

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
Department of Educational Studies

Steps to Completion in M.A. Programs
(Revised August 2022)

Abbreviations used:

EDST	Department of Educational Studies
G+PS	Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
RS	Research Supervisor
RSC	Research Supervisory Committee

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

Please note, if a Master's degree is not awarded ***within a period of five years*** from initial registration, the student's eligibility for the degree will be terminated. Under exceptional circumstances, extensions may be granted by the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (G+PS). This restriction applies equally to full-time and part-time students.

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 the system following the link provided in the offer of admission. An offer of admission is good only for the academic year in which it is made.

2. **Appointment of Supervisor**

A Research Supervisor (RS) 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 RS and arranging an appointment to discuss course selection prior to initial registration. The Welcome Letter, sent to each admitted student, explains the steps to follow for students to connect with supervisors.

A student may request a change of RS at any time as long as another qualified faculty member has agreed to serve in this capacity. To initiate the change, students need to correspond with current supervisors about their plan to work with a different supervisor. A change of supervisor must be requested using [the form](#) here. The form needs to be submitted to the Graduate Advisor at gradadvisor.edst@ubc.ca and the Graduate Programs

Assistant at grad.edst@ubc.ca to be processed.

3. **Establishing Common Understanding of Graduate Student / Supervisor Expectations**

It is recommended that the student and the supervisor review the supervisory [expectations](#). Discussion of expectations can foster open communication between supervisors and students and prevent misunderstandings that might otherwise arise.

4. **Completing Program of Studies Worksheet**

[The Program of Studies](#) needs to be completed by the student in consultation with the RS 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 RS. A completed worksheet should be submitted by the supervisor to the Graduate Program Assistant, who will place the original worksheet in the student's file. A copy of the completed worksheet should be provided by the supervisor to the student.

5. **Completing Required and Elective Courses**

Students are required to take required courses in MA and in their concentration area. Elective courses may be regularly-scheduled on-campus courses, including Directed Studies (EDST 590), approved online courses, courses at UBC Okanagan (UBCO), and courses at other universities that have formal Agreements, i.e. Western Dean Agreement (WDA) with UBC. You will need to consult your RS before trying to register for these courses.

For EDST 580: Directed Studies, students need to receive approval from your supervisor and find a faculty member willing to supervise a 580 course. You will need to discuss the nature of the 580 course with the course supervisor to reach a clear understanding of both faculty and student expectations. You will then need to fill out [the registration form](#), and submit it to the Graduate Programs Assistant to register for the course.

For courses at UBCO, students need to apply for authorization and course registration using [the authorization form](#).

If you plan to take WDA courses, you will need to apply for authorization and course registration by filling out [the authorization form](#).

Upon successful completion of the courses (please note the criteria that you would need to meet in order to get the credits transferred to your MA program), you will also need to apply for credit transfer. For related information, please visit at [G+PS website](#).

6. **Continuous Registration and Program Interruption**

It is student's responsibility to maintain registration throughout the program and to enroll in and complete all the 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 RS for a leave of absence from the program. Information about types of leaves and the policies governing each can be found [here](#).

7. **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.

8. **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 by G+PS. It is the RS's responsibility to ensure that RSC members conform 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 RS 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 and 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 the RS.

Non-G+PS members may join the MA committee. [A request](#) for a non-G+PS member to sit on the RSC needs to be sent to the Graduate Advisor and/or the Department Head for approval.

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

In consultation with the RS and 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:

1. a clear and complete presentation and justification of the research problem, questions, and/or hypotheses;
2. a critical review of relevant literature;
3. a presentation of the study's conceptual or theoretical framework;
4. a detailed description of the research methodology;
5. a statement of significance.

It is highly recommended that students discuss expectations for the form and content of the research proposal with the RSC members.

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

If the student's 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 Services) system. The student prepares drafts of the application and attachments, then these are reviewed by the student's RS. Once the RS approves the materials, the department head is notified that they are ready for review and approval. Once the application is signed by the department head and submitted to the BREB, the review process normally takes 4-6 weeks (longer during the summer) (for most updated information on submission deadlines and turnaround times, please see the BREB website).

Please note that no data can be collected until the approval certificate is granted by the BREB.

Please also note that students must 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 Office of Research Services website](#).

11. **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 on EDST-net, 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.

To reduce paper use and to facilitate data entry, students are expected to fill out the form electronically (Part A only) and forward it to the RSs for their review and completion (Part B). The completed form should be submitted via Qualtrics by following the link in the form.

Students who do not make any 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. Please see point #6 of this document for continuous registration and program interruption.

12. **Research Completion**

It is the student's responsibility to carry out your research as planned, consulting with members of the RSC as needed. Any deviations from the research proposal should be approved by the committee members. 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 the thesis and to provide feedback, advice, and support.

13. **Writing and Revising 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 the material submitted by students. Students can reasonably expect faculty to provide written and/or oral feedback shortly after the two weeks, unless the faculty member indicates when the draft is received that more time is needed.

Students are encouraged to read the “[Final Dissertation & Thesis Submission](#)” which can be found on the G+PS website. These guidelines cover many technical aspects of thesis preparation that are important to know early in the process.

14. **Applying to Graduate**

The student is responsible for completing Application for Graduation by the [published deadlines](#). If students do not complete within the term for which they applied to graduate, they must re-apply to graduate in the next term.

15. **Choice, Status, and Role of an “External Examiner”**

With regard to the choice, status, and participation of an External Examiner in an MA defence, please visit [Graduate Advisor Memo](#) entitled Guideline regarding the choice, status, and role of an “External Examiner” in an MA thesis defence.

16. **Oral Examination and Thesis Approval**

The student submits a complete thesis in proper style and format as specified by the RSC and [G+PS guidelines](#) to all committee members and the external examiner. 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 attend the examination. 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 the external examiner ask questions about the research.

Virtual defence is allowed at the time of the ongoing COVID pandemic. Virtual exams could be arranged through the supervisor’s Zoom account. It will be the responsibility of the supervisor to set up the meeting. In no circumstances should the Zoom meeting be created by the student. One week before the exam, the supervisor should send an exam reminder to the examining committee and the student with the Zoom meeting information. The Zoom URL should be password protected and should not be circulated to anyone but the examination committee, and the student.

When the members of the examining committee agree that the thesis is acceptable, they sign the Master's Thesis Approval and Program Completion [form](#), indicating formal acceptance and assign a mark. Please note, faculty must NOT sign the thesis cover page. The supervisor submits the mark through the Graduate Program Assistant. Check the "policies and forms" section of the EDST website for details on the procedure for the MA oral examination.

17. **Approved Thesis Submission to G+PS**

Students are expected to submit all final theses/dissertations electronically using the [instructions](#) available.

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

Note about pre-reviews: Student 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.

18. **Celebration!**