

**Steps to Completion in the Doctor of Education  
in  
Educational Leadership and Policy (EdD) Program**

(Revised August 15, 2022)

Abbreviations used:

- EDST — Department of Educational Studies
- G+PS — Faculty of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies
- CAC — Cohort Advisory Committee
- POS — Program of Studies
- RSC — Research Supervisory Committee

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

1. **Admission**

Applicant submits required materials to the Department. Application packages are evaluated, and it is determined if the applicant meets admission requirements. Once this determination is made, the Department reviews the application and makes an admission recommendation to the Faculty of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies (G+PS) based on all available evidence. G+PS then sends a formal offer of admission to the applicant, and the applicant must accept or decline the offer in writing. An offer of admission is good only for the academic year in which it is made. Please note that under current policies of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies, doctoral students have 6 years from initial registration to complete all program requirements.

2. **Meeting the Cohort/Beginning the Program**

The EdD program involves joining a cohort of students who begin the program and complete required coursework together. The EdD Academic Coordinator facilitates an initial meeting of the cohort to introduce students to one another, to introduce faculty who will be involved in the program, and to answer questions. This meeting is normally held on or around the opening day of classes in the first summer of the program (July-August).

During this first summer session, the cohort will also meet with the Cohort Advisory Committee (CAC). After the general meeting, each student will meet with the CAC to discuss his or her initial ideas about the dissertation project and to clarify any matters related to the program. Students may request additional meetings with the CAC—or their Program Advisor—at any time. An EdD Program of Study (POS) worksheet will be completed and filed for each student by the Program Advisor or the CAC. The purpose of this one-page document is to confirm the required courses in the program and later to

record other courses that the student may wish to take as electives. It is not essential that electives be recorded at this early stage in the program, but when electives are selected, they will be recorded on the POS.

### 3. **Completing Required and Elective Courses**

The program is designed so students can complete all required and elective courses by the end of the second year, although some students take a bit longer to complete electives. Required courses must be completed before the student takes the EdD comprehensive examination at the end of the second year of the program. Elective courses may be regularly-scheduled on-campus courses, approved online courses, courses taken at other universities that have formal agreements, e.g., Western Dean Agreement (WDA) for credit transfer with UBC, courses at UBCO, or as Directed Studies (EDST 580). Plans for elective courses should be discussed with your Program Advisor or the Cohort Advisory Committee.

For EDST 580: Directed Studies, you will need to receive approval from your cohort advisors or supervisor/s. Once that approval is received, you can approach a faculty member to discuss the nature of the course, including both faculty and student expectations. You will then need to fill out [the form](#) and submit to the Graduate Program Assistant ([grad.edst@ubc.ca](mailto:grad.edst@ubc.ca)) to register for the course.

For courses at UBCO, students need to apply for authorization and course registration using [the form here](#). Should you take courses at other universities, you will need to apply for permission from your supervisor. If you plan to take WDA courses, you will need to apply for authorization and course registration by filling out [the form here](#).

Upon successful completion of the courses outside of UBC Vancouver campus (please note [the criteria](#) that you would need to meet in order to get the credits transferred to your EdD program), you will also need to apply for credit transfer by using [this form](#).

### 4. **Formation of Research Supervisory Committee**

The Research Supervisory Committee (RSC) consists of the student's Research Supervisor (who usually chairs the committee and normally holds the rank of Associate Professor or Professor) and at least two other members. One of these members may be a senior practitioner with expertise in the student's field of interest. The composition of the committee must be approved by the Dean of G+PS if any non-UBC persons are involved. As the title suggests, the role of this committee is to supervise the student's research and preparation of the dissertation. In most instances, the student approaches a qualified faculty member and requests that the individual serve as Research Supervisor. The CAC and the Program Advisor are charged with helping students identify a possible Research Supervisor. If agreement is reached, then the Research Supervisor and student should review [the EDST Graduate Student/Supervisor Expectation](#). It is recommended that both student and the supervisor sign the document and send it to the Graduate Program Assistant to be filed. The Research Supervisor and the student should also jointly identify

other members who may have interests and expertise compatible with the proposed research. Normally the student is expected to initiate discussions with prospective Research Supervisors, and together they extend invitations to other faculty members who might serve on the committee. The specific approach used to constitute the committee is worked out between the student and Research Supervisor.

## 5. **Comprehensive Examination**

All doctoral students at UBC are required to complete a comprehensive examination. EdD students are expected to complete the examination requirements between the conclusion of EDST 602 (which provides a structure to help students prepare for the comps) and the end of the second year of the program. The examination assumes that the required courses in the program have been completed and entails both written and oral aspects.

## 6. **Development and Approval of Research Proposal**

In consultation with the Research Supervisor and other members of the RSC, the student drafts and revises the research proposal until the committee is ready to approve the project. The Committee determines the requirements of the proposal, but most often it includes a clear and complete presentation and justification of the research problem; a critical review of relevant literature and a presentation of the study's conceptual or theoretical framework; and a complete presentation of the research method. The Research Supervisor is responsible for placing an e-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.

## 7. **Admission to Doctoral Candidacy**

Once the student completes required coursework (24 credits, which includes the two electives), passes the comprehensive examination, and produces an approved research proposal, the chairperson of the Research Supervisory Committee (most often the Research Supervisor) completes an "[Advancement to Candidacy](#)" form. Once this form is filed with G+PS, the student is considered admitted to candidacy. Having achieved candidacy students may be eligible for certain teaching assignments that are not otherwise available to graduate students. Current policy of the Faculty of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies states: "A student who is not admitted to candidacy within 36 months of initial registration must withdraw from the program. Extension of this period may be permitted by the Dean of Graduate Studies in exceptional circumstances."

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

If your proposed research involves collecting data from humans (via interviews, questionnaires, observations, etc.), the research protocol must be approved by the UBC Behavioural Research Ethics Board (BREB). The student is responsible for completing the necessary forms and attachments in the web-based RISE (Research Information

Systems). This online research administration tool can be accessed at <https://www.rise.ubc.ca> . The student prepares drafts of the application and attachments, then these are reviewed by the student's research supervisor. Once the supervisor has approved and submitted the application and attachments, the department head is notified that they are ready for review and approval. Once the application is approved by the department head, it is put into the BREB review process, which normally takes 4-6 weeks (longer during the summer). Detailed information on the process, deadlines, and turnaround times is available on the Research Services website. No data are to be collected until the approval certificate is received from BREB. It is necessary for students carrying out research projects to complete an online research ethics tutorial before their application can be submitted to the BREB. Information on how to access the tutorial can also be found on the RISE website. You will learn more about the BREB process in your required Research 1 and 2 courses (EDST 603 and EDST 604).

9. **Complete Research**

It is the student's responsibility to carry out the research as proposed and approved, consulting with the RSC as needed. Any deviations from the research proposal should be approved by the members of the RSC. 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 the RSC to actively follow the student's progress with their dissertation and to provide advice and support.

10. **Write and Revise Dissertation**

Agreement should be reached between the student and RSC members regarding the way drafts are written and reviewed. In some cases, the research supervisor will want to see some or all of these drafts before they are circulated to committee members. The student consults with and receives feedback from members of the committee as drafts are produced. Generally, faculty members expect to have 2 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 2 weeks has passed, unless the faculty member indicates—when the draft is received—that more time will be needed.

Students are encouraged to read the guidelines for "*Dissertation and Thesis Preparation*" and "*Final Dissertation and Thesis Submission*" which can be found on the G+PS website at [www.grad.ubc.ca](http://www.grad.ubc.ca). These guidelines cover many technical aspects of dissertation preparation that are important to know about early in the process.

11. **Nomination of Two External Examiners**

When the RSC members believe the dissertation is nearing completion, they discuss who is best qualified to serve as External Examiner. The External Examiner may be a senior practitioner in the field of the candidate's research. The names, addresses, and qualifications of at least two nominees for External Examiner are submitted by the Research Supervisor on the proper forms to the G+PS. External Examiners must be nominated at least three months prior to the Final Oral Examination. The Dean of

Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies (or designate) contacts the nominees and determines if one of them is willing to serve. Once confirmed, the Research Supervisor is notified who the External Examiner will be.

The policies of the Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies regarding selection of External Examiners and communication with nominees are strictly enforced. See the online G+PS Policy Manual ([www.grad.ubc.ca](http://www.grad.ubc.ca)) for specific regulations. Students are not to know the name of the External Examiner until the dissertation has been submitted to Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies.

## 12. **Dissertation Approved by Research Supervisory Committee**

When the committee believes that the dissertation is ready to go to the External Examiner, the Research Supervisor completes and signs the [\*Graduate Program Approval of Doctoral Dissertation for External Examination\*](#) form and forwards it to the EDST Graduate Advisor for approval. The dissertation must be delivered to the Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies a minimum of 6 weeks before the proposed date of the Final Oral Examination along with a memo of transmittal from the Head. If any of those to be involved in the Final Oral Exam—including the External Examiner—request a printed copy of the dissertation, the student arranges to have these produced. Otherwise, the dissertation is only submitted digitally.

## 13. **Date Set for Final Oral Examination**

The Research Supervisor, in consultation with the student and all members of the Examination Committee, proposes a date and time for the examination. Some negotiation with G+PS may occur, but eventually the date, time, and location of the examination are confirmed.

## 14. **Nomination of University Examiners**

The Research Supervisory Committee, often in consultation with the student, will identify two faculty members (one from within the Department and another from outside the Department) who are qualified and willing to serve as University Examiners. These faculty members are nominated by the Research Supervisor, who sends their names and qualifications to G+PS. The Research Supervisor is responsible for contacting prospective University Examiners to determine if they are willing to serve, supplying them with copies of the dissertation (digital or print), and ensuring that they have all details about the Final Oral Examination.

## 15. **Optional: Examination Program**

If desired, prior to the examination, the student completes the *Doctoral Examination Programme Template* (<https://www.grad.ubc.ca/forms/examination-programme>). Program information includes an abstract of the dissertation, names of RSC members, biographical information, courses completed, and publications authored. Students no longer need to submit the form to G+PS for approval.

16. **Departmental Seminar or “Dry Run”**

Doctoral students are encouraged, but not required, to schedule a departmental seminar in advance of the Final Oral Examination. This seminar provides a good opportunity to practice the presentation that will be made at the Oral Examination and to answer questions similar to those that will be asked during the Final Oral. If a seminar is not scheduled, an alternative is to arrange a “dry run” at which the student performs and receives feedback from one or more members of the RSC on the 20-30 minute presentation that will be made at the beginning of the Oral Examination.

17. **Chairperson of Examination Committee Appointed by G+PS**

The Dean of G+PS appoints the Chairperson of the Examination Committee. The duties of the Chairperson include introducing the candidate, monitoring the time, calling on committee members for comments and questions, leading a discussion of the candidate’s performance, and preparing a report of the examination for the Dean.

18. **Report of External Examiner Received by G+PS and Distributed to the Examination Committee**

The written report of the External Examiner is distributed by G+PS to members of the Examination Committee a few days prior to the exam. The report is considered confidential at this point and is not to be shown to the student.

19. **Final Oral Examination**

The protocol followed in the examination is spelled out in great detail in “*Final Doctoral Examination Guide*” available on the Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies website ([www.grad.ubc.ca](http://www.grad.ubc.ca)). All examinations are public, and students are encouraged to attend several—in advance of their own—to become familiar with the process. At the conclusion of the examination, the Chair of the Examination Committee notifies the student of the outcome. Often, editorial or more substantive changes to the dissertation are required by the Examination Committee before it is submitted to G+PS.

Given the COVID-19 Pandemic, G+PS has developed a process to support total virtual participation in a doctoral defence. G+PS has the ability to support the inclusion of a small invited audience. If the candidate and supervisor wish to invite an audience, they should contact the Doctoral Exams Office at least 2 weeks before the defence date.

20. **Approved Dissertation Submitted to G+PS**

The student is responsible for submitting the final, post-defense approved dissertation to G+PS (via UBC’s digital repository known as “cIRcle”) before the published deadline for completing all program requirements (see the University Calendar). G+PS/cIRcle will provide a receipt that will be placed in the student’s file. The student must also complete a series of forms which are downloadable from the G+PS website. Guidelines provided

by G+PS regarding format and final submission requirements must be observed. Once the student's dissertation has been accepted to cIRcle, then G+PS will automatically "close" their program.

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

## 21. **Graduation**

The student is responsible for completing by the published deadline an *Application for Graduation* which can be done online at <https://students.ubc.ca/enrolment/graduation/applying-graduate> . This application confirms your eligibility for graduation. You are required to apply for graduation, even if you don't plan on attending the ceremony. Please note that it is not necessary to complete all program requirements before applying for graduation. Students who believe they will complete program requirements by the published deadline should apply for graduation. A final check is made for all students who apply to graduate to confirm they have satisfied all program requirements.

### **Note: Completing and Submitting Annual Academic Progress Reports**

Each student in the Department of Educational Studies is expected to complete an [annual academic 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 on EDST-net, but it is the student's responsibility to download and complete Part A this form by May 31 each year they are enrolled in the program. To reduce paper use and to facilitate data entry, students are expected to fill out the form electronically (Part A only), and forward to their supervisor for their review and completion (Part B). The completed form (Part A & B) should be submitted via Qualtrics by following the link in the form.

Students who find they cannot make any progress on their programs for 4 or more months due to unexpected work, family or health changes should request a leave of absence through their program advisor, supervisor or Chair of the EdD Management Committee. The total duration of all leaves of absence granted in a graduate program is normally limited to 24 months for a doctoral student.