

# MEd Program Handbook

Department of Graduate Studies & Research in Education

Revised February 2021



# Faculty of Education

## Foreword

This Handbook is a guide to the Department of Graduate Studies & Research in Education at Lakehead University for Master of Education students. The Handbook is a modified version of earlier handbooks and we are grateful to previous contributors for their work.

Our website contains up-to-date information on program changes, course offerings, and other news. You are invited to visit our site at: <http://education.lakeheadu.ca/graduate/>

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## Information in this Handbook

Lakehead University's regulations concerning graduate programs are found in the Lakehead University Calendar, which is henceforth referred to as "the Calendar." It is important to start from the home page of the current academic calendar, which can be found by searching "Lakehead Calendar." **Please note the date on the page to ensure you are looking at the current calendar.**

### University Regulations

Students should familiarize themselves with the general University regulations found following the "Regulations" tab on the academic calendar homepage.

General regulations which apply to all graduate programs can be found by following the *Regulations* tab, choosing "Graduate" and "Faculty of Graduate Studies."

Regulations that apply specifically to the Faculty of Education can be found by following the *Regulations* tab, choosing "Graduate" and "Faculty of Education."

The Calendar is the definitive reference for any Lakehead University regulations, and should be consulted when students have questions about University regulations or policies. The Chair, Orillia Graduate Coordinator or the Administrative Assistant can assist students in clarifying Lakehead University regulations and policies that are relevant to programs of study, but it is essential for students to familiarize themselves with the regulations and policies. Knowing and understanding the regulations are the sole responsibility of the student.

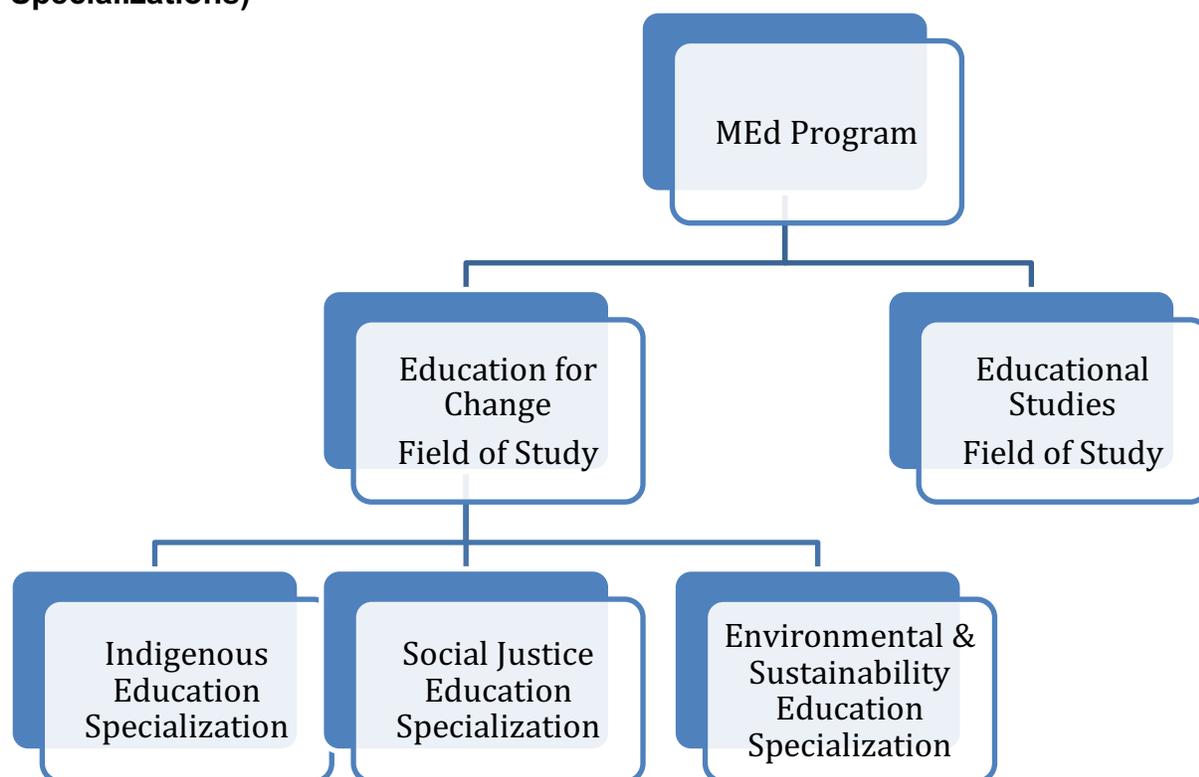
## Introduction

This section presents a concise summary of important information about the Master of Education program at Lakehead University. Further detail can be found later in the Handbook.

### Master of Education Program

There are two fields of study in the Master of Education program: *Educational Studies* and *Education for Change*. Within the latter field, students choose from three specializations: *Social Justice Education*, *Indigenous Education*, and *Environmental and Sustainability Education*. See the flowchart overview of the program below in **Figure 1**.

**Figure 1: Fields of Study: Educational Studies and Education for Change (with Specializations)**



If you are enrolled in the MEd program and would like to change your field of study, please search for the Lakehead Graduate Program Change form, complete it, and send it via email to Bonnie McDonald.

It is your responsibility to make certain that you are meeting program requirements. These may be found starting at the current academic calendar homepage, and following

the “Programs and Faculties” tab.

Once you have decided upon your Field of Study (and possibly a specialization), you must also determine which route you will take: course route, portfolio, or thesis.

**Figure 2** outlines the general course requirements within each route for the Educational Studies field.

<b>Overview of the MEd Educational Studies field degree requirements</b>	<b>Thesis Route</b>	<b>Portfolio Route</b>	<b>Course Route</b>
<b>Mandatory courses</b>	1 introduction to research half-course* 1 research methods half-course	1 introduction to research half-course 1 research methods half-course	1 introduction to research half-course 1 research methods half-course
<b>Open Elective courses</b>	4 half-courses** (2 full course equivalents)	6 half-courses (3 full course equivalents)	8 half-courses (4 full course equivalents)
<b>Thesis or Portfolio</b>	<b>Thesis</b> (2 full course equivalents)	<b>Portfolio</b> (1 full course equivalent)	
<b>Total</b>	5 full course equivalents (5 FCEs)	5 full course equivalents (5 FCEs)	5 full course equivalents (5 FCEs)

\*two half-courses = one full course equivalent (1 FCE); MEd courses are half-courses, though we often just call them courses!

\*\*thesis students may wish to take 1 half course as a directed study with their supervisor

**Figure 3** outlines the general course requirements within each route for the Education for Change field. More detailed course requirements and listings for each field can be found following the “Programs and Faculties” tab from the academic calendar.

<b>Overview of the MEd Education for Change field degree requirements</b>	<b>Thesis Route</b>	<b>Portfolio Route</b>	<b>Course Route</b>
<b>Mandatory courses</b>	1 introduction to research half-course 1 research methods half-course 1 foundations half-course in area of specialization (1.5 full course equivalents)	1 introduction to research half course 1 research methods half-course 1 foundations half-course in area of specialization (1.5 full course equivalents)	1 introduction to research half course 1 research methods half-course 1 foundations half-course in area of specialization (1.5 full course equivalents)
<b>Specialization Elective courses</b>	2 half-courses* (1 full course equivalent)	2 half-courses (1 full course equivalent)	4 half-courses (2 full course equivalents)
<b>Open Elective courses</b>	1 half-course (.5 full course equivalent)	3 half-courses (1.5 full course equivalents)	3 half-courses (1.5 full course equivalents)
<b>Thesis or Portfolio</b>	<b>Thesis</b> (2 full course equivalents) - topic must be in area of specialization	<b>Portfolio</b> (1 full course equivalent) - topic must be in area of specialization	
<b>Total</b>	5 full course equivalents (5 FCEs)	5 full course equivalents (5 FCEs)	5 full course equivalents (5 FCEs)

\*thesis students may wish to take 1 half-course as a directed study with their supervisor

Students in the Education for Change field may undertake a double specialization. The relevant regulations can be found following the “Programs and Faculties” tab from the academic calendar to the Education for Change MEd programs.

Students enrolled in either field of study and in the thesis, portfolio, or course route may consider a specialization in Gerontology or Women’s Studies (these must be applied for and approved).

### **Collaborative Graduate Program with Specialty in Gerontology**

The Specialization in Gerontology requires students to complete Gerontology 5710 (.5 FCE) and Gerontology 5790 (non-credit seminar), plus complete a portfolio or thesis related to gerontology, or, in the course route, complete the major assignments in two Education courses using aging as a construct. Students who have been approved by the Gerontology Graduate Committee receive academic counselling by the Gerontology Graduate Co-ordinator.

The thesis or portfolio, taken in Education, must have a Gerontological focus. Students must have a supervisor who is approved as a core faculty member in Gerontology. In exceptional circumstances, with approval of the Gerontology Graduate Committee, there may be joint supervision by a member of Education and a Gerontology faculty member.

### **Program with Specialty in Women's Studies**

The Specialization in Women's Studies consists of one full-year core course (1 FCE) - *Women's Studies 5101 - Theory and Methods in Women's Studies*, and a thesis or portfolio that must incorporate feminist scholarship. The proposed topic must be approved by representatives of both Education and the Women's Studies Graduate Committee. **Course route students must take WOME 5101 and must complete the major assignments from two other courses on topics relevant for Women's studies and incorporating feminist scholarship.**

## **Taking Courses**

### **Ask Us**

If you are unsure about regulations or procedures, have questions of any kind, or need advice about any aspect of the program, our offices are in the Bora Laskin Building (BL 1007) and Heritage Place (OR 1037) and we would be pleased to help you. Email addresses and phone numbers can be found on page 1. We appreciate your effort to find answers, policy and forms using Internet searches, and particularly starting at the current academic calendar homepage. The academic calendar is the definitive source for program information and students are responsible for knowing all policies and regulations related to their programs.

### **Full-time /Full-time Flex**

The MEd may be taken on a **full-time** or **full-time flex** basis.

**Full-time** provides up to six terms (two years) of continuous full-time registration. Tuition is payable per term until completion. MEd students registered on a full-time basis are expected to complete their degree within two years.

**Full-time flex** provides up to twelve terms (four years) of continuous registration; tuition is payable per term for the first six terms, followed by up to six additional terms during which no fees are payable. MEd students registered on a full-time basis are expected to complete their degree within four years. As this option is intended for working professionals, students admitted to the flex option are not eligible for financial support.

### **Online and On-Campus Courses**

Many courses in the program are offered via asynchronous online learning. It is possible to complete the entire program, in either field, via online courses. It can be challenging to do this in a compressed (three or four term) format. On-campus students typically take one or several online courses.

Mandatory courses are scheduled every year. Specialization and open electives may be offered every year, but most rotate. Students are encouraged to find the current course timetable from the academic calendar homepage to see course offerings.

Students living outside Thunder Bay sometimes take face-to-face summer compressed courses in July. Courses offered on campus during the month of July are typically scheduled Monday to Thursday for 2.5 hours each day for three (3) weeks.

### **Maximum Number of Courses per Term**

The maximum number of half-courses (.5 FCE) that can be taken per term are:

fall term – 3  
winter term – 3  
spring/summer term – 4 (2 in the spring session; 2 in the summer session).

### **Maximum Number of Courses per Degree**

In exceptional circumstances, students may apply to the Chair to take **one** extra course during their degree. For Course route this is the 11<sup>th</sup> course, for Portfolio route this is the 9<sup>th</sup> course and for Thesis route this is the 7<sup>th</sup> course.

## **Admissions**

### **Admission Requirements**

Admission requirements can be found following the “Admissions Requirements” tab accessed from the academic calendar homepage.

### **Admission with Advanced Standing**

Applicants who have taken graduate courses at another faculty/university may be granted credit for up to two half courses in their MEd program. Applicants must request that the course(s) be considered at the time of application. Such courses must be approved by the Graduate Studies in Education Committee based on the following criteria:

1. The courses have not been used as credit toward another degree, certificate, or diploma;
2. A minimum of B standing was obtained;
3. The courses are considered to be directly relevant to the program or area of specialization chosen by the applicant; and
4. The courses have typically been taken within three years of the time of admission to the MEd program.

## **General Information**

### **Full-Time Graduate Student**

A full-time graduate student must:

1. be designated by the University as a full-time graduate student;
2. be pursuing his or her studies full-time; and
3. not be employed full-time (i.e. classified full-time by the Employer).

## **International Students**

International students should be in touch with Lakehead International (international@lakeheadu.ca). They provide orientation, visa support and general support for international students.

The decision to study abroad should not be taken lightly. Some of the challenges facing international students include:

- moving far from home
- adjusting to a new culture
- lack of knowledge of the Canadian education system
- cold winters (sometimes below -20 degrees Celsius)
- learning in a second or third language
- academic English writing
- finances
- almost no financial support for international students
- strong competition for minimum wage jobs

International students who expect to apply for a work permit after finishing the MEd should not exclusively take online courses in any term or session.

It is strongly recommended that international students start with only one or two courses in their first term. Expecting to learn and potentially work in a second language and new culture, to take the maximum number of courses per term, and to get strong grades, is unrealistic.

## **Graduate Assistantships**

A Graduate Assistantship is a paid position which provides some full-time students with the opportunity to work closely with one or more faculty members in various capacities supporting undergraduate teaching and research activities within the University. The number of required hours to work is 270 hrs - 130 in the fall term and 140 in the winter term. This is on average 10 hours/week. As part of a graduate assistantship, students may be required to assist our office with conducting course evaluations on behalf of the Faculty of Education during the fall and winter terms.

Students with Graduate Assistantships must be available to work on campus (Thunder Bay or Orillia) during normal on-campus working hours.

Postings for Graduate Assistantships in Education are typically made in August. Students are encouraged to apply for positions of interest to them, listing them in order of preference. Every effort is made to accommodate these requests. Further details on assistantships can be obtained by contacting the Department.

The number of graduate assistantships available for international MEd students is unfortunately extremely limited.

## **Scholarships**

Information regarding graduate funding both internal and external to Lakehead University can be obtained through the Faculty of Graduate Studies. Search “Lakehead Graduate Funding.”

External scholarships include the Master’s Scholarship of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and the Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS). Most scholarships require application in the fall for a spring award, so it is recommended that students apply the year before beginning full-time study. Full-time students may also apply in the fall of their first year for the following academic year.

There are some internal scholarships and bursaries that are awarded without students needing to apply. The Faculty of Graduate Studies funding pages describe some awards and bursaries that some full-time domestic students may be eligible to apply for,

## **Continuance of Registration**

All graduate students must maintain continuous registration from initial registration until they have completed the requirements of their program. It is the student's responsibility to ensure they are registered by the appropriate deadline for each term. Students who have failed to register by the deadline and have not applied for a Leave of Absence will be registered in a University placeholder course and will be assessed appropriate fees.

Students who have failed to register for two consecutive terms will be considered to have left the program and will be withdrawn. Students then wanting to complete their program must apply for re-admission and pay the application fee.

## **Leave of Absence**

A leave of absence may be applied for in exceptional circumstances (for example, a limited term of external employment closely related to the program of study, health problems, parenting or compassionate grounds). Typically, they must be received prior to the term of the requested leave. Cases will be considered on an individual basis by the Faculty of Graduate Studies on the recommendation of the Department. A graduate student granted a leave of absence will not be required to pay a continuance registration fee and will not have access to University faculty or facilities. Leaves of absence will be considered for up to three terms; for each term granted, a “stop-the-clock” policy will prevail with respect to completion of degree requirements. The policy and appropriate form can be found by searching “Lakehead Leave of Absence Form.”

Completed application forms should be forwarded to Bonnie McDonald.

Leaves of absence may impact OSAP loan repayment and, for international students, student visas. Please check with Financial Services and Lakehead International, respectively, if you are uncertain.

## **Time Extension**

A Time Extension in a graduate program may be granted on a per term basis, for up to three terms. Approval for the first term beyond the calendared Period of Study is at the discretion of the Department. Recommendations for the second term time extension

and for the final term time extension must be sent by the Department to the Faculty of Graduate Studies Council for consideration. Students must provide an adequate description of the grounds for requesting time extensions. The time extension request form may be found by searching “Lakehead Time Extension Form.”

Completed application forms should be forwarded to Bonnie McDonald.

A graduate student who does not complete the required courses and/or portfolio or thesis within one of the prescribed periods of study and does not receive an approved [Time Extension](#) is considered to have failed the program and will be withdrawn from the program.

### **Important Dates**

Please refer to the “Important Dates” tab on the current academic calendar homepage for dates. These include start and end dates for terms and sessions and the last date to add and withdraw from courses.

## **Graduate Fees and Financial Support**

### **Fees**

Students are responsible for the timely payment of all program-related and miscellaneous fees. All such fees must be paid in full before students can graduate. Information on fees can be found by following the “Fees” tab on the academic calendar homepage.

**Unpaid Fees - Unconfirmed Registration.** The University reserves the right to cancel registration if the required fees are not paid by the last day to register in any given academic term. All charges and outstanding fees accrued to the date of cancellation will remain due and payable on the student’s account as defined in the Refund Policy and Schedule.

**Delinquent Accounts.** Students with an unpaid balance from a previous term will not be permitted to register in a subsequent term until their accounts have been paid. Students will not have access to final grades, including official transcripts and/or degree/diploma certificates. The University uses the services of outside collection agencies and reserves the right to use any legal means to reclaim monies owing.

**Financial Support.** Students are encouraged to acquaint themselves with the current Lakehead University Calendar for information on Financial Aid to Graduate Students. Award details, applications centres, requirements, and deadline dates are provided. Interested qualified candidates are encouraged to apply. Search “Lakehead Financial Aid.”

## Application to Graduate

Students must be registered in the year in which they intend to graduate. Students must apply to graduate. Application forms are available through MyInfo. Refer to the current academic calendar for deadlines and fees.

## Grading System

Course standings in the graduate programs will be reported as follows:

A+	90	to	100%
A	80	to	89%
B	70	to	79%
C	60	to	69%
Fail	01	to	59%
F	0	Academic Dishonesty	
INC		Incomplete	

To maintain registration as a graduate student, a student must achieve and maintain satisfactory academic standing at all times. A student whose academic performance does not meet the minimum standing will be withdrawn from the program.

**Minimum Satisfactory Academic Standing** (from the Faculty of Graduate Studies master's regulations)

Graduate students must maintain at least a B overall average in their courses with no more than one full course equivalent graded C. A mark of less than 60% in a graduate course constitutes failure. A graduate student with a mark of 50 - 59% in a graduate course may repeat the course. No more than one full course equivalent may be repeated. If, after exercising this avenue for improving course marks, a student is still unable to achieve the minimum B overall average, the student will not be permitted to continue in the program.

Course marks below 50% are unacceptable in a graduate program. A graduate student with such a mark will not be permitted to continue in the program. Courses with a mark below 50% may not be repeated.

### Incomplete Grades

An incomplete grade may, at the discretion of the instructor and in consultation with the student, be assigned to a course when the instructor believes that the student has not yet completed all the requirements of the course for a valid reason. In such cases, when a percentage grade would normally be assigned to the course, the instructor must also assign a numeric grade for work completed to the point of submission, unless stipulated in the course syllabus that a student will be deemed to have failed the course if a particular component had not been completed, in which case the student would be assigned a failing grade expressed as a portion of the entire course mark. Incomplete

grades will not be included in the calculation of the student's average. The chair must approve the assignment of an incomplete grade.

The instructor is obliged to set the due date for the additional work in order to permit submission of the revised grade to the Office of Enrolment Services before the beginning of the following term.

To clear an incomplete grade, the student must complete the outstanding work and a *Change of Grade* form from the instructor must be received by the Office of Enrolment Services. Grades that are not cleared by the appropriate date will be converted to the numeric grade assigned (students who have not successfully completed the required component needed to pass the course will receive the failing grade) and at that point will be included in the student's average. Pass/Fail courses with a grade of INC will be converted to F.

### **Reappraisal**

Please refer to the *University Regulations*, VI [Reappraisal and Academic Appeals](#) in the Calendar for information.

### **Academic Dishonesty**

The Faculty of Education, in accordance with University regulations, maintains a strict policy regarding academic dishonesty. Rules and penalties for infractions are outlined in the "Code of Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Procedures," which may be found by searching Lakehead Code of Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Procedures.

**Plagiarism.** The consequences of plagiarizing are severe. As noted in Section IX: Academic Misconduct of the University Calendar, the "minimum penalty for a candidate found guilty of plagiarism, or of cheating on any part of a course will be a zero for the work concerned." In many cases, a zero on a major assignment will result in a failure in the course altogether, which in turn will result in withdrawal from the program. The university regulations can be found by looking under the Academics tab on the LU Homepage for the Academic Calendar and then clicking Regulations.

## **Harassment and Discrimination Policy**

Lakehead University has established [a comprehensive policy](#) on harassment and discrimination, including sexual harassment. This document is available from the Office of Human Resources. Students who have concerns may consult with the Chair of The Department of Graduate Studies & Research in Education, and may access the Office of Human Rights and the VP Student Affairs (admin.ohre@lakeheadu.ca).

In conjunction with the policy on harassment and discrimination, Lakehead University has also implemented a [policy on sexual violence](#), which includes not only sexual assault, but also may include sexism, racism, ableism, homophobia or transphobia. The primary purpose of the policy is to outline the University's response to sexual violence.

## Graduate Computer Facilities

Accounts are necessary for access to computer systems including Lakehead email. Accounts are setup by Technology Services Centre when students register. If students have difficulties accessing their account, they can contact the helpdesk at ext. 7777 (807-346-7777 or at [helpdesk@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:helpdesk@lakeheadu.ca)). Students have full access to electronic mail and Internet services through the campus network.

## Library Information for MEd Students

Lakehead University Library includes, on the Thunder Bay campus, The [Chancellor Paterson Library](#) and the [Education Library](#). [Orillia Campus libraries](#) include the University Avenue Library and the Heritage Place Library. Its collections are selected to support the teaching and research programs of the university, both graduate and undergraduate. All graduate students may use the resources of all Lakehead libraries.

You can request general assistance through any of the following methods:

- Call 807-343-8719 for assistance.
- Email library research questions to our confidential email service at [edlib@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:edlib@lakeheadu.ca)
- Use the [ASK a Librarian Research Chat Service](#) that is available through the library websites

Students are also encouraged to arrange a personal research consultation with the Librarian to determine the best strategy for their literature search.

- If you are in Thunder Bay, contact the Education Librarian, for assistance, Gisella Scalse. An appointment can be booked [online](#); or by email at [gscalse@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:gscalse@lakeheadu.ca) or call 807-343-8719.
- If you are on the Orillia Campus, contact the Orillia Campus Librarian for assistance, Chris Tomasini at [ctomasin@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:ctomasin@lakeheadu.ca) or call 705.330.4008 ext. 2260
- If you are not on a Lakehead University campus (Thunder Bay or Orillia) please contact the Education Librarian to discuss alternate consultation methods. Send your request by email to [gscalse@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:gscalse@lakeheadu.ca) or call 807-343-8719.

The [Graduate Education Library Guide](#) provides online assistance to help you through the various stages of the library research process. This guide is available at: <https://libguides.lakeheadu.ca/Educationgrad>

## Borrowing Materials

Upon registration, Thunder Bay students should visit the Chancellor Paterson Library to receive their Lakehead University Photo Identification Card (available at the Paterson Library Circulation Desk 343-8225) – this is the library card for both the Education and Chancellor Paterson libraries.

On the Orillia campus students should visit the bookstore at the University Avenue location with their student ID number, to obtain a Lakehead University Photo Identification Card.

If you are not physically present on a Lakehead University campus you can request a Lakehead University Photo Identification Card [online](#).

Students should become familiar with the “Borrowing Privileges” link on the library website and can manage their library account by clicking on the “My Library Account” icon on the library website. Information can be obtained on the material that a student has borrowed, any recalls that have been placed, and renew of books.

### **If you are outside of Thunder Bay or Orillia**

While you are enrolled at Lakehead University as a graduate student and you are not physically present on the Thunder Bay or Orillia campuses, you still have access to the [following library services](#): borrowing of most library materials; access to online resources and research assistance.

For additional information contact the Education Library at [edlib@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:edlib@lakeheadu.ca) or call 807-343-8719.

### **Starting Points for your Library Research**

It is recommended that students start their search for research from the Education Library [website](#).

On the Education Library website, <https://library.lakeheadu.ca/education>, you will find links to education-related search tools, library guides and information. Please contact the library for more information on any of the starting points outlined below:

### **Finding Books**

Print books or ebooks can be located using the library’s [Online Catalogue](#) (or click on the “Catalogue Search” tab in the centre of the library website). Entering information such as title, keywords, author or subject into the search fields will return results that students can peruse for suitability to their projects and research.

### **Searching for Journal Articles**

For a selection of education-related journal article databases, begin at the Education Library website and click on “Education Databases” tab located in the centre of the website. Try these Education Databases: CBCA Complete (for Canadian Education journal articles); ERIC; and Education Source. Consult the Education Graduate Student Library Guide for additional searching information and/or book a research consultation for additional search strategies. Journal databases for all other topics are available through the Library’s [“Databases AtoZ”](#) link.

## **Connecting from Off-Campus**

When students are off campus, they can search the library website and databases as directed above. However, for links that are restricted, meaning that they require a subscription, a Lakehead University proxy page will appear that will prompt for the student's Lakehead University username and password. Students will then remain logged in and can search all the restricted resources until the browser is closed. In the event of an error message students can receive assistance by contacting the Education Librarian at 807-343-8719.

## **Books and Journal Articles Not Available at Lakehead**

It is possible to obtain books and journals not available at Lakehead through the interlibrary loan/RACER service. Additional information about the Interlibrary Loan/RACER service is available at <https://library.lakeheadu.ca/services/interlibrary-loan-racer>

## **Borrowing from Other Libraries in Canada**

Graduate students may present their Lakehead University Photo Identification card to borrow items from other Ontario University libraries, as well as other participating university libraries in Canada. These items may also be returned to any other university library.

## **Purchase Suggestions**

Feel free to recommend book titles or other items not currently available in our collections. Send an email to the Education Librarian, Gisella Scalese: [gscalese@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:gscalese@lakeheadu.ca) or call 807-343-8719

## **Bibliographic/Citation Manager Software**

Bibliographic software is recommended to assist with creating bibliographies and managing references. Zotero is an open access source that is easy-to-use and will help **collect, organize, cite, and share** your research sources. More information on using Zotero can be found [here](#).

## **Open Access and Scholarly Communication**

Information on open access publishing, including questionable publishing, is available on the library website [here](#). For additional information on this topic or assistance with a journal title, please contact the Education Librarian.

# **Planning Your Program**

## **The Importance of Planning**

The decision to pursue graduate studies in education is an exciting and often life-changing one. Students make this decision for reasons that may be personal, academic, or professional. Graduate education has the potential to introduce students to new ideas and knowledge, to new ways of thinking, to the conduct of research, and to alternative and creative applications of current knowledge. Graduate education provides students with opportunities to pursue personal, academic, and professional interests and goals in breadth through courses and directed study, and in depth through a thesis or portfolio.

Graduate studies in education may lead to several different pathways. It may lead to the development of professional knowledge and skills within a student's current professional role, new career possibilities within their profession, or to the decision to pursue doctoral studies. If you are an MEd student considering doctoral studies, you should be enrolled in the thesis route.

The old adage "You get out of the degree what you put into it" is particularly true of graduate education. The successful completion of a graduate degree requires motivation, ownership, and active involvement, time, tenacity, and the ability to work independently and cooperatively. It is important to consider any graduate degree as a program, including the course-route, rather than as a collection of discrete courses. Conceptualizing the program as a whole enables students to plan a program tailored to their personal, professional, and academic interests and goals.

### **Initial Contact/Orientation**

Prior to registering in the program, students may want to schedule an interview or telephone meeting with the Chair of the Department of Graduate Studies and Research. This provides students with an overview of the program and assists them in the selection of courses.

An orientation session will be held in early September for incoming MEd students. The session is intended to welcome new students and to acquaint them with the various program options. The sessions also give students the opportunity to meet other graduate students and faculty members. Continuing students are also encouraged to attend. Students from out of town, and those who cannot attend the session, are encouraged to contact the Chair or Administrative Assistant with any questions about the program, and to participate, where applicable, via videoconferencing technology.

### **Planning**

(see also planning section at the beginning of this document)

In planning their program, students should give consideration to tentative completion dates or milestones for each phase of the program. The phases include:

1. Choosing between the two fields of study, which are Educational Studies and Education for Change. Students may also change once their program has started.
2. Education for Change students can choose among the three specializations, which are Indigenous Education (IE), Environmental and Sustainability Education (ESE),

and Social Justice Education (SJE). Students may also change during the program.

3. compulsory courses;
4. elective courses; and
5. choosing between course, portfolio, or thesis routes.

The Chair can assist students in the selection of courses, in resolving concerns, and in the selection of a supervisor for the portfolio or thesis.

**Sequence of Courses.** The compulsory courses should typically be completed early in the student's program. These courses introduce students to the area of specialization and research design and methodologies.

**Electives in Other Departments, Schools, or Universities.** With permission of the Instructor and Chair, elective courses may include a maximum of one full graduate course, or the equivalent, in another cognate academic unit. This will require a special permissions request. To take a course at another institution, students must plan at least one term ahead and should familiarize themselves with the information on the Faculty of Graduate and Studies' website pertaining to the Ontario Visiting Graduate Student [Application](#). Signatures from the Chair of the Department and the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies are required, as well as signatures from the Ontario university where students are planning on taking the course. This can work well, though universities are often unwilling to guarantee space prior to 10 days before the course starts; the uncertainty this creates can be stressful.

**Involvement in Research Activity.** Students are strongly encouraged to present their work and to attend events that involve them in research activity. Such events include seminars and guest lectures, the annual Graduate Education Students' Conference, and the annual University-wide Graduate Students' Conference.

Students should consider attending provincial, national, and international conferences as a participant or presenter. The Faculty of Education has some limited monies to help students defray the costs of presenting a paper at a conference. The application, including procedures, can be found [here](#) under "Forms for Graduate Students." Proposals for presenting a paper at a conference are submitted well in advance. For example, the annual conference of the Canadian Society for the Study of Education (CSSE) is held each year in late May, but the proposal deadline is in the preceding fall. There are numerous conferences in many fields of education that might interest students.

The Faculty of Graduate Studies may also support conference travel for presenters; please check their website for details.

## **Thesis, Portfolio or Course Route?**

MEd students should consider carefully which route – course, portfolio or thesis – best meets their personal, professional, and scholarly interests and goals.

## **Course Route**

The course route allows students to gain breadth of knowledge of the wider education field, to be critical consumers of research, and be able to apply that research in various educational settings.

Course route students in either field may informally decide to focus on a particular area of Education, maintaining that interest across many courses.

## **Portfolio**

A portfolio may involve research or the application of theoretical knowledge to a practical problem in the profession. A portfolio allows the candidate flexibility in:

1. The type of problem or topic selected for study;
2. The processes through which a problem is examined, developed, implemented, or evaluated; and
3. The range of forms that may be used for reporting.

The final portfolio must include an introduction, relevant literature review, description of how the task(s) were created, as well as at minimum one task such as a resource for professionals in the field. A portfolio committee consists of the Supervisor and one committee member.

Students may be attracted to the portfolio route if they are keen on creating something of immediate practical value.

A portfolio is equivalent to two half courses (1 full course equivalent).

## **Thesis**

A thesis requires in-depth examination of a research problem. The thesis committee includes the Supervisor and one committee member. Before the graduate student meets the requirements for satisfactory completion of the MEd degree, the thesis must be approved by the thesis committee, an internal examiner (a Lakehead faculty member who is not serving on the committee), and an external examiner from another university. Some details on the timing of this process can be found in Appendix B.

Students may be attracted to the thesis route if they like the idea of conducting original research on a question of interest that will contribute to our collective knowledge in the field of Education.

A thesis is equivalent to four half courses (two full course equivalents); This weighting reflects the commitment to research and analysis required for a thesis. Full-time students typically finish the thesis route in five or six terms.

## **MEd Thesis Route**

There is valuable information that can be found on the [Graduate Programs](#) webpage. Please use this link and the information below to answer your questions about the Thesis Route.

### **Why Undertake a Thesis?**

Undertaking a thesis is typically more complex and intensive than doing course work. Students undertake a thesis to answer a question or address a problem on a particular topic of interest. Doing a thesis is excellent preparation for doing a PhD for interested students; if you are drawn to the idea of conducting original research, the thesis might be the right route for you.

### **Minimum Requirements for the Thesis Route**

The thesis route requires a minimum 75% entry from students' undergraduate degree. Students can switch into the thesis route after starting the MEd program, but must meet this criteria, as well as finding a supervisor willing to supervise their thesis. Students who wish to switch to thesis route but who entered the program with less than a 75% average may apply to the Chair after completing three courses. At that time, students must have an average of 85% based on completed courses in the MEd program and a faculty member willing to supervise their thesis. The Chair can be consulted by students who think they might want to switch routes. This will help in planning the transition and making the most of the coursework.

### **Aligning Your Course Work to Support Your Thesis (Year 1)**

Students who enter the program as a full-time student aiming to embark on a thesis are advised to find a supervisor in the first months. Meeting with a supervisor can help tailor the first six courses toward the thesis. Thesis students typically complete their six courses in the first year. In many courses, it will be possible to focus extra readings and major assignment topics on areas that will support a students' thesis work.

### **Finding a Supervisor (During Year 1)**

You will need to find a supervisor who is working in your area of interest and willing to supervise your thesis. Go to <https://jointphd-ed.lakeheadu.ca/> and then click on the "designated faculty" tab to find potential supervisors' areas of research interest. You will need to scroll down to the Lakehead pages. Some of the people listed may be external adjuncts and may not supervise master's theses, but most do. Speak with the Chair or Orillia graduate coordinator, and speak with your fellow students. Set up a meeting with potential supervisors and meet with them to discuss supervision. You will not likely know the exact question you want to research but should have a general idea of the topic of interest. Please inform the Graduate Office once a faculty member has agreed to be your supervisor and see the Chair for guidance on selecting a supervisor.

Students may, in rare instances, encounter difficulties in working with their supervisor, which may lead them to consider changing supervisors. Because of the potential significance of a change of supervisor, students should carefully consider their options if they are encountering difficulties in working with their supervisor. In such cases, the student should first consult with the supervisor in order to discuss the nature of the problem and to determine what steps might be taken to remedy the problem. Students are encouraged to consult with the Chair, who will work with both the student and

supervisor towards a resolution. A student wishing to change supervisors must submit a request to the Chair. Once approval of the Chair has been obtained, the Chair will notify the original supervisor and committee member.

### **Directed Study Course ED 5570 (Year 1)**

You may want to complete a directed study as an elective course with a supervisor. The directed study is an opportunity to read in your area of interest and lay the groundwork for your literature review. It is also an opportunity for your supervisor to determine whether you will need writing guidance. A directed study might comprise reading 40–50 journal articles in your research area and writing brief summaries for each, recording what may be most relevant to your topic. These annotations allow students to gain an understanding of the field and the supervisor to read and assess their understanding of the literature. This can serve as the beginning of the literature review. You may choose to use bibliographic software (e.g., *Zotero*) in order to build your database. See the library for further suggestions. Other formats for the directed study can also be agreed upon by the student and supervisor and proposed to the Chair.

Students and their supervisors must complete the application for a directed study form that may be requested from Bonnie McDonald. The registration deadline is August 15<sup>th</sup> for a fall course, November 15<sup>th</sup> for a winter course, and April 15<sup>th</sup> for a summer course.

### **Foundations and Electives (Year 1)**

In addition to the first and second research courses, students may need to do a foundations course (if enrolled in the Education for Change field) and then three more electives (one of which could be the directed study). Wherever possible, you should enroll in courses that will contribute to your knowledge of your thesis area. Students in one of the specializations in the Education for Change field must choose some of their electives from specific groups.

### **Committee Member (Year 1)**

As you are ending your coursework and beginning your thesis work by creating a thesis proposal, you will need to discuss possible committee members with your supervisor. Committee members must have Faculty of Graduate Studies status with the Faculty of Education and be a full-time faculty member or an adjunct professor. In exceptional circumstances, supervisors may propose Lakehead faculty members who do not meet these criteria to the Chair for consideration.

Once you have reached agreement, supervisors typically approach a faculty member to invite them to be the committee member on a thesis committee. Some supervisors may request that the student approaches the potential committee member. In either case, a supervisor and the committee member will have a discussion about how they want to proceed. Regardless of how often the committee member wishes to see the proposal, they<sup>1</sup> should be aware of the methods to be used and be in agreement before the proposal is fully written. The committee should meet to agree upon the central components of the proposal, including the research question(s), literature review, and methods. The supervisor should let Bonnie McDonald know who is serving on the committee.

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<sup>1</sup> The gender indefinite “they” is used here to challenge the he/she gender binary.

## **Developing a Research Question**

Students should meet with their supervisor during the last half of their coursework to narrow their focus and agree upon a research question. A research question must be specific enough that it can be answered with the 100 pages maximum of a master's thesis. Furthermore, it must be answerable. Finally, it should be a question that has not been answered repeatedly in the research literature; that is, it must make a contribution to knowledge. A research focus should be determined as early as feasible. Although it is not possible to settle on the research question before students have explored the literature, they may use the readings in courses and for assignments to begin to review the literature in their area of interest. This strategy will enable students to make the best use of their courses.

Attend student/faculty presentations and the Graduate Education Students' Conference. Students should evaluate ideas that they find interesting and follow up the leads from the literature. In addition, it is an excellent idea to build a file of references, articles, and papers that might be useful in developing a proposal. Consult faculty members about ideas for the thesis. Talk with other students. Before thinking about writing a proposal, students will need to find a faculty member with expertise in the area of interest to supervise. Be prepared to revise your idea and, quite possibly, to narrow your topic or problem further. Develop a realistic plan that can be accomplished in a reasonable time frame.

## **Developing a Plan**

Once students and their supervisor have agreed upon a research question and the question has also been approved by the committee member, students should develop a backwards timeline (see Appendix B). The timeline will layout when students need to complete the different aspects of their thesis. The following headings give a general outline of the steps.

## **Writing a Proposal**

The Proposal typically<sup>2</sup> comprises the first three chapters of a thesis: the introduction, including the research question; the literature review; a methodology chapter; and references. Proposals vary; what is described here is one typical way they often look.

*Proposal Introduction.* The introduction to a thesis is a brief introduction to the topic, providing a context of the topic, the purpose of the work, research questions, and significance of the thesis. It may also include a theoretical framework. Many students also position themselves in the introduction, which means to identify one's *position* in relation to the topic and potential research participants. Such positioning might convey insider or outsider status and a student's key identities that shape their worldview and how they view and articulate the research problem under investigation.

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<sup>2</sup>Some approaches to research may differ significantly in important respects from the model presented here. Students are encouraged to do work that resonates with their research question, and should always be prepared to support their choices with relevant references to appropriate literature. Some supervisors' expectations may also differ somewhat; discussing expectations helps to keep the progress running smoothly.

*Proposal Literature Review.* The literature review is the foundation of a thesis. A review will include a broad summary of what is known about the topic generally and then increasingly narrowing it to the very specific question under investigation. The literature review should not simply be a list of article summaries; instead, it should be a synthesis as well as an argument. It positions one's research in the field and is an argument, using the literature, to delineate why it is important to conduct the research being proposed.

*Proposal Methodology.* The methodology chapter outlines the approach to the research and the methods – how students will go about carrying out their research, and the limitations of their approach. It should begin with your research questions, justify the chosen approach, and then lay out the plan. The chapter should be very specific, rather than vague, as it is a blueprint for the actual steps that students will take to conduct their research. Some students include a chart of their research questions and the data they will gather in order to answer the questions. Any instruments to be used, such as surveys and interview questions, should be included, typically in an appendix. Wherever possible, make use of instruments and methods that have already been used in the literature.

The proposal must follow the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> edition) in matters of style, except where a compelling case can be made to diverge (e.g., some arts-based research might break some conventions; this must be cleared with your supervisor, committee member, and the Chair).

### **Supervisor Feedback on the Proposal**

Students should negotiate with their supervisor to agree upon when to meet and how feedback might be obtained. After each meeting, it is good practice to send a brief email to confirm the next steps that have been agreed upon. The Faculty of Graduate Studies suggests a turnaround time of 10 working days for student work once it goes to a supervisor or a committee member. However, it might be unreasonable to expect such turnaround for work delivered just prior to a planned holiday, and work that is unpolished usually takes longer. Supervisors may also send it back without a full read. While waiting for feedback on work submitted, there is almost always something else to work on!

Developing a researchable question and writing a literature review takes time and a number of exchanges of the draft with your supervisor will take place. Students are wise to bear in mind that feedback is meant to strengthen the work and is not an accusation of lack of ability or potential as an MEd scholar. While a supervisor may do some minor editing, it is not their role to copy edit, though it is their responsibility to not approve the work until the writing is very good. Students might consider finding someone, perhaps colleagues in the program, to read first drafts before sending them to their supervisor. Be sure to offer reciprocity.

### **Sending the First Clean Draft to the Committee Member**

Once the proposal is clean and ready to go (usually after three or four drafts), the supervisor asks the student to send it to the committee member. The committee

member should be informed about when it is coming, and will endeavour to provide feedback within 10 working days.

Once the draft is returned with comments, the student and supervisor should speak and discuss the work involved in addressing the committee member's comments. The edited draft may need to be returned to the committee member one or more times, depending on the comments.

### **Signing Off on the Proposal**

When the supervisor and committee member are both satisfied that the proposal is clean and the proposed research is feasible, they will sign off on the proposal using a form supplied by Bonnie McDonald. Some students experience difficulty during the internal or external examination of their thesis, either because the methodology chapter was deemed to not be sufficiently detailed, because it was deemed not to be enough work to be considered thesis-level research, or for other reasons. The supervisor and committee member endeavor to help the student to be successful under examination, but scholars have their own backgrounds, experience and expectations. Ideally, the work will be seen to be 'strong' as opposed to 'acceptable' heading into examination to increase the chances of success.

### **Ethics Application (4-5 weeks)**

If thesis research involves human subjects who might participate in surveys and/ or interviews, students must apply for an ethics review by the Lakehead Senate Research Ethics Board (REB). You apply through the *Romeo Research Portal* (via [datatel/myInfo](#)). Instructions on completing your application can be found [here](#). REB applications must be approved before students can begin to gather data. Although students will write the ethics application and upload it to the system, supervisors are the designated Principal Investigator (PI) in the system. They will need to approve it and submit to the Chair for approval. Once the Chair or Chair's designate approves it, it will be submitted to the REB for a full review.

Plan on one week for the Chair approval process for very clear and complete submissions, and an extra week under consideration for each time a resubmission is required. The REB usually takes three weeks, after they have completed a preliminary review for completeness. Students may be asked to revise the application for additional detail or clarification, which would delay approval.

A YouTube instructional video can be found by searching 'Lakehead REB Ethics'.

### **Data Gathering**

To "gather data" means to administer a survey, conduct interviews, engage in participant observation, etc. Before going out to gather data, students need to have thought about how the data will be analyzed. Qualitative or quantitative software are options that can help to label the data (audio recordings, student work, survey data, etc.) in a way that will support analysis. The supervisor may help with this part or, and students may receive some training on data analysis software from the Department of Graduate Studies.

## **Analysis**

Supervisors may provide advice on analytic procedures. Supervisors may need to have access to the data that students have collected and coded in the case of qualitative research, and to data, tests, and analysis in the case of quantitative research. It is anticipated that students will do independent reading on the data analysis methods that are most relevant to their work.

## **First Draft of Analysis**

Once students have completed analysis, a draft of the results can be written and then sent to their supervisor. After some discussion and exchange of the draft, likely a few times, students can then turn their attention to their final chapters.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

The draft will undergo a “back and forth” with your supervisor until they agree that the whole thesis is complete and polished. Then, the student may be asked to send the draft to the committee member or the supervisor may do this themselves. Providing committee members with advanced notice is always good practice. There will be at least one round of revisions but there may be a number of rounds. All revisions should be read by supervisors and agreed upon before the work goes back to the committee member. The supervisor and committee member will sign off on the “MEd Thesis Report form” that they will ask Bonnie McDonald to prepare when they believe a thesis is sufficiently complete and clean to be put forward for examination.

## **Length of Thesis**

A thesis should not exceed one hundred (100) pages in length, exclusive of references and appendices. Requests to go more than 10% above the page limit must be approved by the supervisor, committee member and Chair. A rationale must be provided to the Chair for consideration.

## **Examinations**

**Internal Examiner.** Once all parties have signed off on the thesis, the Chair reviews it before it is sent to the Internal Examiner. If the Chair is satisfied, it is sent to the Internal Examiner in PDF and Word.

The supervisor is responsible for finding an Internal Examiner who is “arm’s length” from the student. Typically, this is someone with expertise in the area. The Internal Examiner must be a faculty member at Lakehead University, a member of the Faculty of Education or an adjunct. The student will send the Department a PDF and Word copy of the thesis to be forwarded to the Internal Examiner for examination. On the request of the examiner, the student will be asked to provide a hard copy. The thesis must be free of typographical and grammatical errors. The formatting should conform to APA guidelines.

The Department handles the examination. The student may not contact the Internal Examiner during this time. The Department supplies the Internal Examiner with a copy of the “Examiner’s Report on Thesis/Dissertation,” and a copy of the thesis. When

assessment of the thesis is complete, this form is returned to the Department; often, the examiner also provides comments in the manuscript.

Four weeks from the confirmed receipt of the thesis are allotted for completion of the examination. Once the forms and thesis have been completed and returned, the exam findings are sent by the Chair to the supervisor who sends the report to the student and the committee member. The Department sends the examiner's report to the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

Please see the [Faculty of Education Master's Regulations](#) for a description of possible outcomes of the Internal examination, including appreciable revisions and rejection.

**External Examiner.** While the thesis is being examined internally, the supervisor will locate a potential External Examiner. The External has expertise in the area and must also be at "arm's length" from both the supervisor and the student. Students may discuss potential Externals with their supervisor. The supervisor typically contacts the potential External, sending the thesis abstract, to determine willingness and availability, then completes the proposed external examiner form.

Bonnie McDonald then contacts the proposed External for a CV (curriculum vitae), and the Chair reviews the application for suitability. If satisfied, the application is sent to the Faculty of Graduate. The supervisor may not contact the External Examiner at any time after initial contact; the student may not contact the External Examiner.

**External Examination.** Once all parties have signed off on the thesis, the Chair reviews it before it is sent out to the External Examiner. If the Chair is satisfied, it is sent to the External Examiner in PDF and Word. If the External requests a hard copy, Bonnie McDonald requests one from the student.

The Department, not the student or supervisor, handles the examination. The Department supplies the External Examiner with a copy of the "Examiner's Report on Thesis/Dissertation" and a copy of the thesis. When assessment of the thesis is complete, this form is returned to the Department; often, the examiner also provides comments in the manuscript.

Four weeks from the confirmed receipt of the thesis are allotted for completion of the examination. Once the forms and thesis have been completed and returned, the exam findings are sent by the Chair to the supervisor who sends the report to the student and the committee member. The Department sends the examiner's report to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and to the Internal Examiner.

Please see the Faculty of Education [Master's Regulations](#) for a description of possible outcomes of the External examination, including appreciable revisions and rejection.

### **Final Thesis**

After receipt of a favourable External Examination and after any required changes are

made to the satisfaction of the supervisor, the student shall submit a PDF to the Chair for review. If approved, the Chair forwards the copy as the official copy to the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

Students should send this official version to their supervisor and committee member for their records.

Students shall submit the following forms to the Faculty Graduate Studies:

- License to the University
- Non-Exclusive Licence to Reproduce Theses – What You Should Know
- Non-Exclusive License to Reproduce Theses – Form
- Exit Survey

## **MEd Portfolio Route**

### **Why Undertake a Portfolio?**

Undertaking a portfolio is typically more intensive than doing course work but is less work than a thesis. The portfolio is a collection of conceptually connected creative, scholarly, and technical tasks for professional use. Sometimes, it is a single, larger task. The strength of the portfolio option is that it allows students to connect theory and practice by producing authentic resource materials in order to contribute to classrooms and other work sites. The portfolio route is considered to be a terminal degree, not opening the door to future PhD studies.

Undertaking a portfolio often stems from a professional interest in contributing in a practical way to the field. A portfolio should be “authentic.” Archbald and Newman (1992) suggest that the authenticity of tasks can be judged on the basis of three components:

1. it is a result of disciplined inquiry;
2. it builds upon prior knowledge; and
3. it is of personal and professional value once completed.

### **Overview**

Both students and faculty should keep in mind that a portfolio is worth one (1) Full Course Equivalent (FCE) and this weighting should be reflected in the amount of work required for completion of a portfolio.

The final portfolio must be approved by the committee, which is comprised of supervisor and committee member. There is no internal or external examiner. It is recommended that there be a final meeting of student, supervisor, and committee member to assist with the process of critical self-reflection.

### **Aligning Your Course Work to Support Your Portfolio (Year 1)**

When students embark on a portfolio, they are well advised to meet with a supervisor and tailor courses toward the portfolio topic. Students typically complete the eight courses in the first three or four terms. In many courses, it will be possible to focus extra

readings and major assignment topics on areas that will support a student's portfolio work.

### **Finding a Supervisor (During Year 1)**

Students will need to find a supervisor who is working in a mutual area of interest and willing to supervise. Look online for potential supervisors, speak with the Chair, and speak with fellow students.

In the first or second term in the program, students need to find a supervisor who is working in their area of interest or close and is willing to supervise their portfolio. Go to <https://jointphd-ed.lakeheadu.ca/> and then click on the "designated faculty" tab to find potential supervisors' areas of research interest. You will need to scroll down to the Lakehead pages. Some of the people listed may be external adjuncts and may not supervise master's portfolios, but most do. Speak with the Chair, and speak with your fellow students.

Set up a meeting with potential supervisors and meet with them to discuss supervision. Students will not likely know the exact topic but should have a general idea of the area. Students should inform the Graduate Office once a faculty member has agreed to supervise; the Chair can offer guidance in selecting a supervisor.

Students may, in rare instances, encounter difficulties in working with their supervisor, which may lead them to consider changing supervisors. Because of the potential significance of a change of supervisor, students should carefully consider their options if they are encountering difficulties in working with their supervisor. In such cases, the student should first consult with the supervisor in order to discuss the nature of the problem and to determine what steps might be taken to remedy the problem. Students are encouraged to consult with the Chair, who will work with both the student and supervisor towards a resolution. A student wishing to change supervisors must submit a request to the Chair. Once approval of the Chair has been obtained, the Chair will notify the original supervisor and committee member.

### **Directed Study Course ED 5570 (Year 1)**

A directed study might comprise reading 40–50 journal articles in your research area and writing brief summaries for each, recording what may be most relevant to your topic. These annotations allow students to gain an understanding of the field and the supervisor to read and assess their understanding of the literature. This can serve as the beginning of the literature review. You may choose to use bibliographic software (e.g., *Zotero*) in order to build your database. See the library for further suggestions. Other formats for the directed study can also be agreed upon by the student and supervisor and proposed to the Chair.

Students must complete the application for a directed study form that may be requested from Bonnie McDonald. The registration deadline is August 15<sup>th</sup> for a fall course, November 15<sup>th</sup> for a winter course, and April 15<sup>th</sup> for a summer course.

### **Foundations and Electives (Year 1)**

In addition to the first and second research courses, portfolio students may need to do a

foundations course (those who are enrolled in the Education for Change field) and five more electives. Students in one of the specializations in the Education for Change field must choose some of their electives from specific groups. Wherever possible, students should enroll in courses that will contribute to their knowledge of the portfolio topic.

### **Committee Member (Year 1)**

As students are ending their coursework and beginning the portfolio work (meaning, writing a portfolio proposal), they will need to discuss possible committee members with their supervisor. Committee members must have Faculty of Graduate Studies status with the Faculty of Education and be a full-time faculty member or an adjunct professor. In exceptional circumstances, a supervisor may propose Lakehead faculty members who do not meet these criteria to the Chair for consideration.

Once you have reached agreement, supervisors typically approach a faculty member to invite them to be the committee member on a thesis committee. Some supervisors may request that the student approaches the potential committee member. In either case, a supervisor and the committee member will have a discussion about how they want to proceed. Regardless of how often the committee member wishes to see the proposal, they should be aware of the methods to be used and be in agreement before the proposal is fully written. The committee should meet to agree upon the central components of the proposal, including the research question(s), literature review, and methods. The supervisor should let Bonnie McDonald know who is serving on the committee.

### **Developing a Proposal**

Students should meet with their supervisor during the last half of their coursework to narrow the focus and agree upon the overarching theme, the scope of the literature review, and the main tasks to be included and accomplished. Students can use the readings in courses and for assignments to begin to review the literature in the area of interest. This strategy will enable students to make the best use of their courses.

It is worth attending student presentations and the Graduate Education Students' Conference to evaluate ideas that are of interest and follow up the leads from the literature. Build a file of references, articles, and papers that might be useful in developing the proposal. Consult faculty members about ideas for the portfolio. Talk with other students. In consultation with a supervisor, students should be prepared to revise their idea and, quite possibly, to narrow the topic or problem further. Develop a realistic plan that can be accomplished in a reasonable time frame.

### **Deciding on Portfolio Tasks**

The portfolio must include a minimum of an introduction, literature review, description of how the task(s) were completed, and one task from, or similar to those in, the list that follows. Typically, portfolios also include a reflection on the process of their creation. The literature review must reflect the student's knowledge of scholarship relevant to the subject of their portfolio. What is selected for inclusion in the portfolio is at the discretion of the committee, guided by general principles of the program. For example, a video produced by a student which demonstrates an inquiry-based teaching method might be supported by a relevant literature review and a glossary of terms. It is recommended

that portfolios include a variety of components (creative, technical, and scholarly) such that a portfolio could include one creative component, one technical contribution, and one scholarly contribution, but this depends on the breadth and depth of the tasks. A list of suggested portfolio tasks follows:

- resource manual
- illustrated or non-illustrated children's story book
- proposal for a new curriculum- overview
- position paper ready for submission for consideration for publication to a field-based or scholarly journal
- policy manual on some administrative or other school matter, for example, a policy manual on school safety
- glossary of terms for a subject area
- application for funding (for example, research, school project, district-wide project, etc.)
- a play that teaches something
- a rebuttal or critique paper
- a collection of physical resources for teaching a specific topic within a discipline area
- an annotated bibliography of physical resources and artifacts for teaching a particular topic
- a policy analysis suitable for submission to a legislative body (for example, government, school board, etc.)
- an organizational analysis (for example, of a school board)
- a job shadow analysis of an administrative position
- a curriculum plan for a new subject area or particular topic
- a video or multimedia production as a teaching tool or policy resource
- development of a website
- a series of paintings accompanied by a research journal, all focused on a particular theme
- a music composition
- a resource kit on First Nations art/literature/music
- a resource kit on teaching an ethnically diverse class
- a resource kit for the special education teacher or teacher with special education students in the class
- a comparative education analysis

### **Planning the Proposal**

Once an overarching theme has been agreed upon by the student and supervisor, as well as the scope of the literature review, and the task(s), it will need to be approved by the committee member. Students should develop a backwards timeline (see Appendix B). The timeline will layout when students need to complete the different aspects of the portfolio. The following headings give a general outline of the steps.

### **Writing a Portfolio Proposal**

The portfolio proposal must provide:

1. an introduction

2. a literature review, including a compelling rationale for how the various tasks will make an original contribution to the specified field;
3. a description of the task(s) and the process that will be used in their creation
4. references; and
5. any other content considered by the committee to be important. As well, a vehicle for critical self-reflection should also be identified in the proposal; this might involve a self-assessment rubric or a reflective report on the effectiveness of the portfolio in achieving purposes, the effectiveness of the various processes engaged in, and questions or issues left unanswered.

The proposal and the portfolio tasks, where appropriate, must follow the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> edition) in matters of style.

If any of the tasks of the portfolio involve the collection of data on human subjects, the student must prepare a submission for the Research Ethics Board. This may be submitted once the portfolio proposal is approved by the committee.

### **Supervisor Feedback on the Proposal**

Students should consult with their supervisor to agree on when they will meet and how feedback will be obtained. After each meeting with a supervisor, it is good practice to send a brief email to confirm the next steps that have agreed upon. The Faculty of Graduate Studies suggests a turnaround time of 10 working days for student work once it goes to a supervisor or a committee member. However, it might be unreasonable to expect such turnaround for work delivered just prior to a planned holiday, and work that is unpolished usually takes longer. Supervisors may also send it back without a full read. While waiting for feedback on work submitted, there is almost always something else to work on!

Writing the proposal takes time and a number of exchanges of the draft with your supervisor will take place. Students are wise to bear in mind that feedback is meant to strengthen the work and is not an accusation of lack of ability or potential as an MEd scholar. While a supervisor may do some minor editing, it is not their role to copy edit, though it is their responsibility to not approve the work until the writing is very good. Students might consider finding someone, perhaps colleagues in the program, to read first drafts before sending them to their supervisor. Be sure to offer reciprocity.

### **Sending the First Clean Draft to the Committee Member**

Once the proposal is clean and ready to go (usually after three or four drafts), the supervisor asks the student to send it to the committee member. The committee member should be informed about when it is coming, and will endeavour to provide feedback within 10 working days.

Once the draft is returned with comments, the student and supervisor should speak and discuss the work involved in addressing the committee member's comments. The edited draft may need to be returned to the committee member one or more times, depending on the comments.

### **Signing Off on the Proposal**

When the supervisor and committee member are both satisfied that the proposal is clean and the proposed tasks feasible, they will sign off on the proposal using a form supplied by Bonnie McDonald.

### **Ethics Application (4-5 weeks)**

If a portfolio involves research and incorporates human subjects to participate in surveys and/ or interviews, students must apply for an ethics review by the Lakehead Senate Research Ethics Board (REB) through the *Romeo Research Portal* site (via [datatel/myInfo](http://datatel/myInfo)). Instructions on completing your application can be found at [here](#). The application must be approved before students can begin to gather data. Although students will write the ethics application and upload it to the system, the supervisor is the designated Principal Investigator (PI) in the system. They will need to approve it and submit to the Chair of the Graduate Department for approval. Once it is approved by the Chair or Chair's designate, it will be submitted to the REB for a full review.

Plan on one week for the Chair approval process for very clear and complete submissions, and an extra week under consideration for each time a resubmission is required. The REB usually takes three weeks, once their initial review is complete.

A YouTube instructional video can be found by searching 'Lakehead REB Ethics' on YouTube.

### **First Draft of Your Portfolio**

Once you have completed the portfolio tasks and assembled the portfolio, you can send the full first draft to your supervisor. Once this has gone back and forth with the supervisor until it is polished – and the supervisor agrees that the whole portfolio is complete – the supervisor will ask you to send it to the committee member. Providing committee members with advanced notice is always good practice. There may be one round or more of revisions. All revisions should be read by the supervisor and agreed upon before the work goes back to the committee.

### **Length of Portfolio**

A portfolio should not exceed one hundred (**100**) pages in length, inclusive of tasks, references, and appendices.

### **Style Requirements for Portfolios**

In preparing theses or portfolios, students should follow the standards of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> edition) (Washington, American Psychological Association, 2009). For questions concerning style requirements not covered here, consult this publication.

### **Approval of Portfolio**

When the supervisor and committee members are satisfied that a portfolio is complete, the Department of Graduate Studies and Research will prepare the "MEd Portfolio Report Form," for signature by the supervisor and committee member.

### **Final Portfolio**

The student shall submit a PDF to the Chair for review. If approved, the Chair arranges for the portfolio to be available publicly through the Lakehead Education Library. In some cases, physical copies of the portfolio may be required.

Students should send this official version to their supervisor and committee member for their records.

## Regulations and Forms During Your MEd

These forms are subject to change without notice. Graduate students should familiarize themselves with the General Graduate Regulations found on the website as well as the [Master of Education Regulations](#).

Ontario Visiting Graduate Students [Plan](#) [to take a graduate course at another Ontario university).

Research's Agreement Form

Applications for approval of a protocol from the Research Ethics Board are available through the Romeo Research Portal. Please log in by first logging into [myInfo](#).

Request for [Leave of Absence](#)

Request for [Time Extension](#)

Final Thesis [Process](#)

- Department Recommendation of Thesis Student
- Non-Exclusive License to Reproduce Thesis
- Graduate Studies Exit Survey

Graduate Conference [Forms](#) (see under "Forms for Graduate Students")

Travel Authorization Form and Travel Expense Statement. Scroll nearly to the bottom, [here](#).

[Forms](#) from Enrolment Services

## Appendix A:

### Ground Rules Checklist for Graduate Students and Supervisors

This checklist is recommended for use by graduate students and supervisors. It covers basic information that should be considered by both students and supervisors when they are developing a supervisory relationship.

Experienced graduate supervisors recommend that “ground rules” for interactions with students be established early and maintained throughout the supervisory period. These items should be discussed and clarified in the initial meeting.

- How frequently you will meet and why (data updates, literature reviews, etc.).
- The student’s role with regard to the data collection and analysis.
- The supervisor’s role with regard to the student’s data collection and analysis.
- Expectations concerning human subject research and requirements for ethical review.
- A timeline for the research program, data analysis, manuscript writing, and thesis writing.
- Presentations at conventions and meetings, including the Department of Graduate Studies and Research in Education Conference.
- Expectations concerning copy-editing of draft materials, and about seeking assistance with writing.
- Application funding sources and the duration of such funding.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

(Checklist adapted from *Handbook of Graduate Supervision*, Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of British Columbia)

## Appendix B: MEd Thesis Backwards Planning Exemplar

Deadline	Task
May 2015	Projected Graduation Date
May 1 <sup>st</sup> 2015	Final Copies Due in Faculty of Graduate Studies (check with Bonnie)
Mar. 15 <sup>th</sup> 2015	Thesis: External Examiner (reading and editing) – 4-6 weeks
Feb. 1 <sup>st</sup> 2015	Thesis: Internal Examiner (reading and editing) – 4-6 weeks
Dec. 15 <sup>th</sup> 2014	Committee Member (multiple drafts) – 4-6 weeks
Nov. 1 <sup>st</sup> 2014	First Full Draft to Supervisor (expect multiple drafts – minimum 4 weeks, often 8 to 12 weeks, sometimes more: note that 6 weeks is used here, assuming the supervisor has read pieces along the way and the first full draft is already in very good shape)
Oct. 1 <sup>st</sup> 2014	Writing (This varies greatly. Four weeks of intense writing is assumed here.)
Aug. 15 <sup>th</sup> 2014	Thesis (Qualitative/Quantitative/Mixed) Data Collection & Analysis (This varies greatly. Some research might require observation of a group over a semester, while other research gathers data via a paper survey at a single event. Six weeks is assumed here, but much more time may be needed, for example if you are recruiting participants and are transcribing interviews yourself.)
July 1 <sup>st</sup> 2014	If Human Subjects: Ethics Approval – 4-5 weeks for Chair & then University REB, considerably more if external organizations like school boards are involved, or if submission is initially incomplete or imprecise
May 1 <sup>st</sup> 2014	Proposal Full Draft – 8 weeks (often longer) from first full draft Approval of Chair Committee Member (multiple drafts) Supervisor (multiple drafts)
	Selection of Topic, Supervisor and Committee Member
	Courses (6 for thesis, 8 for portfolio)

NOTE: Some of these timelines are minimums (e.g., sometimes more drafts are required by the supervisor and committee member) so you may want to build in extra time if you know, for example, that you have writing challenges. Also, you will need to consult with your supervisor to determine an appropriate length of time for ethics, data collection, analysis, and writing as the nature of your thesis will in part determine these. Sometimes stages may go faster.

## MEd Portfolio Backwards Planning Exemplar

Deadline	Task
May 2015	Projected Graduation Date
May 1 <sup>st</sup> 2015	Final Copies Due in Faculty of Graduate Studies (check with Bonnie)
April 15 <sup>th</sup> 2015	Portfolio: Graduate Chair approval – 1-2 weeks
Mar. 1 <sup>st</sup> 2015	Committee Member (multiple drafts) – 4-6 weeks
Jan. 15 <sup>th</sup> 2015	First Full Draft to Supervisor (expect multiple drafts – minimum 4 weeks, often 8 to 12 weeks, sometimes more: note that 6 weeks is used here, assuming the supervisor has read pieces along the way and the first full draft is already in very good shape)
Dec. 1 <sup>st</sup> 2014	Creation of Task or Tasks (This varies greatly. Six weeks is assumed here, but some things would take more).
Oct. 15 <sup>th</sup> 2014	If Human Subjects: Ethics Approval – 4-5 weeks for Chair and then University REB, considerably more if external organizations like school boards are involved, or if submission is initially incomplete or imprecise
Aug. 15 <sup>th</sup> 2014	Proposal Full Draft – minimum 8 weeks (often longer) from first full draft Approval of Chair Committee Member (multiple drafts) Supervisor (multiple drafts)
	Selection of Topic, Supervisor and Committee Member
	Courses (6 for thesis, 8 for portfolio)

NOTE: Some of these timelines are minimums (e.g., sometimes more drafts are required by the supervisor and committee member) so you may want to build in extra time if you know, for example, that you have writing challenges. Also, you will need to consult with your supervisor to determine an appropriate length of time for ethics, data collection, analysis, and writing as the nature of your thesis will in part determine these. Sometimes stages may go faster