

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
Department of Educational Studies

Steps to Completion in M.A. Programs

(Revised April 2016)

Abbreviations used:

EDST	Department of Educational Studies
G+PS	Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
POS	Program of Studies
RSC	Research Supervisory Committee

Note—The order of some of these events may vary depending on the circumstances and some events may occur simultaneously.

1. **Admission**

Applicants submit required materials using the online UBC application system accessible through the G+PS website. The Department then reviews the application and makes an admission decision based on all available evidence (transcripts, reference letters, statement of intent, etc.). The applicant is notified by email and, if admitted, must accept or decline the offer in writing. An offer of admission is good only for the academic year in which it is made.

2. **Appointment of Supervisor**

A Supervisor is designated at the time of admission and is responsible for assisting the student in initial selection of courses and in completing initial registration. The student is responsible for contacting the Supervisor and arranging an appointment to discuss course selection prior to initial registration. The Welcome Letter, sent to each admitted student, explains all the steps to admission.

A student may request a change in Supervisor at any time as long as another qualified faculty member has agreed to serve in this capacity. A change in Supervisor must be requested using the form available from <http://edst-educ.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2015/05/EDST-Change-of-Supervisor-Form.pdf>

3. **Completion of Program of Studies Worksheet**

The Program of Studies worksheet is completed by the Supervisor in consultation with the student, prior to or immediately following the student's initial registration. Changes can be made to the Program of Studies from time to time, but all changes must be approved by the Supervisor. A completed worksheet should be submitted by the Supervisor to the Graduate Program Assistant who will enter the information into the Department's database and place the original worksheet in the student's file. A copy of the completed worksheet is provided by the advisor to the student.

4. **Coursework — Core, Elective, Research Tools**

It is the student's responsibility to maintain registration throughout the program and to enroll in and complete all courses included in the Program of Studies. If for any reason the student must temporarily interrupt studies, an immediate request should be made to the Supervisor for a leave of absence from the program. Information about types of leaves and the policies governing each can be found in the G+PS website. See this link for comprehensive information: <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/current-students/managing-your-program>

5. **Selection of Thesis Topic**

Students discuss possible topics with their Supervisor and other interested faculty. Students often prepare a short written summary of their proposed project and use this as a discussion paper with various faculty.

6. **Formation of Research Supervisory Committee**

The Research Supervisory Committee (RSC) consists of the student's Research Supervisor and at least one other faculty member. All members of the RSC must meet eligibility criteria as defined in the policies of G+PS. It is the Research Supervisor's responsibility to assure that the membership of the Committee conforms to these criteria. As the title suggests, the role of the Committee is to supervise the student's research and preparation of the thesis. The Research Supervisor and student jointly identify a faculty member or members who may have interests and skills compatible with the proposed research. Normally the student is expected to initiate discussions with and to extend invitations to faculty who might serve on the committee. The specific approach used to constitute the committee is worked out between the student and Research Supervisor.

7. **Development and Approval of Research Proposal**

In consultation with the Research Supervisor and the other member(s) of the RSC the student drafts and revises the research proposal until the committee is ready to approve the project. The Committee determines the form of the proposal, but most often it includes a clear and complete presentation and justification of the research problem, questions, and/or hypotheses; a critical review of relevant literature; a presentation of the study's conceptual or theoretical framework; a detailed description of the research methodology; and a statement of significance. Expectations for the form and content of the research proposal also vary by program, so it is best to discuss details with one's Research Supervisor and supervisory committee early in the development of the proposal.

8. **Approval of Research Protocol by Behavioural Research Ethics Board**

If the student's research involves collecting data from humans, the research protocol must be approved by the UBC Behavioural Research Ethics Board (BREB). The student is responsible for completing the necessary forms (forms are completed online at <http://www.ors.ubc.ca/>) and submitting them—with required attachments (e.g. letter of information, consent form, interview questions, observation protocol)—to the research supervisor for approval. The research Supervisor and Department Head must approve

BREB applications. Once submitted to the Ethics Board, the review process normally takes 4-6 weeks (see the BREB website for submission deadlines and turnaround times). No data are to be collected or pilot studies begun until an approval certificate is issued by the Board.

9. **Completing and Submitting Annual Academic Progress Reports**

Each MA student in the Department of Educational Studies is expected to complete an annual progress report. These reports are a means of tracking student progress through the program and identifying problems that may be impeding timely completion of requirements. Reminders to complete these reports are sent annually through departmental email lists but it is the student's responsibility to download and complete Part A of this form by May 31 each year they are enrolled in the program. The Annual Progress Report form for MA programs can be found at <http://edst-educ.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2013/05/EDST-Progress-Report-MA-May-2014.doc> Completed forms should be submitted electronically to the department's Graduate Program Assistant (grad.edst@ubc.ca), who will log them in and forward them to the student's advisor or supervisor who will complete Part B. Students who find they cannot make steady progress on their programs for four or more months due to unexpected work, family, or health changes should request a leave of absence through their Supervisor or the EDST Graduate Advisor. Students can request up to 12 months of leave during their program.

10. **Complete Research**

It is the student's responsibility to carry out the research as planned, consulting with members of the RSC as needed. Any deviations from the research proposal should be approved by members of the committee. The student is expected to keep all members of the committee informed of progress or problems in completing the research. It is the responsibility of RSC to monitor the student's progress with her/his thesis and to provide feedback, advice and support.

11. **Write and Revise Thesis**

Agreement should be reached between the student and RSC members regarding the way drafts are written and reviewed, including the referencing style to be used. The student consults with and receives feedback from members of the committee as drafts are produced. Generally, faculty members expect to have a minimum of two weeks (10 working days) to read material submitted by students. Students can reasonably expect faculty to provide written and/or oral feedback shortly after the two weeks has expired, unless the faculty member indicates when the draft is received that more time is needed.

Students are encouraged to read the guidelines for "*Masters and Doctoral Thesis Submission*" which can be found on the G+PS website at

<https://www.grad.ubc.ca/current-students/dissertation-thesis-preparation>.

These guidelines cover many technical aspects of thesis preparation that are important to know about early in the process.

12. **Apply to Graduate**

The student is responsible for completing by the published deadline an Application for Graduation which can be done online at <http://www.students.ubc.ca/coursesreg/graduation/>. If students plan to complete their program and graduate within a certain term, they should apply to graduate by the deadline. If students do not complete within the term for which they applied to graduate, they must re-apply to graduate in the next term.

13. **Oral Examination and Thesis Approval by RSC**

The student submits a complete thesis in proper style and format as specified by the RSC and G+PS guidelines to all committee members. If students have only two committee members (including the Research Supervisor), both members must attend the oral examination. At least one qualified person not involved in supervising the research—an “external examiner”—must be added to the RSC for the evaluation of the thesis. Three weeks prior to the oral examination the student should complete the MA Program template and submit it to the Graduate Program Assistant. Normally the evaluation of the thesis involves an oral examination in which the student makes a presentation and the committee members and “external examiner” ask questions about the research. When the members of the examining committee agree that the thesis is acceptable, they sign the Masters Thesis Approval and Program Completion form which can be downloaded from the G+PS website indicating formal acceptance and assign a mark. Please note, faculty must NOT sign the thesis cover page. The Research Supervisor submits the mark through the Graduate Program Assistant. Check the EDST website (“Policies and Forms”) for details on the procedure for the MA oral examination.

14. **Approved Thesis Submitted to FoGS**

Students are expected to submit all final theses/dissertations electronically using the instructions available from <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/current-students/final-dissertation-thesis-submission/circle-instructions>

It is your responsibility to submit a thesis in the correct format and allow time for revisions to be complete in order to meet deadlines.

Note about pre-reviews: If you are preparing for final submission, **your thesis will be reviewed more quickly if you submit directly to cIRcle rather than emailing it for review.**

We recommend you submit your thesis **a minimum of 3 - 5 days before any deadline**, as corrections may be required and the thesis must be approved in order for you to meet deadlines.

15. **Graduation Checklist and Attachments Submitted to G+PS**

Once all program requirements have been satisfied, the thesis has been accepted by G+PS and a receipt issued, the Research Supervisor asks the Graduate Program Assistant to prepare a Graduation Checklist. The purpose of this checklist is to provide a summary of information about the student’s program and to confirm that all program requirements have been completed. Attached to this checklist is a printout of courses completed and marks received, and a copy of the receipt from G+PS.

16. **Graduation**

As noted, above, the student is responsible for completing by the published deadline an Application for Graduation which can be done online at <http://www.students.ubc.ca/coursesreg/graduation/>

It is important to maintain a current email and mailing address on the SIS in order to receive information on graduation.

17. **Celebrate!**