc and then transfer all of those DHSc credits into the PhD program.

Q: What support is available to doctoral students (mentoring, writing resources, library)?

A: Faulkner offers student resources, library access, and writing support (e.g., writing centers) for online students. More specific mentoring, dissertation supervision, and research guidance would be arranged by the doctoral program faculty and committees.

Q: Are international students eligible to apply?

A: English proficiency requirements (TOEFL, IELTS, or Duolingo) are required for

acceptance/entry. International students should contact the admissions office for visa, residency, and credential-evaluation procedures.

Q: How rigorous is the dissertation / capstone process, especially in accelerated formats?

A: Although the timeframes are aggressive (e.g., 14–18 months), students must still plan, execute, analyze, and defend original scholarly or applied research under faculty supervision. Success will require high discipline, effective time management, and close collaboration with advisors.

Q: Are there published alumni or exemplar dissertations/capstones?

A: Yes, we publish our student dissertations via ProQuest, effective Oct 2025.

Other FAQs

Q: How are students tested in each class? Is it primarily examinations, written assignments, etc.?

A: Assignments are generally written papers, as it is preparation for the writing of an extensive research document (dissertation/capstone)

Q: What are the primary research interests and areas of expertise of the faculty members involved in the PhD program?

A: Faculty expertise and interests span physical therapy, nutrition, communication disorders, health promotion, leadership, exercise science, and much more.

Q: How are faculty advisors assigned to doctoral candidates, and what is the process for selecting a dissertation chair?

A: Dissertation/Capstone committee members (of which there are 3) are chosen by the student. These can be selected from the public (colleague, mentor, faculty member) or from our roster. We contract with each committee member via stipend for their work, as a 1099 employee. Our Dissertation Director serves on every committee as the third member, so the student is only required to find two others.

Q: Are there opportunities for students to present at conferences or publish in academic journals during their tenure in the program?

A: Yes! But this would be at the discretion and pursuits of the student, not Faulkner

Q: What are the expectations regarding dissertation/capstone topics, and are there specific areas of focus encouraged by the program?

A: For dissertations, it must be original research. For capstones, original research is discouraged as it is more PhD appropriate, and will take longer. For both the dissertation and capstone, topics must be related to the health-sciences.

Q: How does the program assist students in job placement or further academic pursuits post-graduation?

A: This would require direct and specific conversation with the program director for assistance.