

Faculty of Education |



UM



# PH.D. STUDENT HANDBOOK

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# Introduction

Congratulations and welcome to the Faculty of Education!

The intent of this handbook is to provide students with some user-friendly information for helping you navigate the Doctor of Philosophy Program (Ph.D.) in the Faculty of Education.

The decision to engage in a Ph.D. is a momentous accomplishment in and of itself, so congratulations on moving into this exciting chapter of your academic journey! We have noted major accomplishments that you can mark in celebration with them along the way. Though everyone's journey is unique, there are certain "milestones" through which our Ph.D. students' progress. The intent of this document is to highlight those benchmarks and to provide you with ideas, initiatives, and opportunities that can help you enjoy a richer student experience.

Our first tip—enjoy yourself! Engaging in a Ph.D. program is not an individual endeavor—you have personal supports available to you, but there also exist programmatic and institutional supports that you can access along the way. Most important is having an effective relationship with your Advisor and committee whose role is to ensure that you navigate through the process in a timely way, and to support your developing growth as a scholar and researcher.

We hope this handbook answers many of the day-to-day questions you may have at different steps along the way. When you have questions or concerns please reach out to your Advisor, to our faculty student advisors, or to the Associate Dean (Graduate Programs & Research). We are all here to ensure your success!



# Who is involved in your program?

## Student (You!)

This is your program—try to get the most out of it. You are responsible for meeting deadlines, registration, and complying with all regulations.

## Advisor

The faculty Advisor is your supervisor. Your Advisor guides you in your program development, course planning and changes, committee composition, and research project development.

## Advisory Committee

Your Advisory Committee (which is also usually your Examining Committee) provides guidance and advice throughout your program. They will play an important role in your research project proposal, thesis and defences.

## Student Advisors

Our faculty's Student Advisors help you navigate the university and faculty regulations. They can help you with questions about registration, fees, extensions, leaves of absences, etc., and direct to appropriate supports on campus. They can be reached at [gradprograms@education.umanitoba.ca](mailto:gradprograms@education.umanitoba.ca).

## Associate Dean of Graduate Programs and Research (ADGR)

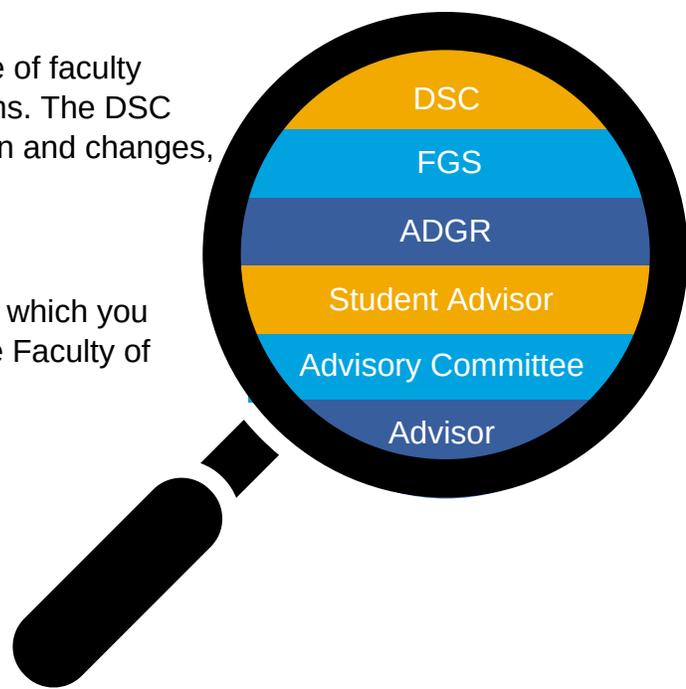
The Faculty of Education Associate Dean of Graduate Programs and Research (ADGR) is the Chair of the DSC, the liaison with FGS, and the person responsible for graduate programs and students.

## Doctoral Studies Committee (DSC)

The Doctoral Studies Committee (DSC) is a committee of faculty members who act as the Head of the graduate programs. The DSC must approve all program plans, committee composition and changes, candidacy exam questions.

## Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS)

The Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) is the faculty in which you are a student while your program is being offered in the Faculty of Education.





# Regulations & Supplemental Materials

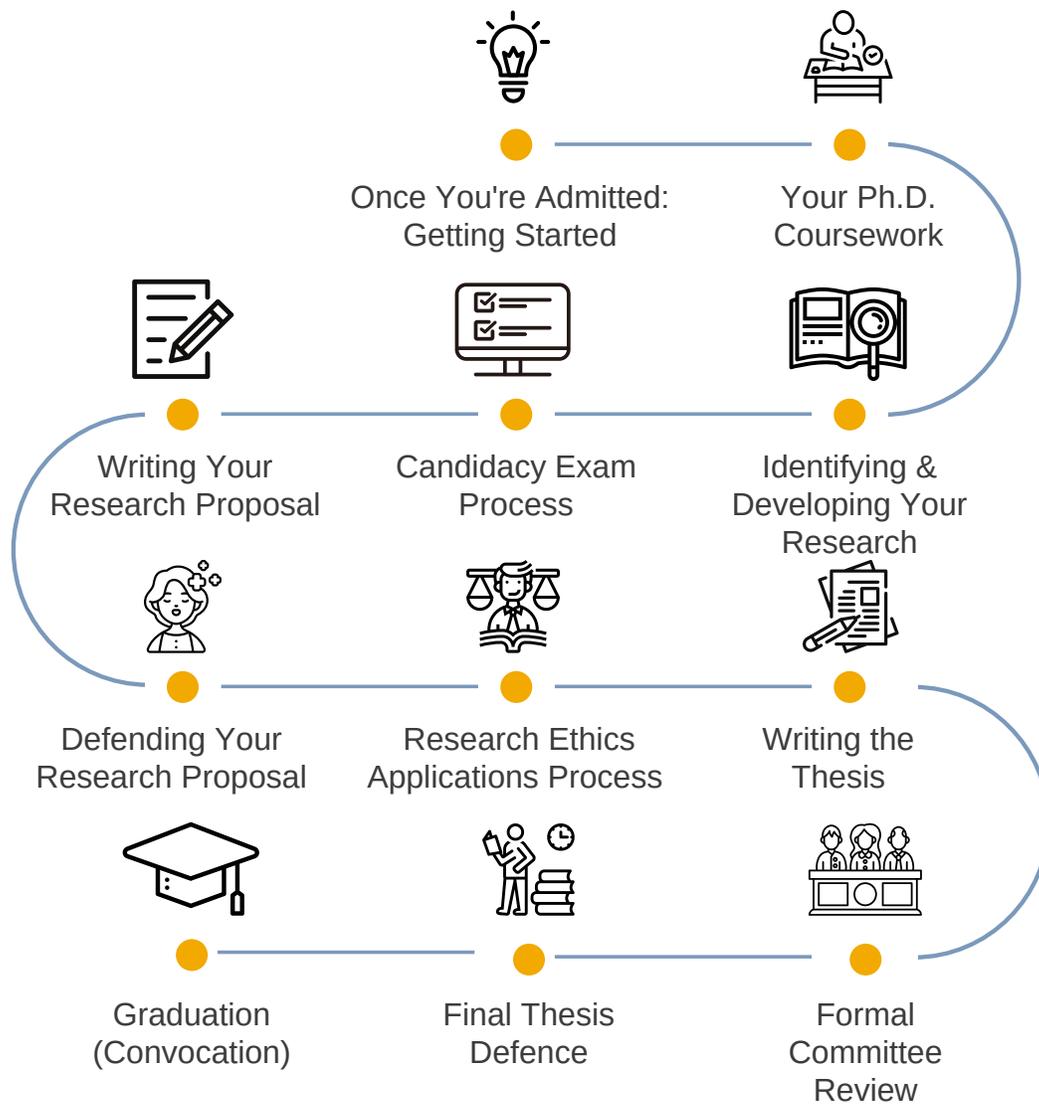
Because you are **FIRST** a student of the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS), you must be aware of and follow their regulations.

You are **SECOND** a student taking a Ph.D. program within the Faculty of Education, that has supplemental regulations to follow (they are more detailed and fall under those of FGS).

Pay attention to **BOTH SETS** of regulations as you move through the program! Those regulations relate to every aspect of the program: admissions, registration, Advisor/committee design and operation, time limits, full-time versus part-time status, coursework, graduation requirements, candidacy examinations, thesis proposals, final thesis deadlines, external examination requirements, oral examinations, leave requirements, appeals, and discipline.

Consult these [Regulations and Supplemental Regulations](#) when you move on to various stages in your program. Although your Advisor will support you in your efforts, in the end, this is your program, and you need to take the responsibility for ensuring you know where you are headed.

# Milestones



# Once You're Admitted: Getting Started

## Meet with your advisor

Your Advisor is there to guide you through your academic journey. Meet with them early to establish your Advisory Committee, to develop your Program Plan, to discuss research and teaching opportunities, and to begin to focus your research interests.

1

### Complete the Advisor-Student Guidelines

The online [Advisor-Student Guidelines form](#) must be completed with your Advisor within the first year of your program. It will allow you to discuss numerous important aspects of your relationship and program.

2

### Establish your committee

Find the like-minded Faculty members (from our faculty and/or from others) whose research interests are similar to yours. Make a list of potential committee members who you can talk to your Advisor about. Read their publications, meet with them in person or online, and talk about ways you might work together. Your Advisor must have the committee membership approved by the Doctoral Studies Committee.

3

### Create your program plan

In consultation with your Advisor, you will develop a Program Plan that will include the content and timeline of your PhD work, including the courses you will take and when you will take them. There are some courses that you will be required to take, some that will be recommended by your Advisor, some that you might take outside of our faculty, and some that you and your Advisor might develop specific to your program. Your Program Plan will be approved by the Doctoral Studies Committee.

## Meet regularly

You should touch base with your Advisor at least once per term to let them know about your progress. In the spring of every year, you, your Advisor, and your Committee must meet to complete a Progress Report. This report is submitted to the Associate Dean and to the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

# Things To Do & Consider

- ✔ Set up your UM NetID and your UM email account. Check it often!
- ✔ Create a calendar for your program with details for each year and term regarding assignment deadlines and program dates such as course registration. Refer to it and update it regularly.
- ✔ Get involved in the [Education Graduate Students' Association](#). They have writing groups, social events, and host an annual symposium.
- ✔ Attend [graduate student workshops](#): they're free and plentiful!

**NOTE:** All graduate students are admitted as full-time students. A change to part-time status must be requested on the [Part-Time Status form](#).

Full details about student status/categories of students are described in the [Faculty of Graduate Studies \(FGS\) Supplemental Regulations](#).



# Your Ph.D. Coursework



Generally, a full-time Ph.D. student will spend about two years engaged with coursework in a relatively structured program. A part-time student may take three to four years to complete coursework. It is important to consider your coursework plan in regard to studying as a full-time or part-time student. Be realistic. The Ph.D. program is a marathon—not a sprint.

## GRAD 7500 and GRAD 7300

You must register for and complete two required online tutorials: [GRAD 7500 Academic Integrity](#) in the first term of your program; and [GRAD 7300 Research Integrity](#) in the first year of your program. These are zero credit hour courses intended to introduce students to their basic responsibilities regarding academic and research integrity, and available resources.

## GRAD 8020 Re-Registration

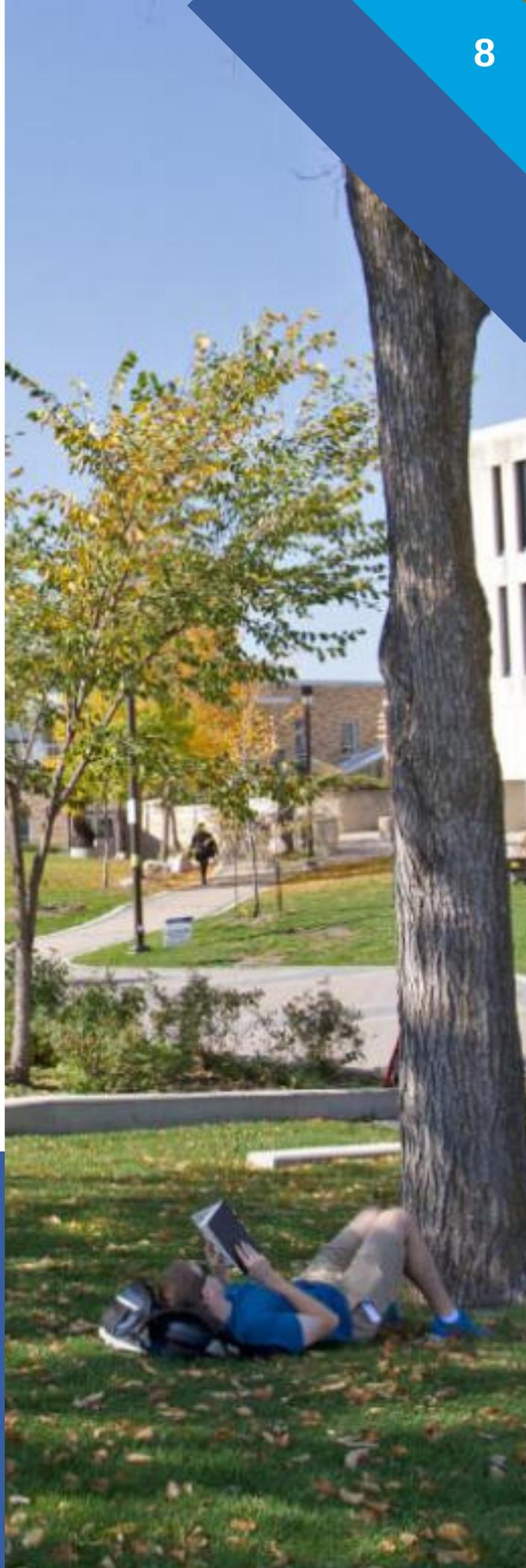
Following registration in your initial program admission term, you must register for GRAD 8020 in all Fall, Winter and Summer terms thereafter to retain status in your program until your degree is obtained.

## The Western Dean's Agreement

If there is no exact match for your research interest in the course titles our faculty or university offers, you may have the opportunity to take courses from other institutions through the [Western Deans' Agreement \(WDA\)](#). Bear in mind that you will need formal approval from your Advisor and from the DSC. This is a long process that requires a significant amount of time to complete, so be proactive.

# Coursework tips

- ✓ Read. Read. Read. And then read more.
- ✓ Part of graduate school is developing your skills as a writer. Do not hesitate to get help from the [Academic Learning Centre](#) for workshops, individual tutorial sessions, and more!
- ✓ Learn how to use a [reference management system](#) to help develop and manage a bibliography. Start on this early!
- ✓ At the doctoral level, it is not the professor's role to provide you with everything you need. You have to build up your own scholarly knowledge and expertise.
- ✓ Check out the [UM Libraries](#) for support and workshops.
- ✓ Back up your work often.



# Identifying & Developing Your Research

You have come to graduate school because you have questions related to your field. Now is the time to develop your expertise in that field and to contribute new knowledge to it. In addition to coursework, Ph.D. students are strongly encouraged to develop their skills as researchers. Seek Research Assistant positions, attend conferences, join a reading group, publish your writing, and apply for grants.

To inform your research, consider the following:

- Read deeply and broadly. Create a bibliography that supports the fields of your studies. Tag valuable insights, models and theories and methodologies that may be helpful as you develop your research ideas and project.
- Attend lectures, talks and university events. Become a part of the UM research culture. Sign up for various listservs for journals and scholarly organizations.
- Apply for a [Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council \(SSHRC\) Doctoral Fellowship](#), which supports high-calibre students engaged in doctoral programs in the social sciences and humanities.
- Join the [Canadian Society for the Study of Education \(CSSE\)](#) and their graduate student caucus, the [Canadian Committee of Graduate Students in Education \(CCGSE/CCÉÉCSÉ\)](#). There is an annual research conference and lots of professional development opportunities!
- Present your papers and research at conferences, such as CSSE and [EdGSA](#)'s annual Graduate Student Research Symposium.
- Publish! Try out your ideas in op-eds, professional magazines, and education journals.



# Research, Conferences, & Publishing

- Consider publishing in the [Canadian Journal for New Scholars in Education](#).
- The Faculty of Education has funds for student research and conference travel. Ask about it at [adgr.education@umanitoba.ca](mailto:adgr.education@umanitoba.ca).
- Follow your favourite researchers and journals on social media.
- Pitch an article about your research for [The Conversation Canada](#).
- Talk to your advisor about the [American Education Research Association](#) and the annual conference.



# The Candidacy Exam Process

The Candidacy Examination (GRAD 8010) is normally taken after successful completion of all coursework (except EDUC 7030 Doctoral Tutorial which is taken after the Candidacy Examination). Students can choose one of three options: a closed-book (sit-down) examination; a take-home examination based on a set of 4-8 questions, or a take-home examination based on two research papers. The latter two options are chosen most often and provide students with three months to complete the exam and help them build their knowledge to inform their thesis proposal. The questions are designed by your committee and must be approved by the Doctoral Studies Committee in advance of the exam. The purpose of the exam is for students to demonstrate their *breadth* and *depth* of knowledge in the program area, the support area, and research methods.

During the three-month process of the Candidacy Examination you may expect the following:

- You will be engaged in an independent process of extensive review of the literature.
- The Examination is an independent endeavour, so you are not able to access advisory support or elicit feedback from classmates, instructors, or your advisory committee.
- You must demonstrate not only effective time management, critical thinking, and strong academic writing skills, but also patience and perseverance.
- The Examination is a pass/fail endeavour; however, each question is graded as a pass/fail.

The Candidacy Examination, though challenging and perhaps isolating, demonstrates to each Ph.D. student and their committee that they have acquired a breadth and depth of knowledge and skills that prepares them as an independent scholar capable of engaging in thesis research. There may be some emotional ups and downs that occur, but it is a time of reading, reflection and writing and is significant in the preparation of your doctoral thesis. It can be a joy to be fully immersed in reading and writing about something that matters to you.

Upon successful completion of the Candidacy Examination, the student moves from being considered as a “Ph.D. Student” to that of a “Ph.D. Candidate.” It is a major milestone and time for celebration!

It is also at this stage that the now-Candidate must register for the course, EDUC 7030 Doctoral Tutorial in Education (3 credit hours), to be completed together with the Advisor. The course is used to prepare for thesis work.

# Candidacy Exam Tips

- Create a schedule and stick to it. Make sure you have time to read, write AND revise.
- Make sure you have a comfortable place to work. Or change it up: head to a coffee shop, library, or the Education Graduate Student Study Space.
- Go back to your bibliography (aren't you glad you started that when you did!) and review what you have already read.
- Survey the literature; add recommended & recent works in the field to your reading list.
- Organize a list of readings for each question.
- Take breaks. Exercise. Eat well. Relax and make time for family and friends.



# Writing Your Research Proposal

From this point on, you should be working very closely with your Advisor and your Advisory Committee on your research topic. The development of the proposal will take a few months and will need numerous revisions before it will be ready for the public defence.

- 
**Understand the expectation.** Be clear on how your Advisor and Committee wish to work with you on the proposal. In most cases, committee members wish to review the proposal at least once (often more) to provide feedback on drafts prior to the defence.

The proposal is typically the first 3 to 4 chapters of the thesis and includes the introduction, literature review, conceptual and theoretical frameworks, and methodology of the study. There is no magic page number. The more detailed and specific your proposal is, the less difficult it will be for your committee to review, and the easier it will be to develop your research ethics application.

- 
**Create a schedule.** Work with your Advisor (and Committee) to develop a schedule of tasks/drafts and deadlines. Check in with them regularly.
- 
**Be efficient!** Use your bibliography, reflect on your course readings, and draw on your previous assignments to help create the literature base for your study, conceptually, and methodologically.
- 
**Be prepared to write multiple drafts.** Committee members each bring their individual expertise and their purpose is to push you to create the best document possible. Be prepared to accept critical feedback. That said, the proposal is not about “pleasing” everyone on the committee, but it is about you taking a stand on a particular niche area of educational research and being able to provide cogent and compelling arguments for your point of view and your research approach.
- 
**You should receive feedback in a timely way.** Expect feedback within two weeks to a month maximum, but also recognize that there are some downtimes during which you should not expect individuals to turn over your work quickly. Summers are times when faculty are expected to take holidays. Holidays and weekends should not be considered work times.

## *Problems... what do I do now?*

If chronic problems develop with an Advisor or Committee member, you can request a change. The procedure is discussed in the section, **If Things Go Awry**.

# Writing the Proposal: Where Do I Start?

- Reflect on your research interests. Try looking through your coursework assignments and candidacy exam.
- Survey the literature; compile a bibliography of the most recommended recent works in the field.
- Formulate your research question(s). This is harder than you think. Share these with others. Revise. Revise again.
- Read dissertations on MSpace and from other universities to consider their format, frameworks, methodologies, and style.
- Double-check your drafts for professionalism: Ensure that the drafts you submit to your committee for review are free from errors, comply with APA and are formatted properly. This will allow them to focus on the content.
- Format your proposal according to the FGS thesis template.



# Defending Your Research Proposal

Even though most people assume that the proposal defence is not as “scary” as the final defence, this is not actually the case. At the proposal defence, you are still the “neophyte”—the research is tentative, the conceptualization has to be critiqued, and you must be able to clearly articulate your understanding of the topic and how you wish to approach the study to a committee whose expertise lies in similar areas. This is an incredibly important moment in your Ph.D. program, because it sets the “legal contract” between you and the University of Manitoba regarding the progression of your research agreed to by the formal assent of your committee.

## Process

Once your proposal is deemed defensible by your Advisor and all Committee Members, your Advisor will work with you and the committee to set up a date for the proposal defence. The Advisor will inform the Office of the Education Associate Dean (ADGR) so that notice of the defence can be distributed at least one week prior to the defence to Education faculty members and graduate students. The Associate Dean (ADGR), or their designate, will chair the event as a non-voting member. At the defence:

- You will present for 20-30 minutes on your proposal, highlighting the purpose, significance, research question(s), conceptualization, theoretical framework, research methodology, and research methods. Remember, the committee has read the document so focus on what you think is most important.
- You may use PowerPoint, but that is not required.
- After the presentation, the Chair will lead a question session, asking each committee member in turn (for two rounds) to ask their questions about your proposal to which you must respond.
- After the committee is finished, and if time permits, others in attendance may ask questions or provide comments.
- You will be asked to step out of the room (in-person or virtually) while the committee deliberates with the Chair.
- When you return, the committee will provide feedback and the results of its deliberation.

# Ensuring Defense Success

- ✔ **Be prepared.** Make your PowerPoint and notes well in advance.
- ✔ **Practice. Practice. Practice.** Practice for family and friends. Be sure to stick to the time.
- ✔ **Make a list of anticipated questions and practice answering them.** You may even want to write out your answers to anticipated questions to ensure clarity and conciseness.
- ✔ **Invite family, friends, other students, and colleagues to the defence.** They want to know what you have been doing all this time!
- ✔ **Plan to celebrate.** This is a big step and deserves to be recognized.
- ✔ **Expect revisions.** Even though the committee has reviewed the proposal, revisions are often still required.





# Research Ethics Application Process

After successfully completing the research proposal, and if your research includes working with human participants, you must submit an application to conduct your research to the UM Research Ethics Board (REB).

When developing your REB application:

- Ensure that you have completed the online tutorial [Course on Research Ethics \(CORE\)](#). You will need to include your certificate of completion in your ethics application.
- Consult with the [Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans \(TCPS 2:2018\)](#), which is the federal research ethics agency that moderates all university research in Canada.
- Work closely with your Advisor who will have insights on how to complete the application and who will be required to review and sign off on your application
- Anticipate at least a month to write your application. The REB application is lengthy and requires you to submit all consent forms and other materials that you will use in your research.
- The REB application review and approval process may take a long time (depending on the complexity of methods, anywhere between two weeks to months). Most likely, you will be asked to refine your application at least once before its final approval.

# Ethics Tips

- ✔ Write your REB application right after defending your proposal to save time.
- ✔ Attend workshops offered by REB and FGS about the Research Administration System (RAS) and the REB process.
- ✔ Review other applications that use a similar methodology.
- ✔ Work with your Advisor on the REB application, as they will have experience crafting successful applications.





# Preparing Your Thesis

Multiple thesis formats exist, and the format should match the nature of the study and the best way to respond to your research question:

A **Traditional thesis** is often comprised of five chapters: (1) Introduction; (2) Literature Review; (3) Methodology; (4) Findings, and; (5) Conclusions and Implications for theory, practice and research.

A **grouped or manuscript style of thesis** or practicum consists of a paper or collection of papers, which are published or are soon to be published.

**Alternate forms** exist, too! Emerging examples of theses are much more creative (e.g., written as novels, plays, and graphic novels) and attempt to break down traditional barriers.

## Formal Committee Review

The drafting stage of the final document is similar to the drafting of the proposal, in that you and your Advisor will work closely together, often in conjunction with committee members who will provide feedback on your work.

- Be prepared for several rounds of drafting, reviews by your Advisor and committee, and revising (over several months).
- Once there is agreement that the document is ready for review, it will move forward through a process of formal evaluation, in which the committee (excluding your Advisor) must write a final report regarding your work and rate it as a Category 1-4.
- Your Advisor will nominate External Examiners to FGS, who will then appoint one of them. The process of accessing an external examiner by the Faculty of Graduate Studies should be initiated as soon as possible once the thesis is “almost” complete to avoid time lags.
- Once the reports from the Advisory Committee members and the Externals have been received by FGS, the final oral defence will be arranged. The Faculty of Graduate Studies needs at least two weeks in which to organize and publicize the public event.

# Digging into the Thesis!

- Transcribe your data as you collect it.
- Consider using data analysis software such as NVivo, SPSS or others.
- Use the FGS template to [format your thesis](#). Save lots of time for a table of contents, acknowledgments, etc.
- Use your APA style guide from the outset of the writing. Keep your reference list up-to-date.
- Expect to write numerous drafts for your Advisor and then for your Committee.
- Save lots of time to reread, edit and revise.
- Consider sharing preliminary findings at conferences. Roundtables are a great place to get feedback.
- Continue to read. You can't write if don't read.



# The Final Thesis Defence

At this point, you are the most familiar with what occurred in the actual research study!

At the defence:

- You will prepare a 20-30 minute presentation about the research project. You may use PowerPoint, but that is not a necessary format.
- Be sure that you highlight the purpose, significance, research question, conceptualization, theoretical framework, research methodology, research methods, findings, conclusions, and implications for theory, research and practice. Because your proposal emphasized the introduction, literature and methodology, in the final defence, you should spend the most time now articulating any changes to methods that occurred (and why), findings, conclusions and implications.
- The committee will take turns asking questions regarding the document and your presentation, to which you are asked to respond, similar to the proposal defence. The questions will come first from the External Examiner. After the committee is finished, if time permits, others in attendance may ask questions or offer comments.
- You will be asked to step out of the room while the committee deliberates with the Chair. You will then be asked to come back into the room where the committee will provide feedback and the results of its deliberation.

Since the Faculty of Graduate Studies dictates this final stage of your doctoral studies, it is important to check with them regarding any finalization details. [Contact FGS at graduate.studies@umanitoba.ca](mailto:graduate.studies@umanitoba.ca)

## Graduation (Convocation)

To graduate, the final copy of the thesis must be uploaded to the University Library MSpace by the FGS deadline.



# Preparing to Celebrate!

- Invite your friends and family to your defence—this is a major achievement!
- Students may graduate from the University of Manitoba in February, Spring, and Fall, but the Convocation Ceremony is held in Spring and Fall only.
- Pay attention to information that comes out regarding dates, gown rental, accessing parchments, order of proceedings, etc.
- Show up! This is a major achievement in your life! Less than 1% of the Canadian population holds a Ph.D.!
- Celebrate! Plan a party to celebrate your success and to thank all of those who supported you.

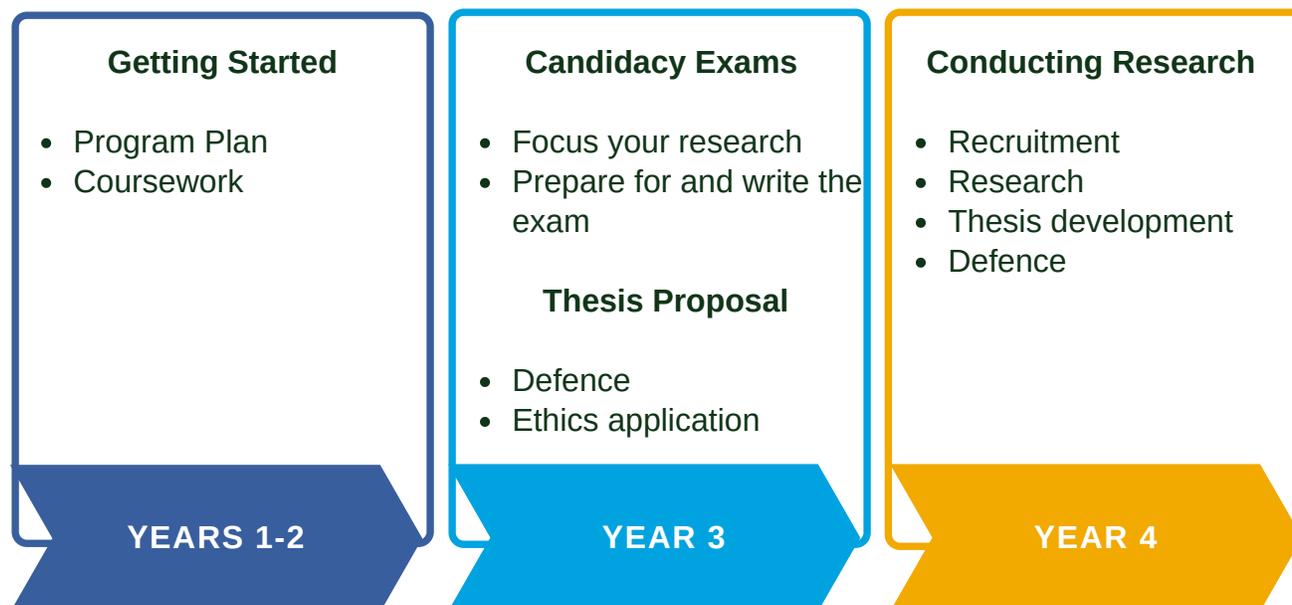


# Benchmarks & Timelines

## Part-Time Students' Benchmarks



## Full-Time Students' Benchmarks



# Calendar of Regular Events

September	October	November	December
Fall Term Begins	Fall Convocation	Reading Week	Fall Term Ends
Vanier CGS Applications Due	SSHRC Doctoral Applications Due	R. I. Hedley Applications Due	
	CSSE Conference Proposals Due		
January	February	March	April
Winter Term Begins	Reading Week	Summer Registration Opens	Winter Term Ends
		EdGSA Annual General Meeting	AERA Conference
		EdGSA Graduate Student Symposium	
		Pamela Hardisty Fellowship App Due	
May	June	July	August
Summer Term Begins	Faculty of Ed. Alumni Scholarship Applications Due	AERA Conference Proposals Due	Fall & Winter Course Registration Opens
Summer Convocation	Faculty Scholarship Applications Due		Arthur Stinner Memorial Fellowship Application Due
Annual Progress Report Due	UMGF Application Due		
CSSE Conference			

# Practical Tips from Grad Students

- Subscribe to a cloud service such as Google Drive, One Drive etc. or email yourself the most recent version of your work regularly so that it does not get lost!
- Use a reference manager such as Medeleev, Zotero, or Citepro.
- Set up an electronic agenda or application to get notification for coming deadlines.
- Consider purchasing an e-reader if you can afford one.
- Access student versions of data analysis packages.
- Take every opportunity you can to engage in scholarly conversations and academic work.
- Take a short break in between to energize, but do not lose momentum!

## If Things Go Awry...

Changes to advisors and committee members are possible. If you feel that you and your Advisor and/or one of your committee members are not a good match, you can request a change. It is good to address potential mismatches sooner rather than later and to engage in effective and clear communication with your Advisor as soon as possible so as to avoid a cumulative effect on your program. Please reach out to the Education Associate Dean (ADGR) to talk about issues and ways of addressing them.

The [Student Advocacy Office](#) is an excellent resource for students. Its role is to support students in their efforts to ensure they have been treated fairly and to help students understand university policies and students' rights, and to craft responsive actions (including appeals) should the need arise.



# Grad Student Resources & Opportunities

- [Education Graduate Students' Association \(EdGSA\)](#): The EdGSA is an important student-led organization. They host formal and informal events.
- [GradSteps](#): Take advantage of a variety of workshops hosted by the Faculty of Graduate Studies to help you throughout your graduate program.
- [UM Libraries](#): Learn how to conduct searches, use reference management (bibliography) systems, and more!
- [Academic Learning Centre \(ALC\)](#): The ALC serves all UM students. Make an appointment with a writing or study-skills tutor or sign up for one of our many workshops.
- [Faculty Graduate Student Study Space](#): Find out how to access and apply for Graduate Student Study Space in our faculty.
- [International Centre](#): The International Centre is UM's hub for all things global and has numerous supports and resources for students.
- [UM Employment](#): Become a research assistant, teaching assistant or sessional instructor. For career services, check out [Career Connect](#).
- [Student Accessibility Services \(SAS\)](#): SAS provides support to students who have temporary or permanent accessibility issues. They liaise between a student and the faculty (instructors and/or program advisors) to arrange for academic accommodations as appropriate. Accommodations might include support in coursework (note-takers, additional time for papers, assistive technologies etc.), as well as an accommodation for an alternate defence format or more time to write a thesis.
- **Awards and Scholarships**: Numerous awards and grants for students exist. Watch your UM email for announcements and review the websites below. Most awards need a reference letter from your Advisor, so be sure to be proactive.
  - [Faculty of Education Research Funding and Awards](#)
  - [FGS Awards Database](#)
  - [Financial Aid and Awards](#)

## Land Acknowledgment

The University of Manitoba campuses are located on the original lands of Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota and Dene Peoples, and on the homeland of the Métis Nation. We respect the Treaties that were made on these territories, we acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past, and we dedicate ourselves to moving forward in partnership with Indigenous communities in a spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.