

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
Department of Educational Studies

Steps to Completion in M.A. Programs

(Revised May 2008)

Abbreviations used:

EDST	Department of Educational Studies
FoGS	Faculty of Graduate 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.

Completing and Submitting Annual Academic Progress Reports

Each 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 July 15 each year they are enrolled in the program. The Annual Progress Report form for MA programs can be found on the EDST website (www.edst.educ.ubc.ca) under "Policies and Forms." Completed forms should be submitted electronically to the department's student records clerk (edst.records@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 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 Pro Tem advisor, supervisor or the EDST Graduate Coordinator. Students can request up to 12 months of leave during their program.

1. Admission

Applicants submit required materials to the Department. Transcripts are evaluated and it is determined whether or not the applicant meets minimum admission requirements. The Department then reviews the application and makes an admission decision based on all available evidence. The applicant is notified by mail 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 “Pro Tem” Advisor**

A Pro Tem Advisor 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 Pro Tem Advisor and arranging an appointment to discuss course selection prior to initial registration.

A student may, through the Graduate Advisor, request a change in Pro Tem Advisor at any time as long as another qualified faculty member has agreed to serve in this capacity. When a change of advisor occurs, the student, as a courtesy, usually informs the original advisor of the change and the new advisor or Graduate Advisor notifies the Graduate Secretary.

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

The Program of Studies (POS) worksheet is completed by the Pro Tem Advisor in consultation with the student, prior to or immediately following the student’s initial registration. Changes can be made to the POS from time to time, but all changes must be approved by the Pro Tem Advisor. A completed worksheet should be submitted by the Pro Tem Advisor to the Graduate Secretary 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 enrol in and complete all courses included in the POS. If for any reason the student must temporarily interrupt studies, an immediate request should be made to the Pro Tem Advisor for a leave of absence from the program. Information about types of leaves and the policies governing each can be found in the FoGS Policy and Procedures Manual which is online at www.grad.ubc.ca.

5. **Selection of Thesis Topic**

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

6. **Selection of Research Supervisor**

Students usually approach prospective Research Supervisors and ask if they would be willing to serve. The Research Supervisor assumes all duties formerly performed by the Pro Tem Advisor. If the Research Supervisor is not a member of the Department, a member of the Research Supervisory Committee who is a member of the Department shall assume the duties of Pro Tem Advisor.

7. **Formation of Research Supervisory Committee**

The Research Supervisory Committee (RSC) consists of the student's Research Supervisor and at least two other faculty members all of whom must meet eligibility criteria as defined in the policies of FoGS. 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 other faculty 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.

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

In consultation with the Research Supervisor and other members of the Research Supervisory Committee, 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 and a presentation of the study's conceptual or theoretical framework; and a detailed description of the research methodology. Expectations for the form and content of the research proposal also vary by program, so it is best to discuss this with your research supervisor and supervisory committee early in the development of the proposal.

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

If the student's research involves collecting data from humans, then the research protocol must be approved by the UBC Behavioural Research Ethics Board. The student is responsible for completing the necessary forms and submitting them to the Research Supervisor for approval. Once submitted to the Ethics Board (online), the review process normally takes 4-6 weeks (longer during the summer). No data are to be collected, including pilot studies, until the approval certificate is received from the committee. Forms, procedures and deadlines can be found on the website of the Office of Research Services: www.ors.ubc.ca.

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 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 FoGS website at www.grad.ubc.ca. 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://students.ubc.ca/current/> (click on “Student Service Centre” then “New and Current Students,” then “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 FoGS guidelines to all committee members. 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. 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 Faculty of Graduate Studies 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 Secretary. Check the EDST website (“Policies and Forms”) for details on the procedure for the MA oral examination.

14. **Approved Thesis Submitted to FoGS**

The student is responsible for depositing the approved thesis with FoGS before the published deadline for completing all program requirements (see the University Calendar). Guidelines provided by FoGS regarding format and paper quality must be observed. Students are advised to carefully review these requirements well before the date of submission to FoGS. As of November 2007, students can submit their final dissertation to FoGS electronically. The student must also complete a series of forms

which are downloadable from the FoGS website. FoGS will provide a receipt which the student must give to the graduate secretary in EDST who will make a copy for the student and place the original in the student's file.

Please note, as of November 30, 2007, students are no longer required to submit a copy of their thesis to EDST for binding. Instead, students should submit to the Graduate Secretary a copy of the front page and abstract of the final version of the thesis plus a copy of the approval form (signed by the members of the examining committee).

15. **Graduation Checklist and Attachments Submitted to FoGS**

Once all program requirements have been satisfied, the thesis has been accepted by FoGS and a receipt issued, the Research Supervisor asks the Graduate Secretary 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 FoGS.

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://students.ubc.ca/current/> (click on "Student Service Centre" then "New and Current Students," then "Graduation").

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

17. **Celebrate!**