

Introduction to the Program

The PhD degree program in Language and Literacy Education is designed for students engaging in applied research in language education, language study, literacy, and the teaching of literature. The program consists of course work, comprehensive examinations, a research proposal, and a dissertation. Examples of research areas in the Department are: bilingual education, second language education, socio-cultural dimensions of literacy learning, early reading and writing development, early language development, oral language in the classroom, drama in education, literacy across cultures, multi-modal and digital literacies, post-structuralist critical theory, written composition, language assessment, the role of children's literature in language and literacy, and educational linguistics.

The PhD in Language and Literacy Education is governed by the policies of the Faculty of Graduate Studies which are described, in part, in [The University of British Columbia Calendar](#) and on the [Faculty of Graduate Studies \(FoGS\) website](#). This Handbook offers a description of the PhD degree program specific to LLED students. General guidelines for UBC doctoral students are provided throughout this text with links to the FoGS website.

Organization of the Program

The Department of Language and Literacy Education (LLED) is organized into the general fields of applied language studies (Modern Languages Education, Teaching English as a Second Language) and literacy studies (Reading, Writing, Literature, Drama, and Multimodal and Digital Literacies). Language and Literacy Education PhD programs are designed and supervised by scholars in the various specializations in the Department.

Assignment/Selection of a Supervisor

When students are admitted to the program, a pro tem supervisor is identified in the notification letter to assist the student in planning a program of studies. The student's supervisor is a faculty member who has been selected by the Department to meet the expressed academic interests of the student. The Graduate Committee welcomes a student's recommendation for a supervisor in the effort to provide qualified and capable supervision. A meeting with the Graduate Academic Advisor and the student's pro tem supervisor can be arranged prior to or at the beginning of the student's first semester to discuss any changes in supervision.

The [supervisor is responsible for](#) ensuring that the student's program is conducted in accordance with all University and Faculty regulations. The supervisor plays a major role in designing a graduate program with the student, recommending a suitable supervisory committee, writing letters of support on the student's behalf, as well as overseeing the comprehensive examinations and the dissertation defense. The [responsibilities as a student](#) include understanding and accepting the rules, procedures and standards in place in the program and at the university. The pro tem supervisor typically becomes the student's research supervisor after the completion of the comprehensive examinations unless the student notifies the Language & Literacy Education Graduate Academic Advisor that a change of supervisors is desirable. Students wishing to [change supervisors](#) during their program should meet with the Language and Literacy Education Graduate Academic Advisor to discuss the availability of supervisions. For further

information please consult the [Handbook of Graduate Supervision](#) and the [Advising and Supervision](#) section on the Faculty of Graduate Studies website.

Registration and Residency

Students must be registered continuously during their entire program. The University Calendar describes the procedures and current fee structures which are set on a per-degree rather than a per-course basis. Students have six years to graduate in the doctoral program, with [extensions granted](#) only under exceptional circumstances. A one-year parental leave from the program is available, and other requests for leaves, when based on very special circumstances, will be considered. Students who, for health or personal reasons, must interrupt their studies should apply for [On-Leave Status](#). The period of leave is not counted toward time to completion.

The doctoral program requires that students be enrolled "a minimum of two sessions of uninterrupted duration of at least eight months in full-time status at the university." "[Full-time](#)" study is defined as not having outside employment commitments, such as a Teaching Assistantship, that exceed 12 hours per week. Although it can often raise serious impediments for the successful completion of a degree, a modified residency that consists of 12 consecutive months on campus can be requested at the time of application, if the student has completed a thesis-based MA and submits a detailed plan of study to the Department Graduate Advisor.

Supervisory Committee

The supervisor typically serves as the chair of the student's [supervisory committee](#). The committee, which is assembled by student and supervisor in the first year or second year of the student's program, should include at least two other faculty members. The members can be drawn from outside of Language and Literacy Education, as well as outside of the Faculty of Education, in the interests of extending the range of competencies represented by the committee. The major task of the supervisory committee is to supervise and evaluate the comprehensive examinations, dissertation research proposal, and dissertation. Students can seek changes in the composition of their committees through consultation with the supervisor and/or Graduate Academic Advisor.

All students are required to complete and submit an LLED Annual Doctoral Student Academic Progress Report and Plan to the department. An e-mail reminder with the progress report form attached is typically sent out at the beginning of April with the report due at the end of May (exact date is indicated on the form). Four-year fellowship holders are required to submit an [additional progress report](#) to the Faculty of Graduate Studies, available on the FoGS website.

Graduate Research & Teaching Assistantships

Student Service Appointments are intended to help highly qualified students of UBC meet the cost of their studies at the university, as well as to assist the University in meeting its educational and research objectives. In LLED, student appointments such as [Graduate Teaching Assistant](#) (GTA) or [Graduate Research Assistant](#) (GRA) may involve part-time duties in teaching, research, or other academic activities. While both appointments are coordinated and administered at the graduate program level, the conditions of appointment as a Graduate Teaching Assistant are governed by the collective agreement between the University and CUPE Local 2278. Normally, only those students registered full-time in the Faculty of Graduate Studies are eligible.

Further information is available in the [Working while Studying](#) section, under [Policies & Procedures](#), and as part of [Scholarships, Awards, and Funding](#) on the FoGS website. Specific information regarding the

type of work, rates of pay, hours, and potential authorship credit should be discussed with the student's supervisor(s) and relevant faculty members of the graduate program.

Intellectual Property, Scholarly Integrity, & Digital Archiving

The [Intellectual Property Guide](#) provides a comprehensive description of students' right and responsibilities and academic practices concerning intellectual property, including information about [Joint Authorship](#) and [Publication](#) of one's research. [University policies](#) regarding scholarly integrity and research can also be found in the "Student Responsibilities" section of the FoGS website. Information regarding digital archiving for increased visibility of one's research publications consult [cIRcle](#), UBC's institutional repository.

SSHRC or Affiliated Fellowships

Graduate students at the doctoral level are greatly encouraged to apply for a [SSHRC](#) (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Grant) or [Affiliated Fellowships](#) as well as some of the internally- and externally funded [awards](#) offered at UBC. A complete list of awards is available in pdf format on the Department website. General information about Graduate Student funding is provided by the [Office of Graduate Programs and Research](#). The OGPR organizes information sessions on the SSHRC and UBC Scholarship competitions. The workshops are usually available in July and before the September departmental deadlines. The OGPR also offers one-on-one guidance on navigating SSHRC and affiliated award forms. Students can sign up for a 0.5-hour session with a Graduate Academic Assistant (GAA) for help on the online UGF applications. To book an appointment, please email ogpr@interchange.ubc.ca. LLED faculty members generally also offer SSHRC application feedback to graduate students during a session in September organized by the Graduate Academic Advisor. Other resources include recent SSHRC/Affiliated Awards [Information Booklets](#) as well as the [SSHRC website](#). You may also want to consult a document entitled [Applying Successfully for Graduate Scholarship Funding](#).

Advancement to Candidacy

Overview

The basic requirements for a doctoral student to be admitted to candidacy are:

- 1) All required coursework has been [successfully completed](#)
- 2) The comprehensive examination has been passed
- 3) The dissertation research proposal has been officially approved

The Faculty of Graduate Studies requires that all PhD students be advanced to [Candidacy](#) **no later than 36 months** after initial registration in the PhD program. For further information regarding comprehensive exams and candidacy please consult the Faculty of Graduate Studies [Policies and Procedures](#).

Part 1: Completion of Course Work

Students in the [Doctoral program](#) in Language and Literacy Education work with their supervisor and

supervisory committee in designing a program of coursework that both provides a focus to their studies, and supports breadth in the student's general area of inquiry. Information regarding [course registration](#) is outlined in the Faculty of Graduate Studies Policies and Procedures. In LLED, the common core to the program is composed of the two Language & Literacy Education doctoral seminars (LLED 601 and LLED 602,). Additional coursework is taken over a one-to-two year period. PhD students in LLED programs are required to complete successfully a *minimum* of 18 credits of coursework, which includes the doctoral seminars. Methods courses (9-12 credits) are strongly recommended, but not required. It is recommended that student consult with their pro-tem supervisors with regard to other courses the student and supervisory committee deem necessary for the purposes of the student's research and program goals. The course work, as it relates to the dissertation topic and proposed research method, as well as expanding the student's general academic preparation, should be drawn from both within and outside of the Faculty of Education in an effort to extend the intellectual reach of the [student's program](#).

Part 2: Comprehensive Examination

Purpose

A [comprehensive examination](#) is required by the Faculty of Graduate Studies in all doctoral programs. This examination is intended to assess students' analytical, problem-solving and critical interpretative abilities, their breadth and in-depth knowledge of the discipline, their ability to conduct independent and original empirical research and their degree of preparation for their thesis research to follow. The comprehensive examination usually takes place within two years (24 months) from the date of initial registration. Students are expected to work independently to complete this examination.

Examination Format Options

In the Department of Language and Literacy Education, students, in consultation with their supervisory committee, select from one of three options:

Option A: Comprehensive paper

The function of this paper is to present a comprehensive theoretical framework for research in the student's area of interest. Such a framework is based on a commitment to theoretical discussion, that is, to discuss the nature and implications of research philosophies (e.g., ontologies, epistemologies) and an associated logics of enquiry (e.g., deductive/theory-driven; inductive/data-driven; narrative; eclectic), in close relation to the field of interest. The theoretical framework typically engages commensurate analytical and/or empirical approach(es); however, articulation of a specific research methodology is not expected. The more general function of this paper is to provide evidence of the student's ability to write a sustained, coherent theoretical discussion or argument in the field of the proposed research. The student, in consultation with the Doctoral supervisory committee, determines the topic for the paper before any writing begins. The student should also provide an initial reading list. The final paper should be approximately 10,000-12,000 words. Its key function is to provide evidence of the student's ability to write a sustained, coherent discussion or argument in the field of the proposed research. Along with the comprehensive paper, students are also expected to submit their curriculum vitae. The CV is intended to provide the committee with information about the student's background preparation and overall progress, which will help determine how the student's profile might be strengthened.

Option B: Research Portfolio

The portfolio option is conceptualized as a pragmatic opportunity for students to re-develop and/or extend work papers completed for courses into more rigorous scholarly work that will inform, situate, or scaffold their eventual dissertation research. The portfolio should consist of 2-3 relevant papers written during PhD studies. Papers should be selected in consultation with the supervisory committee, and can include a relevant pilot study, manuscripts submitted for publication (usually single authored, although co-authored is acceptable as outlined below), a paper prepared for a refereed conference presentation, an extended literature review on a relevant topic, etc.. In cases where co-authored articles are included, the following section from the Faculty of Graduate Studies policy on manuscript-based theses will apply. A statement emphasizing details of the student's contribution as co-author and stating the proportion of research and writing conducted by the student needs to be included. The statement should include details about the student's contribution to the following:

- Identification and design of the research program
- Performance of the various parts of the research
- Analysis of the research data
- Preparation of manuscripts, if any

The portfolio requires an introduction and a conclusion (approximately 20-30 pages) or a situated reflective piece as agreed upon by the committee (approximately 20-30 pages). These can be written as narrative pieces. The introduction should explain the contents of the portfolio, including how the individual papers are related (e.g., conceptually and/or methodologically) and how the work represents the student's growth and development as a scholar. The conclusion should address the significance of the papers in the portfolio including the contributions they make to theory, policy, and/or pedagogy. Papers included in the portfolio should not also be duplicated in a manuscript-style thesis. Students who opt for Option B are also expected to submit their curriculum vitae as part of the portfolio. The CV is intended to provide the committee with information about the student's background preparation and overall progress, which will help determine how the student's profile might be strengthened.

Option C: Three related papers

Prior to September 2010, all students in LLED were required to complete three comprehensive papers, as outlined below. This remains an option for current students and may be suitable for those who are still working on narrowing the focus of their dissertation research or for those who require a more encompassing or in-depth review of the literature with which to situate their research focus. Students who choose this option are also expected to submit their curriculum vitae. The student, in consultation with the Doctoral supervisory committee, determines the research questions for the three papers before any writing begins. The student may propose the three topics, draft possible questions, or present outlines of each paper for the committee's input. The student should also provide initial reading lists. Normally, each paper is 7,500-10,000 words. The papers typically cover the following three general areas:

- 1) The student's area of specialization within Language and Literacy Education
- 2) One additional area or group of areas of special interest
- 3) Appropriate research methodology

Timing of the Comprehensive Exam

Students meet with their supervisory committee ahead of time to confirm their readiness for the comprehensive examination, choose an option, explore and identify questions, and suggest timing and sequence

of the exam. Optimally, this meeting will take place at some point during the student's second year of PhD studies. (Students are encouraged to begin planning for their comprehensive exams early on in their PhD studies, in consultation with the supervisor, with the understanding that plans may change).

The entire exam typically takes 3 to 4 months to complete. Each paper is expected to be of publishable quality; indeed, students are encouraged to view this as an opportunity to publish one or more papers in an academic journal. The comprehensive papers should be circulated to the supervisory committee 2-3 weeks prior to a scheduled closed session examination meeting with the supervisory committee and the doctoral student.

Committee Evaluation of Comprehensive Examination

Supervisory committee members generally review the comprehensive exam(s) and decide by consensus whether it is an Unconditional Pass, Conditional Pass, or Fail. Committee members and the student meet to discuss the assessment and reasons for the decision reached by the examination committee, including strengths and weaknesses of the exam. Examiners from outside the students' graduate program are sometimes consulted if the student's area of interest falls within the 'outside' examiner's expertise. An Unconditional Pass means that the student can begin writing the dissertation research proposal and prepare for the proposal presentation. If a student receives a Conditional Pass, the requirements to achieve an unconditional pass will be provided to the student in writing by the examination committee. Expected standards of achievement and times for completion should also be included.

Part 3: Dissertation Proposal and Presentation

After the coursework and comprehensive examinations, the research design for the dissertation is brought together in the form of a proposal and presented in a public forum.

Purpose

Each PhD student is required to prepare a dissertation research proposal for his or her Supervisory Committee. The proposal outlines the theoretical framework, research design, and methodology of the dissertation research in order to demonstrate that the research will be conducted in an ethical manner and generate data in response to the research questions. Its main purpose is to demonstrate that the proposed research is significant and that it is manageable within the scope of the program.

The purpose of the presentation is the examination of the candidate on the research proposal and related material in the area of study. It is intended to help students refine their research design, theorizing, methodology, and data analysis, and to gain experience in presenting and defending their work. The presentation also provides an important forum for apprenticing new graduate students into the research process.

Proposal Format

Your dissertation research proposal should be developed in consultation with your supervisor and committee. The proposal normally includes: introduction to the topic, statement of the research problem, research questions, theoretical framework, review of the research literature and the context for the work, methodology, and significance and limitations of the study. Including a time line and summary of the scope of each chapter of the thesis is also recommended. Typically, the proposal should be about 40 pages in length (excluding references).

Presentation and Examination

The research proposal presentation and examination is scheduled at the convenience of the supervisory committee and the student. An abstract of the research proposal (500 words) will be made available to graduate students and faculty members of the Department as part of a public announcement of the event at least one week prior to the presentation and examination. The examination begins with an oral presentation by the student of approximately 20 minutes. The presentation is followed by questions from the supervisory committee. An opportunity for audience members to ask questions and make comments will also be provided. Following the question session, the audience and the student will be excused and the supervisory committee will meet in-camera to make a decision about approval of the proposal. The written proposal, the public presentation, and the examination will be considered in reaching a decision.

Because the proposal presentation and examination are the final step before advancement to candidacy, the committee also typically decides on admission to candidacy during this in-camera meeting. Formative feedback on the student's CV may also be provided at this time.

Advancement to Candidacy

In the Department of Language and Literacy Education, Advancement to Candidacy occurs when the student has completed all required course work, passed the comprehensive examination (a pass on all papers in the set is required), and had the research proposal approved. As soon as the student satisfies all requirements, the graduate program recommends to the Faculty of Graduate Studies that the student be admitted to candidacy. This status is then entered on the University's Student Information System (SISC). "Advancement to candidacy" and the date that this status was met will appear on the student's transcript.

PhD Dissertation

Conceptualizing the project, conducting the research, and writing the dissertation should be done in close consultation with the student's advisor and supervisory committee. The regulations governing [Dissertation and Thesis Preparation](#) are described on the Faculty of Graduate Studies' website and include formatting guidelines, thesis samples, and tutorial information. [Submission deadlines](#) for doctoral dissertations are found in the Policies and Procedures section.

All research involving human subjects must receive ethical approval from the university's [Behavioural Research Ethics Board \(BREB\)](#). Before submitting an application for Human Ethics Approval, you must register with [Researcher Information Services \(RISe\)](#) and complete an introductory online tutorial to assist you in the management of the application process through the Office of Research Services.

Given the variety of disciplines in which students work in this program, the program does not follow a single style guide for scholarly writing, although, the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA)* (most recent online or print edition) is recommended as one that is used by many of the academic journals in education. There are also a number of commercial guidebooks to dissertation writing available in the UBC Bookstore. Recent dissertations from LLED students are available on the [Department website](#). In addition, students' theses and dissertations can be found in the [Theses Canada Portal](#) or [Proquest Dissertations and Theses](#) among the "[Research Tools](#)" of the Education Library website. In writing course papers and dissertations, students are expected to use gender neutral language according to APA guidelines by consulting the [Guidelines for Non-sexist Language in APA Journals](#).

The [UBC regulation on plagiarism](#) is laid out by the Provost and Vice President Academic. The Faculty of

Graduate Studies defines plagiarism as follows: *Plagiarism is intellectual theft. It occurs when an individual submits or presents the oral or written work of another person as his or her own. [This definition, taken from the UBC Calendar](#), applies to draft work and oral presentations as well as to final submissions. Failing to properly cite the work of another also constitutes plagiarism, even if it is accidental.* For further information about [plagiarism](#) please consult the FoGS website.

Dissertation Defense

The Final Doctoral Examination is an integral part of the PhD. It is also an inherently complex process to navigate. During their final year of completing the dissertation, Doctoral Candidates are asked to read in its entirety the [Final Doctoral Examination Guide](#) provided by the Faculty of Graduate Studies. The Guide includes detailed information about the composition of the Examination Committee, the selection and role of the External Examiner, the submission and distribution of the dissertation, and all aspects of the oral defence. It is recommended that students download and use the Oral Exam [Checklist and Timeline Worksheet](#) and to be aware of [Doctoral Deadlines](#). Finally, students are encouraged to communicate their expectations for completion to the Faculty of Graduate Studies in collaboration with their research supervisor and committee. Guidelines for post-defense submission of theses include important information about the [doctoral documents required](#) for the final submission as well as for the [electronic submission](#) of dissertations.

Graduation Procedures

Please check the [Graduation](#) section of the Faculty of Graduate Studies website for procedures and important dates. Note that graduate students must register for the session during which they wish to graduate by applying online on the [Student Services website](#).

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