



# PHD STUDENT HANDBOOK

2017 Edition

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## Introduction

Welcome to the PhD in Educational Studies! This document provides information for new and continuing PhD students. This guide should be read in tandem with the *EDST New Student Handbook*, which provides general and administrative information for all students in the department.

### PhD studies in the Department of Educational Studies (EDST)

The Department of Educational Studies (EDST) is one of several departments in the Faculty of Education. The PhD program is a research-oriented doctoral program that attracts students who have a range of interests. The department has several “streams” which include (but are not limited to):

- adult and community education and social movements
- citizenship and human rights
- continuing professional education
- cultural politics, critical multiculturalism and feminist studies
- educational leadership and policy
- epistemology, ethics, and political philosophy
- equity in education
- indigenous education
- international and comparative education
- media, popular culture and representation
- youth and children in schools, families, and communities

The PhD program is not orientated towards any particular stream and PhD students and faculty members may focus their work on one or more area of study. Given the range of research and scholarship in EDST, PhD students are often studying distinct aspects related to education. Thus, the courses students take, the topics of their comprehensive exam, and the types of research and scholarship they undertake are distinct and individually crafted.

Although there are some general requirements for all PhD students, as outlined in this handbook, ***it is essential to discuss requirements and decisions connected to the PhD program with your supervisor.***



## What to do before you begin the program

### ***Contact your pro-term supervisor***

Incoming PhD students should contact their pro-term supervisor(s) as soon as they accept their offer of admission. The Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies [recommends](#) meeting early with the appointed pro-term supervisor(s) to discuss the following areas:

- Frequency of meetings
- Who should initiate contact, preferred method of contact, and communication style
- Supervisor(s) expectations
- Program funding and scholarships
- Professional career goals
- Publication, presentation and authorship practices and protocols
- Plans to form the supervisory committee


### ***Enroll in courses***

Students are expected to enroll in classes prior to the start of their program. Students can gather information about courses (required course requirements and additional electives) through several avenues:

- For information about courses in EDST, visit the department [website](#)
- To register and learn about courses university-wide, visit the [UBC course schedule](#)
- To learn more about a course, contact the instructor to request a syllabus

### ***Preparing funding applications***

Many incoming PhD students will apply for funding soon after they begin their first term. Because deadlines are often in September, these applications often require planning, work, and collaboration with your supervisor prior to beginning the program.



There are several ways to learn about funding opportunities:

- The Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies [website](#) (including workshops and seminars)
- The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council [website](#)
- Information provided through the EDST student list serve
- Supervisor

Importantly, specific funding opportunities may not be open to international students. It is necessary to research funding opportunities thoroughly to learn the requirements and expectations prior to applying.

***If you plan to relocate***

Students who are relocating to Vancouver can visit the Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies [website](#) for information about housing, living costs, and other aspects of life in Vancouver. International students can also access information on what you need to know if you are coming to UBC from abroad at the following [link](#).

Incoming students can contact the EDST Graduate Academic Assistants for further questions about relocating.



## Degree timeline

At UBC there are three main academic terms beginning in September, January, and May (which encompasses two short summer terms). The 2005 EDST [departmental policy](#) outlines expectations for PhD student residency and progress.

Study and completion time for the PhD program varies from student-to-student and there are a range of influences which may lengthen or shorten the program. Each student works with their supervisor to ensure timely completion. In addition, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies has created an online resource, [The Graduate Game Plan](#), which provides information on the primary stages of graduate studies.

In 2013, EDST revised their recommended “Steps to Completion in the Ph.D. Program.” This [document](#) provides an overview of the steps to completing the program at the departmental level, information about the [annual progress report](#), timeline for being admitted to **candidacy** and length of leave allowed.

### ***What is candidacy?***


Candidacy is the final stage of a PhD program and is attained by completing required coursework, comprehensive exam, and a research proposal. For further information on advancement to candidacy visit the Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies website.

Although the exact timeline will differ between individuals, most PhD students complete their required classes in their first year of study, complete their comprehensive exam and research proposal during their second-to-third year of study, and complete their research and dissertation in their third-to-fourth (and beyond) year of study.

Some students’ time to completion may be suspended for personal reasons. Students should contact the EDST Graduate Coordinator for any potential leaves (parental, medical and so on) and read the university’s policy on [leaves of absence](#).

### ***Coursework***

Information about the required courses for the EDST PhD program can be found on the department [website](#).



Although there is no required number of credits/courses beyond the required doctoral seminars, coursework is an excellent way to meet potential committee members, prepare for comprehensive exam, gain research and writing skills, and meet other students. In comparison with other doctoral programs which have several required courses, the doctoral program in EDST is flexible and allows students to design their own program of study.

### ***Forming a committee***

The supervisory committee consists of your supervisor and *at least* two other individuals (normally faculty members). Its role is to provide support by broadening and deepening the range of expertise and experience available to PhD students. UBC Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies has prepared a [Handbook of Graduate Supervision](#) which provides insight into working with a supervisor and committee.

Forming a committee is the responsibility of the student but must be done in consultation with the research supervisor. PhD students may consider committee members both within and outside of the department and UBC. In order to learn who is eligible to be a committee member, consult the EDST department [policy](#) on the composition of a supervisory committee. It is recommended that PhD begin forming their PhD committee soon after beginning their program.

### ***Comprehensive exam***

All PhD students are required to successfully complete their comprehensive examination after completing required coursework and before confirming their research proposal. The department has a distinct comprehensive exam procedure that differs from other departments and faculties. Details about the mechanics of the examination and the options in format are provided in the [departmental policy](#). Additionally, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies provides a general [overview](#) for all PhD students at UBC.

### ***Dissertation proposal***

In consultation with the research supervisor and other members of the committee, students often draft and revise their research proposal throughout their PhD. However, the dissertation proposal is not approved until after the comprehensive exam have been completed.

Currently, there is no departmental policy on what the dissertation proposal should contain. Instead, each student determines with their supervisor and committee the requirements of the proposal.

Once the dissertation proposal has been approved, the research supervisor is responsible for placing a copy of the approved research proposal—with the signatures of all committee members on an approved cover page—in the student’s file and for notifying the Graduate Program Assistant that the proposal has been approved. At this stage, PhD students must submit an Advancement to Candidacy [form](#) to Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

### ***Dissertation***

The [scope and requirements](#) of a doctoral dissertation are outlined by UBC Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. As of early 2017, they define a doctoral dissertation as “a substantial piece of scholarly work that contains a significant contribution of new knowledge to the field of study. It presents the results and an analysis of the student's original research, and should be significant enough to be publishable in the refereed literature.”

Although it is the responsibility of each student to ensure their dissertation meets these requirements, the supervisor and committee will work with each student to help ensure it is met. Prior to the research and writing process, it is recommended that students form a timeline with their committee and agree on a framework for revisions and feedback.

There are [ethics procedures](#), [formatting requirements](#), word limits, [structure requirements](#), and many other aspects that should be considered well in advance.

### ***Defence***

The Final Doctoral Examination is the culmination of years of research and writing and is the last step toward the conferral of the doctoral degree. At this stage of the PhD students will need to closely adhere to the [Doctoral Defence Guide](#) published by UBC Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

Because the defence takes several months of advance planning, students should prepare a timeline using the [Doctoral Examinations Planning Tool and Checklist for Candidates and Supervisors](#) and discuss this with their supervisory committee during their final year of study.



## Professional Development & Student support

### ***Teaching Opportunities/Teaching Assistantships (TA)***

The department of EDST does not regularly have teaching assistantships available; however, students are encouraged to apply for positions in other departments by visiting their departmental websites and contacting their administrative staff. For example, EDST students have had success in obtaining teaching assistantships in the [Department of Sociology](#) and the [Faculty of Land & Food Systems](#).

Students may have success finding opportunities through other avenues to enhance their teaching skills, including guest lecturing. Although these opportunities are often unpaid, they do provide excellent teaching experience. The best way to find out about opportunities for guest lecturing is to approach faculty members and make your interest known.


Lecture positions are also available at other universities and colleges (such as Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Langara, or Simon Fraser University) and may be advertised on their human resources websites, through local job posting websites, or on the EDST listserv.

Students may also be interested in improving their teaching skills through the [Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology](#). The Centre offers graduate student training on teaching in higher education, including workshops (including the [Instructional Skills Workshop](#)), seminars, one-on-one coaching, departmental TA training programs, and a certificate program in Advanced Teaching and Learning (for more information, email: [ctlt.gcpinfo@ubc.ca](mailto:ctlt.gcpinfo@ubc.ca)).

### ***Research***

Research support is available to students both departmentally and at UBC more broadly. A great place to start are the Graduate Student Workshops offered through the [Koerner Library Research Commons](#). These workshops help students with various stages of the research process, including an orientation to the library, literature reviews, use of popular citation management tools, training in NVivo (qualitative research software) R and SPSS (quantitative research software), thesis formatting and publishing workshops, and seminars on expanding your academic network.

UBC also has specific subject librarians that can provide graduate students with personalized help with their research. The Education Librarians can be contacted through the [library website](#).



UBC students have access to [ABACUS data serve network](#), a container for research data studies. The [UBC data librarian](#) is available to help students navigate data services available through UBC, ABACIS, and Statistics Canada [Research Data Center](#) at UBC.

### ***Publishing & Presenting Your Research***

Part of graduate school is presenting and publishing your ongoing research. While perhaps a daunting task, there are many opportunities at UBC and within EDST to become familiar with these processes. You may wish to start by visiting the library's [publication guide](#). This guide introduces tools and resources for publishing your work in an academic journal, as well as how to prepare your paper for the publication process. [Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies](#) also offers students tips for presenting and publishing research.

Within the EDST department, there are opportunities to present your ongoing research or a course paper, including [EDST's Annual Research Day](#), which showcases and celebrates the research, practice, and theory being developed by EDST students and faculty. This supportive environment provides students the opportunity to experience what it is like to present at an academic conference, and obtain valuable feedback for future presentations.

Publishing and presentation opportunities will frequently be shared through the EDST listserv. EDST's Graduate Academic Assistants additionally hold workshops throughout the year, including step-by-step guides on publishing and presentations.

### ***Writing Resources***

UBC offers both on campus and online writing support:

- [Graduate Pathways to Success](#) offers writing workshops throughout the year
- The UBC library hosts an excellent and free [multi-disciplinary graduate student writing community](#) which includes ongoing mentorship and consulting
- [UBC Continuing Studies](#) offers courses (for a fee) to help with the specific requirements of graduate-level articles, reports, and theses
- The [Academic English Support Program](#) provides free, professional language support to UBC students who speak English as a second/additional language
- Keep a lookout for ongoing student writing groups and workshops offered through the EDST listserv



## Employment/Working While Completing a PhD

Each year there are a limited number of research and academic assistantships available in the department. The best way to learn about research assistantships is to talk with faculty members who have projects you may be interested in working on. Make your interest in serving as a research assistant known to these faculty and ask them to notify you if an assistantship becomes available.

The department also provides funding for four academic assistantships each year to provide student-based services in the department, including two peer advisers and two academic research and publication assistants. These appointments are from September 1 to April 30. Each year, EDST students are invited to apply and the positions are posted on the department website and through the EDST-student listserv. These are usually posted and filled during the summer months.

- There are a wide variety of job opportunities available through UBC, both on and off campus. Visit <https://students.ubc.ca/career> for more information
- Job opportunities may be shared via the EDST listserv

Many students hold employment while also completing their PhD. It is important to note that it may be a funding requirement to limit the number of hours a student may work per week. It is up to students to manage these requirements and ensure they are following rules and guidelines from the funding agency.



## Support Services

Although being a PhD student is a privileged opportunity, it can also be overwhelming and difficult at times. There are many university services that promote wellness and wellbeing among students. For example,

- UBC's [Graduate Pathways to Success](#) program offers students workshops, seminars, and other activities that cover a range of personal and professional development topics – including skills in academic writing, applying for funding, stress management, professional skill and career building.
- [Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies](#) offers a variety of student support services, including academic and professional development support, advising and counselling, support for international students and those who are new to Vancouver, conflict resolution, family support, social connection, financial support, and health and wellness.
- UBC offers mental health and counselling support services, including wellness workshops, group programs, individual therapy, and psychiatric care. Please visit <https://students.ubc.ca/health-wellness> for more information
- Student Health Services at UBC offers year-round healthcare for UBC students, including family doctors and registered nurses

All UBC students have a health and dental plan (unless they opt out) through the Graduate Student Society. Visit <http://www.studentcare.ca/> for information about what's covered, how to find a healthcare professional, and how to file a claim.

Graduate Student Services and the department of EDST also holds workshops, seminars, and activities throughout the year to support students' mental and physical health and wellbeing. Events will be shared through the EDST listserv



## PhD Student Rights

Although there are many requisite steps to complete a PhD and a UBC-wide [Code of Conduct](#), it is also important to highlight *that PhD students have several important rights*:

- **Change supervisors and committee members.** While many students remain working with the supervisor they were initially assigned, students have the right to change supervisors or committee members. Often this happens because another faculty member is a better match to your areas of interest and expertise. Sometimes a change occurs because of differences in communication, personality, or expectations. Please consult with the EDST Graduate Advisor if you have any questions about this process.
- **Meet with your supervisor(s) on a regular basis.** Over the course of a PhD the need to meet with your supervisor and committee will change. It is recommended that students openly discuss communication expectations with their supervisor.
- **Access health support.** Students can access support through Graduate Student Services, Student Health Services, or by speaking with your supervisory committee and EDST Graduate Advisor.
- **Take a leave of absence.** Students should speak with their supervisor about requesting and leave of absence.
- **Meet with the university [Ombudsperson](#)** for any issues relating to equity, fairness, and respect. Additionally, UBC's Graduate Student Society provides [advocacy](#) services.



## Link Directory

Abacus Dataverse Network <http://dvn.library.ubc.ca/dvn/>

Graduate Pathways to Success <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/current-students/graduate-pathways-success>

Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/>

Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Student Support & Services <https://students.ubc.ca/health-wellness/student-health-services>

International Student Guide <https://students.ubc.ca/international-student-guide>

Office of the Ombudsperson <http://ombudsoffice.ubc.ca/>

Student Health Services <https://students.ubc.ca/health-wellness/student-health-services>

Student Services <https://students.ubc.ca/>

UBC Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology <http://ctl.ubc.ca/>

UBC Directory <https://directory.ubc.ca/index.cfm>

UBC Library <https://www.library.ubc.ca/>