

Statement on Ph.D. Residency and Student Progress

(Approved by EDST—April 21, 2005)

University Policy on Residency

UBC regards all doctoral students as “full-time” in its official documents, but in the late 1990s, the Faculty of Graduate Studies permitted departments to define what was expected in terms of doctoral “residency.”

The usual justification given for requiring a residency period (sessions or years of full-time study) for doctoral students is that being fully immersed in the intellectual life of the university—without the “distractions” of outside employment or other responsibilities—is necessary in order to both understand the norms and expectations of the department and university and to concentrate sufficiently on the work required of doctoral students so that coursework, comprehensive examinations and demanding research projects can all be completed within the six-year limit. Because doctoral study is viewed by many as preparation for an academic career, it has seemed reasonable to expect students to engage fully with the university for some period of time.

We in the Department of Educational Studies understand that personal circumstances (economic, family, work, etc.) of students may make it difficult or impossible—not to mention professionally unwise—to disengage from any and all outside work or professional obligations to pursue doctoral studies. There is also the very practical problem of enforcing this requirement when all doctoral students are regarded by the university as full time regardless of the commitments they have outside the university. There is currently no provision for part-time doctoral study at UBC although some professional doctoral programs have been approved—including the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy—that assume students will be employed during their studies.

Departmental Policy on Ph.D. Residency

1. We believe that all students who decide to pursue a Ph.D. in the Department should make as intense and “full-time” a commitment to their studies as possible given their individual circumstances. Experience working with students who have been able to make only limited commitments to full-time study suggests that they *are much less likely to be successful in the program*. Being immersed in academic work during doctoral study is especially important for those students who wish to pursue an academic career.
2. Rather than set an arbitrary period of full-time study, we will expect *all* students in the Ph.D. program to make a sufficient commitment to their academic studies that they are able to make “satisfactory progress” throughout their programs which means:

- a. That during the first 12 months of their programs, students will complete at least half the coursework regarded as necessary preparation for the comprehensive examination and thesis research, including EDST 601.
- b. That during the second 12 months, students will complete all remaining courses regarded as necessary preparation for the comprehensive examination and thesis research.
- c. That during the third 12 months, students will complete their comprehensive examination, form their research supervisory committee and have their research proposals approved [the three primary requirements of candidacy]. Of course, completing any of these milestones earlier than the third year of study is encouraged.
- d. That by the end of the third 12 months of study, students must be admitted to candidacy.

According to current Faculty of Graduate Studies policy,

“A student who is not admitted to candidacy within 24 months from date of initial registration must withdraw from the program. Extension of this period may be permitted by the Dean of Graduate Studies in exceptional circumstances.”

- e. That once admitted to candidacy, students are expected to make steady progress on their research projects and to consult regularly with their advisors and committee members.

If illness, financial problems or family obligations prevent the student from making satisfactory progress at any stage in his or her program, then the student should request via his or her advisor a leave of absence from the program for this period. See the Graduate Studies Policy and Procedures Manual (www.grad.ubc.ca) for the various types of leave available, the maximum length of each type, and the conditions or restrictions related to each. Because leaves are granted when students are advised to temporarily disengage from their studies, time on leave is not counted toward total time on program. The period of leave extends the total amount of time allowed to complete all program requirements.

Annual Review of Progress and Plans

1. The student’s program of study worksheet, completed in consultation with a pro tem advisor and program advisory committee, lists the courses regarded as important in preparing for the comprehensive examination and the research project that follows. This worksheet is located in the student’s file, should be updated when needed by the advisor and provides the reference point for assessing student progress.
2. Once a year (usually in May or June) the department will request a brief progress report from the student on coursework and other requirements completed during the past 12 months and on plans for the next 12 months. The report will be reviewed by the student’s advisor and a determination

made about whether or not progress has been satisfactory and whether or not the plan for the next 12 months is satisfactory. If the advisor believes that either progress or the plan is not satisfactory, the advisor will consult with the student and discuss his or her concerns. The student will have an opportunity to respond to the advisor's concerns and this response will be noted in the advisor's recommendation to the Graduate Advisor

3. If the student's progress and plan are satisfactory, the student will be notified by his or her advisor. If the student's progress or plan is not satisfactory, the Graduate Advisor will notify the student and explain in what respects the progress or plan is not satisfactory. The student will be asked to provide a written response with a revised plan for completing program requirements. The Graduate Advisor will then consult with the student's advisor or program advisory committee after which he or she will decide about the student's continuation in the program.
4. If a student is required by the department to withdraw from the program because of unsatisfactory progress, this decision may be appealed to the Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies.

