

## Steps to Completion in the Ph.D. Program

(Revised June 2011)

Abbreviations used:

EDST	Department of Educational Studies
FoGS	Faculty of Graduate Studies
PAC	Program Advisory Committee
POS	Program of Studies
RSC	Research Supervisory Committee

Note—The sequence 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 May 15 each year they are enrolled in the program. The Annual Progress Report form for the PhD program can be found on the EDST website (<http://edst.educ.ubc.ca/current/current-students>) under "Policies and Forms." Completed forms should be submitted electronically to the department's Graduate Program Assistant ([grad.edst@ubc.ca](mailto: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 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

Applicant submits required materials to the Department. Transcripts are evaluated and it is determined if the applicant meets minimum admission requirements. Once this determination is made, the Department 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 (temporary) Advisor is designated at the time of admission and is responsible for assisting the student in the selection of courses and answering questions about the program. Unless a qualified faculty member agrees at the time the application is reviewed to serve as Pro Tem Advisor, admission is unlikely. Once admitted, the student is responsible for contacting his or her 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 Program Assistant.

Advisors and students should be aware of the policies and practices related to graduate supervision at UBC that are summarized well in the “Handbook of Graduate Supervision” available on the Faculty of Graduate Studies website ([www.grad.ubc.ca](http://www.grad.ubc.ca)).

## 3. **Formation of Program Advisory Committee**

In some cases, a Program Advisory Committee (PAC) will be formed by the Pro Tem Advisor to provide advice to the student about coursework and preparation for the comprehensive examination. The committee usually consists of the Pro Tem Advisor and two other faculty members. The Pro Tem Advisor chairs the committee and is responsible for calling meetings. The PAC meets at least once a year to assess the progress of the student.

## 4. **Completion of Program of Studies Worksheet**

The Program of Studies worksheet is completed by the Pro Tem Advisor or, if there is one, the Program Advisory Committee (PAC), 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. In practice, decisions about which courses will be taken are often made session-by-session or year-by-year. What is important at this stage is that the student receives good advice about what courses to complete in order to prepare for both the comprehensive examination and the thesis research project. A completed program of studies worksheet should be submitted by the Pro Tem Advisor to the Graduate Program Assistant who will place the original worksheet in the student’s file. The student receives a photocopy of the completed worksheet from the advisor.

## 5. **Supervision Principles**

This document provides definitions and sets out the roles and responsibilities for protem advisors and research supervisors. These definitions, principles and procedures have been agreed upon by the faculty members of the Department of Educational Studies. This statement will be sent to all students as part of their admission materials or can be found on our Policy and Forms page on our Web site. At their first meeting, the document must be reviewed and discussed by the student and her/his advisor. Once these guidelines have been reviewed, student and advisor should write or type in their names on the last page

and submit this page along with the student's program worksheet to the graduate secretary (students should keep copies of the principles for their own files). The principles should be reviewed when the student's research committee is formed (for MA and doctoral students), and also reviewed and co-signed if there is a change in supervisors.

## 6. **Coursework—Required, Elective, Research Methods**

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 (family, health, financial, etc.) the student must temporarily interrupt studies, an immediate request should be made through the Pro Tem Advisor for a leave of absence. Information about types of leave and policies governing each can be found in the FoGS Policies and Procedures Handbook ([www.grad.ubc.ca](http://www.grad.ubc.ca)) or from the EDST Graduate Program Assistant or Graduate Advisor.

## 7. **Comprehensive Examination**

All doctoral students take a comprehensive examination. Written procedures for the examination are available on the EDST website. Generally, the comprehensive examination is taken once the student has completed all or most of the courses included in the PoS. Students consult their Pro Tem Advisors/Research Supervisors when they believe they are ready to take the exam and this person makes the necessary arrangements for the development and marking of the examination.

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

The Research Supervisory Committee (RSC) consists of the student's Research Supervisor (who usually chairs the committee and most often holds the rank of Associate Professor or Professor) and at least two other faculty members who are members of the Faculty of Graduate Studies. As the title suggests, the role of this committee is to supervise the student's research and preparation of the thesis. In most instances, the student approaches a qualified faculty member to serve as Research Supervisor. The Research Supervisor and student then 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 prospective Research Supervisors and to extend invitations to other faculty who might serve on the committee. The specific approach used to constitute the committee is worked out between the student and Research Supervisor. Once the membership of the committee is confirmed, the Research Supervisor notifies the Graduate Program Assistant of the composition of the committee.

Students should obtain a copy of the "*Handbook of Graduate Supervision*," available on the Faculty of Graduate Studies website ([www.grad.ubc.ca](http://www.grad.ubc.ca), "Current Students," "Supervision"), that offers advice to faculty and students on the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in thesis research.

## 9. **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, questions, and/or hypotheses; a critical review of relevant literature and a presentation of the study's conceptual or theoretical framework; and a complete presentation of the research methodology. 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.

#### 10. **Admission to Doctoral Candidacy**

*Please note that UBC policy is that all PHD students should have achieved candidacy within 24 months of beginning their program and must be admitted to Candidacy by 36-months.* Candidacy is achieved when a student completes required coursework, passes the comprehensive examination, and produces an approved research proposal. At this stage, the chair of the Research Supervisory Committee (most often the research supervisor) completes an "Advancement to Candidacy" form. Once this form is filed with FoGS, the student is considered admitted to candidacy. Doctoral candidates are eligible for certain teaching assignments that are not otherwise available to graduate students. Achieving candidacy is also an important milestone because it indicates that the only remaining requirement for completion is the thesis.

#### 11. **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.

#### 12. **Complete Research**

It is the student's responsibility to carry out the research as planned, consulting with the RSC as needed. Any deviations from the research proposal should be approved by the members of the RSC. If there are major changes to the methodology the student must submit an addendum to BREB. 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 his/her research and to provide advice and support.

#### 13. **Write and Revise Thesis**

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 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 passed, 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](http://www.grad.ubc.ca) . These guidelines cover many technical aspects of thesis preparation that are important to know about early in the process.

#### 14. **Nomination of External Examiners**

When the RSC members believe the thesis is nearing completion, they discuss who is best qualified to serve as External Examiner. Students can suggest some examiners but cannot be party to the final deliberations of which examiners are nominated by the RSC. The names, contact information, and qualifications of two or three nominees for External Examiner are submitted on the proper form to the Faculty of Graduate Studies. External Examiners must be nominated at least four to five months before the thesis is ready to be examined; nominations must be received three months before the thesis is submitted to FoGS who then send it to the External Examiner. The Dean of Graduate Studies (or designate) contacts the nominees and determines if one of them is willing to serve. Only when the thesis is submitted to FoGS for examination is the name of the External Examiner made known to the students and RSC. If students will not be submitting their thesis to FoGS for examination by the date on the External Examiner form, their supervisors must notify FoGS and indicate a revised date. The policies of the Faculty of Graduate Studies regarding nomination of External Examiners and communication with nominees are strictly enforced. See the FoGS website and “Oral Examination Guide” for detailed information on the role of the External Examiner and the “arms length” requirement.

#### 15. **Graduation**

Once the student anticipates when they will complete their program, they should apply to graduate and must complete by the published deadline an Application for Graduation which can be done online at <http://www.students.ubc.ca/coursesreg/graduation/> This application, along with the information contained in the graduation checklist, confirms your eligibility for graduation. If students do not complete in the term for which they applied to graduate, they must reapply for the next term.

#### 16. **Thesis Ready to be Examined**

When the supervisory committee believes the thesis is ready to be examined, the Research Supervisor notifies the Head of EDST that the committee has approved the thesis for release to the External Examiner. Two copies of the thesis must be delivered to the Faculty of Graduate Studies a minimum of six weeks before the proposed date of the Final Oral Examination along with a memo of transmittal signed by the Graduate Advisor or Department Head. One copy of the thesis is sent to the External Examiner and the other is provided to the Chair of the Examination Committee (who is appointed by and represents the Dean of Graduate Studies).

17. **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 FoGS may occur, but eventually the date, time, and location of the examination are confirmed.

18. **Nomination of University Examiners**

The Research Supervisory Committee, with or without consulting the student, will identify two faculty members (usually 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 FoGS on the correct form. The Research Supervisor is responsible for contacting the University Examiners to determine if they are willing to serve, supplying them with copies of the thesis, and ensuring that they have all details about the Final Oral Examination.

19. **Examination Program Information Submitted to FoGS**

At least four weeks prior to the examination, the student submits program information to FoGS in the required format (see [www.grad.ubc.ca](http://www.grad.ubc.ca)). Program information includes an abstract of the thesis, names of RSC members and University Examiners, biographical information, courses completed, and publications authored.

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

Doctoral students are encouraged 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 at 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.

21. **Chair of Examination Committee Appointed by FoGS**

The Dean of FoGS appoints the Chair of the Examination Committee. The duties of the Chair 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.

22. **Report of External Examiner Received by FoGS and Distributed to the Examination Committee**

The written report of the External Examiner is distributed by FoGS 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.

## 23. **Final Oral Examination**

The protocol followed in the examination is spelled out in great detail in “*Oral Examination Guide*” available on the Faculty of Graduate 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—in order to become familiar with the process. At the conclusion of the examination the student leaves the room while the committee deliberates. Once agreement is reached by the examination committee, the student is brought back into the examination room and notified of the outcome by the Chair of the Examination Committee. Often, editorial or more substantive changes to the thesis are required by the Examination Committee before the thesis is submitted to FoGS.

## 24. **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 Program Assistant 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 Program Assistant 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).

## 25. **Graduation Checklist and Attachments Submitted to FoGS**

The Chair of the Research Supervisory Committee asks the Graduate Program Assistant to prepare a graduation checklist. The purpose of this checklist is to summarize information about the student’s program and to confirm that all program requirements have been completed. The title of the student’s thesis is added to the checklist. Attached to this checklist is a printout of courses completed and marks received as well as a copy of the FoGS receipt.

## 26. **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/> This application, along with the information contained in the graduation checklist, confirms your eligibility for graduation.

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

## 27. **Celebrate!**