Inter-University PhD in Educational Studies



Doctoral Student Handbook

2026

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Preface

This handbook is a guide to the PhD in Educational Studies. The information herein closely parallels that provided at the PhD website (http://www.nsphdeducation.ca). It provides information about the program itself, followed by information on *how to apply for the program* and then other sections on policies and procedures that pertain to those who have been admitted into the degree program. Information in this document is subject to change.

For additional queries not addressed in this handbook, applicants or students should contact either the Doctoral Program Office (902-457-6564) or their home institutions' Doctoral Program Coordinator.

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Part I — Description of Doctoral Program

General Overview

The doctoral program (PhD) in Educational Studies is collaboratively offered by three Nova Scotian universities - Acadia University, Mount Saint Vincent University, and St. Francis Xavier University. The degree was approved by the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC) in 2009 and launched in July 2011. Students are admitted to one university, the home of their Supervisor, and receive a degree from that university. The coursework and degree requirements are identical across the participating universities and have been approved by each respective Senate. All students complete a 14-month, full-time residency together, and may be followed with one-to-five additional years of directed study (full- or part-time) with their Supervisor and committee. The formal course component of the program is delivered both onsite (normally during July) and via an e-learning platform (fall and winter). The Portfolio, Proposal, and Dissertation are completed through the respective home institutions, with students working closely with their Supervisor and committee.

Academic Calendars

Each participating university has calendar entries for the doctoral program:
Acadia University http://gradstudies.acadiau.ca/programs.html
Mount Saint Vincent University http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/programsdepartments/graduatecalendar/default.aspx
St. Francis Xavier University http://www.mystfx.ca/academic/graduate-studies/

Educational Researchers

Although students anchor their studies in one or more themes (see below), this program prepares doctoral students to be educational researchers. It is a PhD in Educational Studies, not a PhD in any of the themes. Put simply, graduates receive a *PhD in Educational Studies*, not a PhD in Literacies or a PhD in Lifelong Learning, for example. The collection of five core courses for the degree (GEDU 9001-9005/EDUC 8013-8053) grounds doctoral students in *research* foundations, methodologies, theories and methods (see Table 1), all required to be an educational researcher. The intellectual foundation provided in these core courses provides transferable skills for any future research endeavour, not just that completed during doctoral studies. The intent of the program is to graduate doctorates who are able to design, generate, and communicate research germane to educational studies. Doctoral students internalize the philosophies, theories, competencies, and processes inherent in scholarly inquiries related to education, using one or more themes (below) as their focus *while* in the doctoral program. In lieu of content-specific courses, it is assumed that doctoral students will engage with theme-specific content in GEDU 9004/EDUC 8043 (*Focused Educational Studies Seminar*), their Portfolio, and their actual Dissertation (described elsewhere in the handbook).

Table 1 - Doctoral Program Courses

GEDU 9001/ EDUC 8013	GEDU 9002/ EDUC 8023	GEDU 9003/ EDUC 8033	GEDU 9004/ EDUC 8043	GEDU 9005/ EDUC 8053	GEDU 9006 and 9007/ EDUC 8063/ 8073	GEDU 9008 and 9009/EDUC 8083/8093	GEDU 9010/ EDUC 8109	GEDU 9100/ EDUC 899Z & 8990
Foundations of Educational Inquiry	Methodological Perspectives in Educational Research	Doctoral Seminar: Contemporary Educational Theory	Focused Educational Studies	Advanced Research Seminar: Focus on Methods	Special Topics	Independent Study	Comprehensive Research/ Scholarly Portfolio	Dissertation (and Proposal)

Program Objectives

The Inter-University Doctoral Program in Educational Studies has four overarching objectives:



Figure 1 — PhD Program Objectives

A. *Provide Nova Scotia-based Educational Leadership*

- establish a Nova Scotia-based educational research presence at the doctoral level that is competitive with innovative national and international PhD programs;
- promote a climate of education-related research and advanced study that will develop human resources in the Atlantic region, leading to an advanced research base in educational studies in the province and beyond;

B. *Utilize and Augment Existing Research Capacities*

- build upon the existing research capacity and strengths of faculty in education (and other disciplines) to attract, develop and retain high calibre doctoral candidates;
- use the collective resources of Nova Scotia higher education programs for doctoral level study in education through a collaborative model of participation and governance;
- afford a basis for collaboration amongst scholars in other disciplines at the three universities and other provincial institutions (foster inter-university and -institutional links);

C. *Ensure Integrity and Academic Excellence*

- ensure that the program of study continues to adhere to national quality assurance standards;
- recruit, attract and select the top doctoral candidates in educational research regionally, nationally, and internationally;
- provide a rigorous learning context that develops the research and intellectual capacities of doctoral candidates to ensure academic excellence and program completion;

D. *Model Collaboration and Innovation*

- maintain and enhance a comprehensive doctoral program permeated by a culture of collaborative scholarship within a coordinated research community that is marked by innovation and leadership in educational studies; and,
- contribute to the renewal of the professorate and educational leadership in Nova Scotia.

Program Oversight, Administration, Governance and Funding

The doctoral program is jointly administered, meaning every aspect of its operation is negotiated collaboratively through a consensus approach by the three participating universities. A summary of the main components of the organizational structure is set out below (see Figure 2):

Administration

- Each partner university has an elected/appointed Doctoral Program Coordinator and faculty representative. They are all members of the Schools or Faculties of Education.
- The day-to-day operations of the degree are overseen by the Inter-University Doctoral Administrative Committee (the IDAC). This committee comprises the Doctoral Program Coordinators and faculty representatives noted above. The appointed Chair of IDAC serves a three-year term.
- A Doctoral Program Office is supported by a full-time Administrative Assistant at Mount Saint Vincent University.

Governance

- The Inter-University Doctoral Governance Committee (IDGC, herein the Governance Committee) monitors the quality of the doctoral program and attends to policies and fiscal affairs. It comprises the three Vice Presidents (Academic) and the Chair of IDAC.

Funding

- The Inter-University Doctoral Program is financially supported through tuition, faculty research grants, and student scholarships and bursaries.

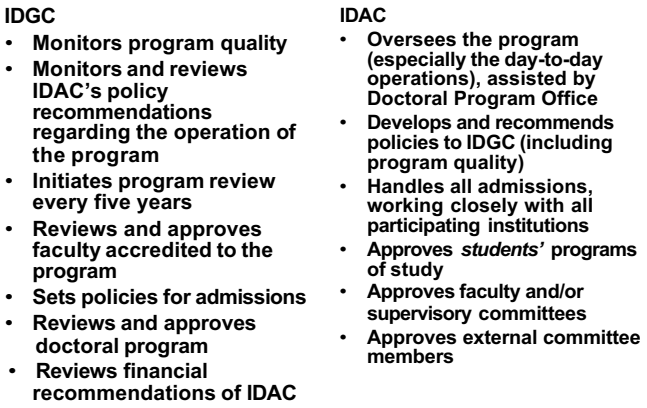

Figure 2 — PhD Administrative and Governance Structure

Degree Description (Courses and Research Requirements)

The course and research requirements for the degree total a minimum of 7 units (42 credit hours) comprising: (a) 2.5 units or 15 credit hours of course work (more if deemed necessary at time of admission), (b) a 1.5 unit or 9 credit hour Comprehensive Portfolio (with attendant examination), (c) and a 3 unit or 18 credit hour Dissertation (includes Proposal). Students may also take (and may be required to take) Special Topics and Independent Studies, if deemed necessary at admission.

As part of the admissions process (Letter of Intent), and based on their scholarly work to date, applicants declare their intention to undertake doctoral work within one or more of six themes or fields of study (described elsewhere in the handbook).

The following text describes each course and when and how it is offered (see Table 2). Course descriptions as they appear in the graduate calendars follow:

- *Foundations of Educational Inquiry*
  (first summer, face-to-face, rotating sites, 0.5 units/3 credit hours)
- *Methodological Perspectives on Educational Research*
  (first summer, face-to-face, rotating sites, 0.5 units/3 credit hours)
- *Doctoral Seminar: Contemporary Educational Theory*
  (0.5 units/3 credit hours, first fall, via e-learning platform)
- *Focused Educational Studies*
  (first fall, via e-learning platform, 0.5 units/3 credit hours)
- *Advanced Research Seminar: Focus on Methods*
  (first winter, via e-learning platform, 0.5 units/3 credit hours)
- *Special Topics*
  (first fall and first winter, perhaps second summer, as required/elected, via e-learning platform)
- *Independent Study*
  (first fall and first winter, perhaps second summer, as required/elected, via e-learning platform)
- *Comprehensive Portfolio*
  (1.5 units/9 credit hours started first summer and normally completed by the second summer (over 14 months, full-time residency), in consultation with Supervisor and committee)
- *Dissertation (includes Proposal)*
  (The second summer through to the third summer [12 months] is dedicated to preparing and defending the Proposal; then, within an additional three- to four-year timeframe, students complete and defend their Dissertation; extensions are possible) - 3 units/18 credit hours
- Residency requires 14 months full-time (completing six courses [i.e., 5 courses and portfolio]; 4 units/24 credit hours) and any Special Topics or Independent Studies) and then up to three to four years full- or part-time completing Proposal and the Dissertation.

Table 2 — Residency, Student Timetable and Program Delivery Mode

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4">Year One (14 month residency, full-time)
Normally, Supervisory Committee will be constituted by June 30th of the first year.
Courses will rotate among the three universities and will be offered through a combination of onsite and the Inter-University Distance e-Learning platform</td><td>Entire degree must be completed within 6 years</td></tr>
<tr><td>Summer Semester (On-site)</td><td>Fall Semester (E-Distance)</td><td>Winter Semester (E-Distance)</td><td>Summer Semester (2)</td><td rowspan="8">GEDU 9100/EDUC 899Z/8990
Dissertation and Oral Defence

(3 units/18 credit hours)

Normally completed within 2-4 years after defending Portfolio</td></tr>
<tr><td>GEDU 9001/EDUC 8013
Foundations of Educational Inquiry

(.5 unit/3 credit hours)</td><td>GEDU 9003/EDUC 8033
Doctoral Seminar: Contemporary Educational Theory

(.5 unit/3 credit hours)</td><td rowspan="2">GEDU 9005/EDUC 8053
Advanced Research Seminar: Focus on Methods

(.5 units/3 credit hours)</td><td rowspan="3">GEDU 9010/EDUC 8109
Comprehensive Portfolio Examination

(1.5 units/9 credit hours)

Normally, by July 1st of the 2nd year, submit and complete Portfolio to Supervisory Committee for oral examination

Normally have 6-12 months after Portfolio Examination to successfully defend Proposal</td></tr>
<tr><td>GEDU 9002/EDUC 8023
Methodological Perspectives in Educational Research

(.5 unit/3 credit hours)</td><td>GEDU 9004/EDUC 8043
Focused Educational Studies

(.5 unit/3 credit hours)</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2">At the time of admission it will be determined if the applicant needs elective courses:</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>GEDU 9006/EDUC 8063
Special Topics
and/or
GEDU 9008/EDUC 8083
Directed Study

(1 x .5 unit/3 credit hours)</td><td>GEDU 9007/EDUC 8073
Special Topics
and/or
GEDU 9009/EDUC 8093
Directed Study

(1 x .5 unit/3 credit hours)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">GEDU 9010/EDUC 8109
Assembly of Comprehensive Research/Scholarly Portfolio
(in consultation with Supervisor and Supervisory Committee)

1.5 units/9 credit hours</td></tr>
</table>

Calendar Course Descriptions

All Students must take GEDU 9001-9005, 9010 and 9100/EDUC 8013-8053, 8109 and 899Z/8990. Additional Special Topics and/or Independent Studies will be determined at the time of admission, and will be specified in the *Final Program of Study* form. Students may opt to complete Special Topics and/or Independent Studies if it augments their program of study. All of these courses are included in the program-tuition fees.

GEDU 9001/EDUC 8013
Foundations of Educational Inquiry 0.5 unit/3 credit hours
Co-requisite: GEDU 9001/EDUC 8013 is a co-requisite of GEDU 9002/EDUC 8023. GEDU 9001/EDUC 8013 is a pre-requisite for the remaining courses in the program.
An examination of the purpose, process, nature and ideals of education. Students engage with enduring educational philosophical and theoretical traditions and perspectives, the history of educational thought and the philosophy of education, in particular. A variety of foundational perspectives provide deeper understandings of the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of education.

GEDU 9002/EDUC 8023
Methodological Perspectives on Educational Research 0.5 unit/3 credit hours
Co-requisite: GEDU 9002/EDUC 8023 is a co-requisite of GEDU 9001/EDUC 8013. It is a pre-requisite for the remaining courses in the program.
An examination of the import of methodological paradigms in educational research (building on the foundations of educational inquiry). Students investigate: (a) ontological assumptions; (b) epistemological views; (c) the role of logic, sound evidence and justified beliefs; (d) axiology (values and biases); and, (e) rhetorical (research reporting structures) components of educational inquiry.

GEDU 9003/EDUC 8033
Doctoral Seminar: Contemporary Educational Theory 0.5 unit/3 credit hours
Prerequisites: GEDU 9001/EDUC 8013: Foundations of Educational Inquiry and GEDU 9002/EDUC 8023: Methodological Perspectives on Educational Research. GEDU 9004/EDUC 8043 Focused Educational Studies is a co-requisite of GEDU 9003/EDUC 8033.
An exploration of how educational philosophy, research paradigms and theories are manifested in contemporary educational research debates and dialogues. Through an intensive examination of a range of theories that inform studies in education, students gain an advanced and comprehensive understanding of contemporary educational theory within the Canadian and international contexts.

GEDU 9004/EDUC 8043
Focused Educational Studies 0.5 unit/3 credit hours
Prerequisites: GEDU 9001/EDUC 8013: Foundations of Educational Inquiry and GEDU 9002/EDUC 8023: Methodological Perspectives on Educational Research. GEDU 9003/EDUC 8033: Contemporary Educational Theories is a co-requisite of GEDU 9004.
A focused exploration of research topics reflective of the current roster of doctoral students. In a seminar setting, individual students study the research and theoretical literature in the educational area(s) that background and inform their research interests.



GEDU 9005/EDUC 8053
Advanced Research Seminar: Focus on Methods 0.5 unit/3 credit hours
Prerequisites: GEDU 9001/EDUC 8013: Foundations of Educational Inquiry and GEDU 9002/EDUC 8023: Methodological Perspectives on Educational Research.
Students gain detailed knowledge and technical expertise related to methods appropriate to their research question(s), aligned with philosophical and methodological orientations. Issues related to research design process are addressed, as they differ from method to method.

GEDU 9006/EDUC 8063
Special Topics Educational Studies 0.5 unit/3 credit hours
GEDU 9007/EDUC 8073
Special Topics Educational Studies 0.5 unit/3 credit hours
Prerequisites: GEDU 9001/EDUC 8013: Foundations of Educational Inquiry and GEDU 9002/EDUC 8023: Methodological Perspectives on Educational Research.
An exploration of a selected topic in educational studies to provide students with detailed knowledge and further preparation for advanced research.

GEDU 9008/EDUC 8083
Independent Study 0.5 unit/3 credit hours
GEDU 9009/EDUC 8093
Independent Study 0.5 unit/3 credit hours
Prerequisites: GEDU 9001/EDUC 8013: Foundations of Educational Inquiry and GEDU 9002: Methodological Perspectives on Educational Research.
An Independent Study related to topics in educational studies. The curriculum for this course will be determined by the Supervisor of the course in consultation with the student and other faculty members, as necessary.

GEDU 9010/EDUC 8109
Comprehensive Examination: Research/Scholarly Portfolio 1.5 units/9 credit hours
Co-requisites: Students complete the first five required 2.5 units (GEDU 9001, 9002, 9003, 9004 and 9005/EDUC 8013, 8023, 8033, 8043 and 8053) and any additional special topics and/or independent studies (GEDU 9006/07 and 9008/09/EDUC 8063/73 and 8083/93) while generating the contents of their Portfolio.
Develop and orally defend an extensive scholarly Portfolio demonstrating sufficient breadth, depth, creativity and engagement to undertake substantive research in the field. Comprising 10-15 artifacts, students will demonstrate knowledge and competence in each of five areas: general, in-depth, research, professional and collegial, and teaching and instruction (graded Pass/Fail). Students are allowed, and encouraged, to use course work assignments as artifacts

GEDU 9100/EDUC 899Z & 8990
Dissertation 3.0 units/18 credit hours
Prerequisites: successful completion of all course work (required and electives) and successful completion of GEDU 9010, Comprehensive Examination: Research/Scholarly Portfolio
Dissertation must constitute a substantial and original contribution to the study of education. To complete this course, students must prepare a research Proposal for approval by an approved supervisory committee, complete the proposed study, and defend the completed draft in a final oral examination (graded Pass/Fail).

Residency/Time to Completion

Each year, approximately 10-14 students will be admitted to the doctoral program, four to six at Mount Saint Vincent University and three to four each at Acadia University and St. Frances Xavier University, if a Program and Supervisor are available for each prospective student. All students take most of their courses together as a community of learners.

The program is structured to be **full-time**, anticipating that doctoral students attending on a full-time basis can complete their degree within three-and-a-half to four years. Although the IDAC cannot prevent doctoral students from being gainfully employed during their residency period, it is inadvisable to do so given the intensity of studies during this timeframe, and the repercussions of failing any courses. Residency requires 14 months full-time, spent completing (a) six courses (5 courses and the Portfolio; 4 units/24 credit hours), plus (b) any Special Topics or Independent Studies and (c) then up to five years full- or part-time to complete the Proposal and the Dissertation (3 units/18 credit hours). Students are required to complete the degree within six years of initial registration. The normal time to complete the doctoral program will be four years, of which the equivalent of 14 months must be in full-time residency (see Table 2). More detail follows.

The purpose of residency is to provide doctoral students with significant time for sustained and intense participation with peers and faculty members in scholarly/creative activities. The primary activity for doctoral students during their residency is *full-time commitment* to the doctoral program. Residency is expected to be a vehicle for socialization into the shared community of professional life. Expected outcomes are the acquisition of skills of intellectual inquiry, development of understandings of research methodologies/paradigms, theories and research techniques, the incorporation of professional values, and socialization into what it means to be an educational researcher. At the heart of the academic community lies a commitment to continued inquiry and intellectual growth that extends beyond the period of doctoral preparation and into the doctoral student's lifetime work.

Normally, during the second year of their program, students present their Portfolio for oral examination. Students who have not completed their portfolio by the end of year 2 will be expected to provide a timeline to complete their portfolio in their third year. Doctoral students who have not completed the Portfolio examination by the end of year 3 may be advised to withdraw from the program.

During year three of the program and onward, individual students work at their home institution with their respective Supervisor and committee members to complete their Dissertation.

During their studies (full-and/or part-time), all students are expected to play an active role supporting scholarly activities at their University of Record, including attending scholarly seminars developed for or in conjunction with the doctoral program. As part of their residency, students may have the opportunity to teach a university course(s) consistent with their expertise. This teaching experience may form part of the scholarly Portfolio.

Fields of Study (Six Interrelated Themes)

As noted above, the PhD program prepares participants to be educational researchers in fields of study commensurate with educational studies (six fields of study or interrelated themes) (see Figure 3 and text on next page). These themes reflect the ongoing research foci of the complement of Education faculty at the participating universities.

As part of the admissions process, and based on their scholarly work to date, applicants are expected to declare their intention to undertake doctoral work within one or more of these six themes. In addition to the program website, each home university has a website for the School or Faculty of Education, highlighting faculty research interests. Doctoral students who are teachers also may draw on their content background (teachable) while engaging with the philosophical and theoretical explorations of one or more themes. It is imperative that doctoral students realize that they receive a degree in Educational Studies, not a degree within a particular theme. The latter serves to bring focus and content to their doctoral studies.

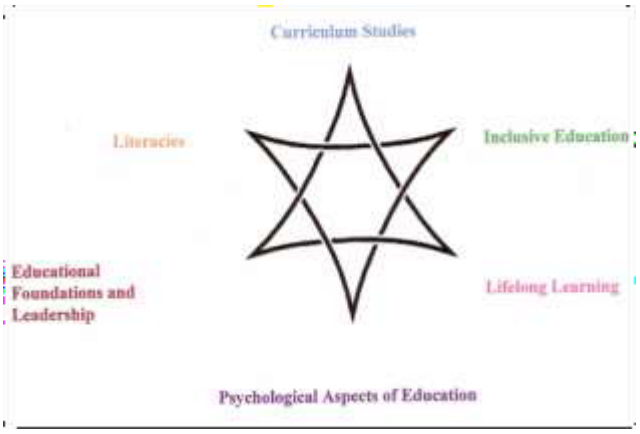

Figure 3 — PhD six interrelated themes (fields of study)

Curriculum Studies

Curriculum is broadly defined as any complex structure, or set of structures (guides, courses, units, lessons, resources, etc.) that supports learning and teaching, usually in particular subject areas. The curriculum *studies* theme addresses theoretical, philosophical and ideological issues related to curriculum research and curriculum design, implementation and evaluation of educational initiatives. These research issues transcend the various subject areas of educational inquiry, while still allowing intellectual space for subject-focused studies (e.g., mathematics and science education or health education). Doctoral students address fundamental, core questions: "What should be taught or studied? Why? By whom? In what ways? And, in what settings, guided by what ideological and philosophical orientations?"

Within this theme, doctoral students critically examine the intellectual offerings of a range of curriculum scholars across the spectrum of paradigms and ideologies (conservative, structural-functional, critical, progressive, narrative and arts based, etc.). Students drawn to this theme join a bourgeoning cadre of educators interested in the cross-disciplinary conversations taking place among curriculum studies scholars. They will explore and conduct research around the nuances of the relationship between (a) curriculum theoretical and philosophical awareness *and* (b) ultimate educational practice.

How educators are socialized into the teaching role truly affects the curricula they develop and deliver. To that end, this theme provides doctoral students an opportunity to focus on professional (teacher) socialization and how this development process informs teacher education. Professional socialization is a process whereby students move from (a) a narrow, student-centered concern for getting through the BEd program, (b) through a stage where this perspective broadens to include the problems of practice and *what constitutes curricula* (a perspective that is still filtered and defined through their experiences of being a student) to, ultimately, (c) a focus on the ideals, concerns, and practices of practitioners at large. Doctoral students examine theoretical and philosophical frameworks for understanding the early socialization of undergraduates into their lives as future teachers, a process that deeply informs curricula design, implementation and evaluation.



Educational Foundations and Leadership

This theme sits at the nexus of foundations and leadership. It assumes a broad definition of leadership including teachers as transformative leaders (as well as transactional leaders), shared governance (the system by which an educational unit is controlled), and community-family-school collaborations. Rather than limiting the focus of the intellectual inquiry to one particular perspective of leadership, students can examine, critique and integrate a variety of theoretical and philosophical orientations to leadership. Educational foundations scholars are interested in pursuing in-depth, critical studies in the history, philosophy and sociology of education by exploring the underlying principles of education, the nature of knowledge, how classical, modern and post-modern theories and philosophies have impacted K-12 curricula, pedagogy, and research. A joint focus on foundations and leadership opens compelling lines of intellectual and philosophical investigations about the connections between critical inquiry of the educational context and leadership directions.

In particular, doctoral students critically consider the roots, tensions, and controversies surrounding the character of Canadian education. This theme helps students reflect about and intellectually examine the relationship between the role of education and leadership and the larger society that education and educators help to form. Central to educational foundations and leadership are pedagogical issues of values, morals, ethics and the critical examination of power relationships in society and educational politics. Of special interest in Nova Scotia are power issues relevant to First Nations peoples, African Nova Scotians and issues around rural education. Close to three quarters of Nova Scotians live in rural areas and upwards of half of rural Nova Scotians do not complete high school. Doctoral students engage with intellectual inquiry around different and sometimes competing visions of the ideal society and educational leadership and practices.

Inclusive Education

Inclusion remains a controversial concept in education because it relates to educational and social values, as well as to our sense of individual worth. Under ideal conditions, all students work towards the same overall educational outcomes. What differs is the level at which these outcomes are achieved, the additional support that is needed by some students, and the degree of emphasis placed on various outcomes. Educational inclusion as a theme concerns itself with philosophical, theoretical, and critical awareness of diversity in learning, and the ways in which issues related to diversity and equity are taken up and mediated in schools and in society. This diversity comprises elements of ability, race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation and social class, among other differences experienced in society. Successful inclusion depends on flexibility in learning environments, curricula, delivery systems and instructions as well as the involvement of educators, leaders, learners, parents and communities. Successful inclusion is predicated on diversity being valued, not just tolerated and accommodated. This theme enables doctoral candidates to engage in scholarship focused on researching and examining the deep theoretical, philosophical and practice nuances of including everyone in the educational journey and experience. The intent of inclusive education is to enable children and young people to develop their capacities as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society. Doctoral students research the idea of what inclusive practice means in classrooms and schools in the light of others' research, theoretical innovations, and educational policy and legislation. This theme especially invites scholars to explore theoretical and philosophical issues around rural education and inclusion, given that two-thirds of students in Nova Scotia attend rural schools.

Lifelong Learning

The theme of lifelong learning engages students in critical, analytical explorations of learning processes over the life span in a wide range of social, institutional, cultural and curricular contexts beyond the formal public school setting. Stemming from adult education, lifelong learning is an innovation that brings a focus to community and international development, citizenship, and cross-cultural learning, among others. The education of adults across their lifespan concerns itself with issues of adulthood and selfhood as well as the educational potential that lies outside the formal system.

Students drawn to this theme are intrigued with the process of learning over the lifespan within a learning society. They appreciate the distinctions between adult education and adult learning (the newest conceptualization), with the former referring to planned educational activities and the latter to life's curriculum. This learning can deal with being a consumer and worker, a democratic citizen, and a member of resilient communities. The scholarship shifts from a focus on the school as institution to the learner as an intelligent agent with the potential to learn from all of life's encounters. This theme exposes students to philosophical and theoretical examinations of an emergent new conceptualization of education and learning. Scholars of lifelong learning look to individual and collective learning within a *learning society*. Learning involves all of one's life, in the sense of both time-span and diversity. The idea that learning should be supported and encouraged through the life course is the crux of this theme for doctoral research in educational studies.

Literacies

Teachers and administrators are pressed to simultaneously meet two goals: (a) to better support all students' literacy development; and, (b) to be responsive to learning and other literacy needs, including but not limited to: linguistic and print based, technological, mathematical, scientific, research, media, cultural, family, English (ESL), and aesthetics literacies. People need education to become literate and literacy to become educated. As the world rapidly changes, educators need to find new ways to conceptualize what it means to be literate. In this spirit, from a multi-faceted approach to literacy, this theme includes both philosophical and theoretical explorations of the cultural, social, political and curricula dimensions of literacies for learning and development. Doctoral students choosing this theme are concerned with why literacy matters, and will investigate literacy development, student performance and life efficacy.

This theme is predicated on the assumption that a central task of schools and school leaders is to prepare students to become independent learners, who can use reading, writing, listening, speaking, seeing, thinking and other literacy skills to successfully negotiate their roles in society as family members, workers and democratic citizens. Schools and the attendant education policy environment must support students' literacy development in ways relevant to their current and future circumstances. Given the critical connections between literacy and development, leading to valued and productive citizens, this theme, focusing on the role of literacy development within the context of school curricula, is a promising area for doctoral research. The resultant research and curricula innovations contributes to learners developing a sophisticated set of literacy habits and skills for the demands of employment, higher education, and personal success.



Psychological Aspects of Education

Within this doctoral program, psychological aspects of education deals with thought processes that are characteristic of a group or an individual, and focuses on school psychology, educational psychology, and educational counselling. *Educational psychology*, the study of the cognitive processes inherent in attaining an education, develops and applies theories of human development as they inform a wide range of specialities within educational studies. *School psychology* applies the principles of educational psychology and clinical psychology to diagnose and treat students' learning and behavioural problems experienced as they attain an education. From a more sociological, humanistic viewpoint, *educational counselling* applies theoretical and empirical knowledge from counselling psychology to prepare people to plan, conduct, evaluate and disseminate educational counselling research.

All three of these psychological research areas are ripe for further theoretical development, building on past successful impacts on teaching approaches and curricula. This theme concerns itself with the theoretical complexities of the process by which people actually become educated. Those drawn to the psychological aspects of education theme concern themselves with the philosophical and theoretical interests of educators, psychologists and counsellors who are engaged in schools, higher education, child guidance, and the wider community. Doctoral candidates explore theoretical advances in child, adolescent and adult development, psychological assessment, learning theories, personality and counselling theories, mental illness and distress and related areas, and consider the applied implications of these innovations. They may also be intrigued with approaches to cognitive sciences (the study of mind and intelligence) and with learning sciences (a convergence of cognition, social context, and designing learning environments and innovations).

Part 2 — Admission Process and Policies

Pool of Candidates

The IDAC will consider applications from beyond the Maritimes, with the understanding that qualified Maritime applicants will be given preference. This admission strategy is grounded in the local, recognizing that there is a place for non-local applicants, who may well produce educational research and knowledge applicable to the region. This admission strategy was approved by the MPHEC and the IDGC, with the proviso that it be closely monitored to see if it merits revision and changes. In more detail, the decision to give priority to local candidates at the outset of the doctoral program is partially predicated on the need to meet pent up demand. More significantly, the Maritime Provinces have historically been characterized as users of knowledge, not producers of knowledge. To enhance regional sustainability and growth, and to inform educational policies and practices, the region needs more educational researchers who have learned and worked in the local system, and who will ultimately return to that system after completing this doctoral program.

Admission Requirements

In order to be *considered for admission to the program*, each applicant is required to have:

- A Master's degree in education or in a related field of study (a cognate discipline) from a recognized university;
- Normally, a graduate thesis in a field related to their doctoral studies. Those applicants who have not completed a thesis are required to submit evidence of their ability to undertake research in education through the completion of a *qualifying research paper* (see Appendix 1) of sufficient depth and scope to reflect their research competence;
- Evidence of scholarly preparation to conduct research, normally including graduate level courses in quantitative and/or qualitative research methods and design;
- Three letters of reference, normally including two academic and one professional;
- A recent curriculum vitae indicating current initiatives in education and any academic, scholarly work to date;
- A letter of intent indicating a proposed area of study from among the six interrelated themes of educational studies;
- A minimum of A- or 80% average in his/her/their highest degree; and,
- An interview with a selection committee that is a subcommittee of the IDAC may be required.

Note: Qualified applicants will only be admitted if a suitable Supervisor and Program can be provided.

Note: English Language Proficiency - to achieve success in this doctoral program, applicants must demonstrate strong reading, writing, and comprehension skills in the English language.



Letter of Intent and Goodness of Fit

Each applicant has to make a case that he/she/they is/are a good fit with the program objectives, interrelated theme(s), faculty interests, and his/her/their identified Supervisor. Making this case is a key part of the application process and is articulated in the Letter of Intent. In this letter of intent, the applicant indicates a proposed area of study from among the six interrelated themes/main pedagogical issues of educational studies. The letter of intent will include information under the following headings: (a) originality and expected contribution to knowledge framework,
(b) clearly explained and focused theoretical research framework, and (c) well-described and appropriate research methodology and method(s). Applicants are encouraged to review the research interests of education faculty members at all three participating universities, available at their respective websites, as well as the research interests of other faculty members. Applicants are further encouraged to discuss their research ideas with relevant faculty members, who can aid them in determining the goodness of fit. The purpose of the application process is to determine (a) the quality of the applicant's intellectual and (b) academic preparation for doctoral studies as well as to determine (c) the availability of an academic Supervisor for the applicant. All three categories must be in place in order to recommend the acceptance of any application. All completed applications will be reviewed after November 15th and recommendations for letters of offer will be issued in March.

Funding, Grants and Scholarships

Some potential applicants want assurances they will have funding *before* they actually apply. At this time, IDAC can only inform applicants of potential sources of funding that may be available after they have been accepted, including:
(a) assistantships (teaching and/or research) especially from faculty grants, if available;
(b) scholarships (especially SSHRC but from other granting agencies and institutions as well);
(c) loans (government, financial institutions and/or personal sources);
(d) research grants obtained by students;
(e) part-time or full-time employment; and,
(f) sabbatical leaves and professional development support for teachers.

Application Process and Deadlines

Given the provisos set out above, should applicants desire to apply for the program, the following procedures are in place to process applications:

- Applicants apply for admission to the Inter-University Doctoral Program in Educational Studies via the Doctoral Program Office, using a standardized application form available at the website. Applications must be postmarked or received electronically by November 15th for July 1st entry to the doctoral program. Applicants are asked to identify potential
  Supervisor(s) and specify the home institution(s) for the latter.
- Respective applicants are vetted using the criteria for admission set out in the Application Form (i.e., goodness of fit with program theme(s) and potential Supervisor's research interests, academic preparation for doctoral work and intellectual preparation for doctoral work). Qualified candidates will be admitted only if the IDAC is able to provide a program of study (per the applicant's letter of intent) and a Supervisor.
- Through iterative dialogue and consensus, the IDAC will prepare three admission-related rosters: applicants who will receive a letter of offer, those who will receive a wait pool letter, and those who will receive a rejection letter (with reasons).
- Normally, respective home institutions will communicate the IDAC's decisions to applicants in writing after March 1st. Specifically, applicants will receive letters of offer from the university that is home to their Supervisor. Rejection letters will be issued by the university that is home to an applicant's identified potential Supervisor. Wait pool letters will be mailed by the Doctoral Program Office.



- Applicants who receive a letter of offer have two weeks to confirm their acceptance of the offer to be admitted to the doctoral program. Supervisors will arrange to meet with successful applicant(s) who have been admitted to their home institution. The purposes of these meetings (there may be several) are to confirm the *Final Program of Study* (courses required by the IDAC), to be submitted to the IDAC for approval by August 15th. These meetings also will entail discussions about potential Supervisory Committee membership (normally form to be submitted by December 1st) and initial agreement on which artifacts will be included in the Portfolio (form to be submitted by April 30).
- The Doctoral Program Office will manage the wait pool. Should a seat become open in the program after the mailing of initial letters of offer, the IDAC will select qualified applicant(s) to receive a letter of offer (per protocol set out above) and so on, until May 1st when, normally, no further letters of offer for admission to the doctoral program will be tendered.

Academic Regulations

In addition to specific doctoral program requirements and regulations overseen by the IDGC, admitted students are bound by the regulations and procedures pertaining to graduate studies at their home university:

- *Acadia University* http://www.acadiau.ca/admissions/gradPrograms.htm
- *Mount Saint Vincent University* http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/programsdepartments/graduatestudiesgeneralinformation/default.aspx
- *St. Francis Xavier University* http://www.mystfx.ca/academic/graduate-studies

Application Form

This form is available from the Doctoral Program Office (currently at MSVU, Room Seton 449G) and at the website: http://www.nsphdeducation.ca/en/home/default.aspx



Part 3 — Tuition, Registration, Status within Program

Tuition Fees

Doctoral students pay a program-tuition fee (rather than course-based fee) of approximately $13,260 plus $405 auxiliary fees for each of the first two years, and then a $3,790 *program continuation fee* plus $405 auxiliary fee per year until completion of the Dissertation (flat rate) (these are 2026 fees). The program tuition fees cover 7 units of coursework (GEDU 9001-9005/ EDUC 8013 -8053, GEDU 9010/EDUC 8109 and GEDU 9100/EDUC 899Z and 8990) and any Special Topics and/or Directed Studies required by the IDAC and offered within the participating institutions (GEDU 9006-9009/EDUC 8063-8093). Tuition fees for the initial two years of the program will be due in two instalments each year: June 1st and December 1st. The *program continuation fee* will be due by June 1st of each relevant program year. Payments will be made to the home institution. International differential will be a matching amount for each scenario, i.e. a first/ second year international student would pay $26,520 plus $405 auxiliary fees and a continuing international student would pay $7,580 plus $405 auxiliary fees per year continuation fee. Tuition fees must be paid by the payment due dates in order to remain in the program, and are subject to change without notice after the first year. Penalties for late payment are regulated by the policies in place at the home institution.

Continuous Registration in the Doctoral Program

Students are required to maintain continuous registration in the doctoral program as governed by policies in place at the students' home institution. Normally, this is 1-unit per academic year (four semesters). The Program includes the following semesters: (a) first Summer (July), (b) first fall (September to December inclusive), (c) first winter and summer (January-June inclusive), (d) the second summer (July-August inclusive), (e) the second year (September-August inclusive, when students are completing their portfolio), and (f) subsequent academic years/ semesters as required to complete the proposal and dissertation.

Annual Student Progress Report

The IDAC requires doctoral students to complete, with their Supervisors, an annual academic progress report (the *Annual Student Progress Form)* by the end of each winter term as a condition of continuing in the doctoral program. These progress reports are a tool to help students stay on track throughout their doctoral program. Students, in consultation with their Supervisors, will clarify academic expectations and gauge student progress in the various areas of their program. Progress reports will be placed on file at the Doctoral Program Office.

Leave of Absence from the Doctoral Program

A leave of absence from the program will be considered in *rare* circumstances and will be recommended by the IDAC and approved by the appropriate authority at the home institution. In such cases, the student will submit a request to the IDAC via the PhD coordinator at the home institution. Legitimate reasons must be provided to explain the need for a leave of absence from the program. IDAC will respond to such a request with a recommendation to the student's home university, which will then make and communicate a decision to the student and to the IDAC. Each respective university has existing policies pertaining to reinstatement of graduate students to active student status.

In addition to the regulations of the home institution relative to leave of absence, doctoral candidates, who are considering a leave of absence, should note that: they are not entitled to use university services or any kind of doctoral supervision during the period of their leave; the timeline for completion of the doctoral program ceases for the duration of the leave and resumes when study recommences. All fellowships, scholarships and other forms of financial support (and eligibility for same) cease for the duration of the leave. Reinstatement of financial aid is not guaranteed. Decisions regarding funding for students who take leave will be decided by the appropriate authority in consultation with the IDAC; and, candidates cannot avail themselves of the resources of any of the three participating institutions.

Academic Accommodations and Accessibility Services

The Interuniversity Doctoral Program participating institutions are committed to providing a supportive, inclusive, and welcoming learning environment for all students.

Upon acceptance of the offer of admission and registration in the PhD program, and to facilitate access to supports and resources for students with disabilities, doctoral students who may require academic accommodations are encouraged to register with Accessible Learning Services at their home institution as well as to engage in conversation with their doctoral supervisor.

Upon meeting with an Accessible Learning advisor (see contact information below), a doctoral student will be asked if information may be shared with relevant instructors.

Acadia
Marissa McIssac
Manager, Accessible Services
disability.access@acadiau.ca
902.585.1291

Mount Saint Vincent University
Jessica Ferguson
Interim Manager, Accessibility Services
jessica.ferguson@msvu.ca
902-457-6567

St. Francis Xavier University
Elizabeth Kell
Coordinator, Accessible Learning
ekell@stfx.ca
902-867-3633

Extensions of Time to Completion

Doctoral students who anticipate that they will be unable to complete their doctoral program requirements within the required timeframe must apply to IDAC before the end of the 5th year with a modified plan that may be supported by the IDAC.

The form "Request for an Extension of Time to Complete Program of Study" can be found on the program website and the page, Forms and Documents. This form must be received before the end of the 5th year in the program.

The student must consult their Doctoral Supervisor and the Doctoral Program Coordinator of their home institution when completing this request. The Doctoral Program Coordinator will present the request to IDAC.

Normally, upon review of a well-justified request, IDAC will make a positive recommendation to the student's home institution that an extension of up to one year be granted. The student's university will then make and communicate a decision to the student and to the IDAC.

Any additional extension requests can only be considered according to exceptional circumstances.

Transfer to Another Home Institution

Only in exceptional circumstances will a transfer from one home university to another be considered, normally when the student changes Supervisor to one who is at another participating university. A student wishing to transfer must prepare a written request outlining the academic reasons for the request. Included in the request is the name of the proposed new Supervisor, with written, signed confirmation that they have agreed to supervise the student's doctoral work. This request is sent to the Doctoral Program Coordinator at the student's home institution for discussion with the current Supervisor and Supervisory Committee. If a transfer is still desired, the Doctoral Program Coordinator will take the request to the IDAC. There is no obligation on the part of the prospective partnership institution to receive the student requesting a transfer for academic reasons. The final decision to allow a transfer to take place must be arrived at by mutual agreement between the faculty member involved in the transfer and the IDAC as a whole. For funded students, continuing funding cannot be guaranteed and will be available only if resources permit at the receiving university. All courses taken to date will be transferred. **Students will not be permitted to change their Supervisor after their proposal is presented unless exceptional circumstances arise.**

Withdrawal from Doctoral Program

Under normal circumstances, any student receiving a grade below B- (GPA 3.0) in any graded course will be required to withdraw from the doctoral program.

Normally, a failed Portfolio will result in termination from the program, even if all course work is completed successfully (GPA above 3.0).

The candidate who received a fail on the Dissertation defence is required to withdraw from the doctoral Program and is not permitted to resubmit the Dissertation for approval.

Voluntary Withdrawal from Program

Should doctoral students voluntarily withdraw from the program once they have commenced their studies, they will forfeit any tuition monies paid and will remain responsible for any monies owing and past due to their home institution. Applicable dates for this policy are regulated by the home institution. This policy exists because of the nature of the delivery of the program; that is, in a finite number of seats for the program each year, all required courses are taken in tandem by all doctoral students accepted in a given year. The IDAC does not hold spaces open for future intakes. Should they decide to, doctoral students who voluntarily withdraw may choose to reapply in the future for a new competition. In rare instances, a modified residence plan may be approved by the Governance Committee upon recommendation of the IDAC.

Part 4 — Committees

Constituting Supervisory Committee and Externals

Normally, the doctoral student's Supervisory Committee is fully constituted by December 1st, in the first year of the program. This timing is required for several reasons, mainly because (a) committee members may wish to be involved in the development of the doctoral student's Portfolio (*Initial Portfolio Agreement Form*) and to share initial thoughts around the plans for research, and (b) because doctoral students are expected to register in GEDU 9010/EDUC 8109 (*Comprehensive Research/Scholarly Portfolio*) in July of the first year and begin work on the Portfolio in full consultation with their Supervisor.

Supervisor

The IDAC confirms the Supervisor in the *Letter of Offer*. An inaugural meeting will be called soon after the doctoral students accept their home university's offer to register in the degree. Normally, the meeting(s), there may be several, will be held in April and May.

Confirmation of Program Plan of Study

At this first meeting, the Supervisor will begin discussions with the doctoral students about three topics: their program plan of study, their Supervisory Committee membership, and their research (per their *Letter of Intent*) (informal discussions for the latter). It is quite possible that these three issues will be dealt with simultaneously, instead of linearly as set out in the following text. The committee is duly constituted, normally by June 30th, before the July 1st course start date.

An *Initial Doctoral Program Plan of Study* form was mailed to the applicants with their *Letter of Offer*. At this first, of what may be several, meetings, the Supervisor first confirms and/or changes the doctoral student's initial program plan of study (affirming courses and confirming any additional special topics/independent studies as specified in the *Letter of Offer* or determined in consultation with the doctoral student).

Once the plan of study has been agreed to by all concerned (perhaps the duly constituted committee members as well, see below), the *Final Doctoral Program Plan of Study* form is signed by the Supervisor and the doctoral student, who then submits it to the IDAC for approval (within a timeframe specified by the IDAC). A copy of the form is housed in the Doctoral Program Office. Any subsequent change(s) to the doctoral student's plan of study are requested and approved using the *Revised Doctoral Plan of Study* form.

Concurrently, the Supervisor will begin to work with the doctoral student to refine the doctoral student's research area (theme(s)) and plan laid out in the *Letter of Intent*. The doctoral students' informal research plan will evolve and emerge from a synergistic collection of: (a) course work, (b) the Portfolio, (c) ongoing discussions with Supervisors and committee members, and (d) dialogue with fellow doctoral students and other faculty members. This intellectual evolution and synergy will materialize in the formal research Proposal developed in GEDU 9100/EDUC 899Z and publicly defended, six months to a year after successfully passing the Portfolio oral examination (GEDU 9010/EDUC 8109).

The Supervisor and the doctoral student also will negotiate, complete and file an *Initial Portfolio Agreement* form by April 30 th of the first year, after completion of the course work. Students and Supervisors should be having conversations about the Portfolio artifacts by the end of January of the first year. The mid-way, in-progress (formative) assessment will be conducted in reference to this initial agreement, appreciating that original, agreed-to artifacts in the Portfolio can change with the approval of the doctoral student and the Supervisor, reported to the IDAC. The elements of the Portfolio can stem from the *Letter of Intent*, orientations for the Portfolio process provided during the courses, discussions with the Supervisor (in consultation with committee members), and engagement and interactions within the doctoral community of learners.

Confirmation of Committee Members

Working together, the doctoral student and the Supervisor *normally* constitute the members of the Supervisory Committee by December 1st of the first year. This timing is required for several reasons, but mainly (a) because committee members may wish to be involved in the development of the doctoral student's Portfolio (*Initial Portfolio Agreement Form*) and to share initial thoughts around the plans for research, and (b) because doctoral students are expected to register in GEDU 9010/EDUC 8109 (*Comprehensive Research/Scholarly Portfolio*) in July of the first year. The doctoral student will then begin work on the Portfolio in full consultation with their Supervisor.

Normally, discussions about who will serve on the committee happen during or shortly after the *Final Doctoral Plan of Study* form is signed by August 15th. Normally, the committee will comprise three people, including the Supervisor and two other members. Normally, the other members will have expertise in the theme(s) or the focus of the research.

Once the Supervisor has secured/affirmed the approval of committee members, the Supervisor, committee members and the doctoral student will sign the *Approval of Doctoral Supervisory Committee Membership Form*. A copy of this form is given to the doctoral student and filed with the Doctoral Program Office. If any faculty member(s) identified on the form becomes unavailable, additional people will be identified and approached until a committee has been constituted. Changes to committee members can be approved by the IDAC using the *Request to Change Doctoral Supervisory Committee Membership* form. Different forms are available for approving the External Examiners for the Portfolio and for the Dissertation defences (see below).

Co-Supervision

Co-supervision, a common university practice, serves several purposes. Sharing supervisory responsibilities can enable interested and/or over-committed academics to share workloads, of which the mechanics are a function of local conditions and traditions. Co-supervision can provide doctoral candidates with enriched intellectual contributions; they benefit from two complementary sets of expertise and experience. Co-supervision also opens the door for cross-disciplinary cooperation and knowledge sharing with doctoral students. When the co-supervision arrangement entails a seasoned academic and someone new to the university (an early-career academic), the doctoral student benefits from the former's experience and the latter's recent lived experience of being a doctoral student.

In some instances, the Supervisor may wish to *temporarily* involve another faculty member or expert who has valuable expertise pertinent to the doctoral student's research program (different from the co-Supervisor model). In this instance, the Principal would be the IDAC-appointed Supervisor, and the person invited to sit on the committee is the Associate Supervisor, who may or may not remain on the committee for the duration of the doctoral student's studies. The Associate Supervisor may be from the three participating universities or elsewhere, and cannot serve as an External. The Associate Supervisor would be in addition to the other two committee members, and normally is tenured.

External Examiners

Although doctoral students will work consistently with their Supervisor and committee members for the duration of their degree, the Supervisor will select an External committee member to partake in the Comprehensive Portfolio Examination, and a *different* External committee member will be selected to partake in the Dissertation Defence.

Dissertation Supervisory and Committee Membership Approval

In accordance with the IDAC's mandate, the IDAC will apply the following criteria when approving membership to Supervisory Committees:

Criteria for accreditation as doctoral faculty normally include:
-tenure stream appointment as a faculty member at one of the participating institutions,
-possession of an earned Doctorate,
-demonstrated record of scholarly activity as established by peer review, and
-demonstrated record in the supervision of graduate theses.

Criteria for accreditation as a doctoral committee member normally include:
-eligibility for appointment as doctoral faculty (see above) and
-ability to contribute to the research being undertaken.
-In some situations, a committee member who may not meet the criteria for appointment as a doctoral faculty member in general may be accredited by the IDAC on the recommendation of the supervisor because of his or her unique specialized knowledge.*

Criteria for accreditation as a doctoral supervisor normally include:
-eligibility for appointment as doctoral faculty (see first three points above, with the exception that the supervisor has to be tenured and, if untenured, be approved by the IDGC upon IDAC's recommendation, with rationale);
-ability to contribute to the research being undertaken; and,
-demonstrated record of supervision to completion of graduate theses at the master's level or the doctoral level

*the recommendation of the supervisor to IDAC for approval of a committee member who is not from one of the three institutions and/or is not on the list of accredited faculty requires a rationale statement and CV that includes brief outline of the proposed member's credentials that support appointment.

Once the Supervisor advisor has secured/affirmed the approval of committee members, the Supervisor, committee members and the doctoral student will sign the Approval of Doctoral Supervisory Committee Membership Form. A copy of this form is given to the doctoral student and filed with the Doctoral Program Office. If any faculty member(s) identified on the form becomes unavailable, additional people will be identified and approached until a committee has been constituted. Changes to committee members can be approved by the IDAC using the Request to Change Doctoral Supervisory Committee Membership form. Different forms are available for approving the External Examiners for the Portfolio and for the Dissertation defences (see below).

Comprehensive Portfolio Examiner

In addition to the Supervisory Committee, an additional External Examiner will be appointed for the Comprehensive Portfolio oral examination. The External Examiner may be a faculty member at one of the participating universities, including the doctoral student's home university. Using IDAC-approved criteria, the Examiner will be identified by the Supervisor in consultation with the Supervisory Committee, and approved by the IDAC via the Approval of the Comprehensive Portfolio External Committee Member form. Although the External Examiner will not be involved in the development of the Portfolio, he or she will be expected to have read it carefully (using the IDAC-suggested assessment/grading criteria for this purpose) and to be prepared for the oral examination, attending in person or via video or teleconference.

Dissertation External Examiner

NOTE - these particular procedures are subject to change, with adequate notification for all concerned

Regarding the External for the Dissertation defence, in consultation with the Supervisory Committee, the doctoral Supervisor will recommend a list of suitable External Examiners for the Dissertation, people who are at arms' length from the candidate and Supervisor (at least four names). While the External Examiner will usually be engaged in aligned research, he/she/they will not be known personally or professionally to the candidate, and must be from a university *outside the tri-university program*. The IDAC will rank order the Examiners from this list and submit their selection for approval by the candidate's University of Record's Graduate Studies' Office. This office will contact the first Examiner to arrange details of the examination. This process will continue until an Examiner can be found who agrees to serve on the Examination Committee. In the event that an Examiner cannot be found, the Office of Graduate Studies will direct the IDAC to contact the Supervisory Committee for another roster of Examiners, and the process will begin again until someone can be identified. The *Approval of Dissertation Defence External Examiner* form is used for this purpose, requiring the signatures of the Supervisor, the IDAC and the Dean/Chair of Graduate Studies.

Part 5 — Course Registration

Roster of Courses

Doctoral students in the program complete the same program of study together; however, they receive their degree from their home institution, and their transcript will reflect the course numbers of their home institution (see Table 3).

Table 3 — Course Titles, Prefixes, and Numbers as they appear in respective university calendars

Course titles	Course Prefix and Number		
	MSVU	**Acadia**	**St. F.X.**
Foundations of Educational Inquiry	GEDU 9001	EDUC 8013	GEDU 9001
Methodological Perspectives on Educational Research	GEDU 9002	EDUC 8023	GEDU 9002
Doctoral Seminar: Contemporary Educational Theory	GEDU 9003	EDUC 8033	GEDU 9003
Focused Educational Studies	GEDU 9004	EDUC 8043	GEDU 9004
Advanced Research Seminar: Focus on Methods	GEDU 9005	EDUC 8053	GEDU 9005
Special Topics: Educational Studies	GEDU 9006/9007	EDUC 8063/8073	GEDU 9006/9007
Directed Study	GEDU 9008/9009	EDUC 8083/8093	GEDU 9008/9009
Comprehensive Examination: Research/ Scholarly Portfolio	GEDU 9010	EDUC 8109	GEDU 9010
Dissertation	GEDU 9100	EDUC 899Z Proposal EDUC 8990 Dissertation	GEDU 9100

Coordinated Course Registration

The doctoral program is co-administered and co-delivered by three partner universities, coordinated by the IDAC. Doctoral students enrolled in the doctoral program take all courses together, in a community of learners. Instead of each individual doctoral student self-registering in separate courses at her or his home institution and non-home institutions, the IDAC has arranged for the three participating registrars' offices to coordinate course registration.

Doctoral students are informed of their student ID number and username for their home institution when they begin the summer courses. This enables them to enrol in courses being delivered by their home institution. The three registrars' offices will register all doctoral students in their system as Visiting Students (with student ID number and username) for any courses being offered by their respective universities per term, according to each doctoral student's Final Plan of Study form. Appropriate universities will send Visiting Students confirmation of their registration in non-home institution course(s), normally by email.

Course Rotation Schedule

The program has been designed so that each year, all three participating universities contribute to the co-development and co-delivery of the five core courses (and any Special Topics). For example, in 2018 (subject to change) StFX is responsible for delivering GEDU 9001/EDUC 8013, GEDU 9002/EDUC 8023, and GEDU 9004/EDUC 8043. The Mount will deliver GEDU 9003/EDUC 8033 and Acadia will deliver GEDU 9005/EDUC 8053.

The schedule then shifts in subsequent years, rotating among the three partner institutions (see table on the following page with e-learning, multi-mode courses highlighted). In the first July of their program, doctoral students will be onsite at one campus. They then take three e-learning multi-mode courses (four or more if they have to take a special topic(s). Independent studies are conducted onsite at the home institution.

Three-year course rotation schedule for the Inter-University Doctoral Program in Education Studies (subject to change):

Semester	Courses and University Co-Responsible for Delivery *E-Learning, multi-mode courses are highlighted*
Summer 2017 (seventh intake)	**Mount: 9001/8013** **Mount: 9002/8023** **NOTE: All doctoral students register in GEDU 9010/EDUC 8109 at their home institution at the beginning of their program, July 1st** **NOTE: Normally, all doctoral candidates register in GEDU 9100/EDUC 899Z at their home institution after they successfully pass their Portfolio oral examination. Those who decide to postpone their oral examination must complete it by July of the next year, and cannot register in the Dissertation/ Proposal course until that time.**
Winter 2018 (this year only)	**Mount: 9003/8033**
Fall 2017	**StFX: 9004/8043**
Winter 2018	**Acadia: 9005/8053**
Summer 2018 (eighth intake)	**StFX: 9001/8013** **StFX: 9002/8023**
Fall-Winter 2018-19	**Mount: 9003/8033**
Fall 2018	**StFX: 9004/8043**
Winter 2019	**Acadia: 9005/8053**
Summer 2019	**Acadia: 9001/8013** **Acadia: 9002/8023**
Fall 2019	**MSVU: 9003/8033** **StFX: 9004/8043**
Winter 2020	**Acadia: 9005/8053**
Summer 2020	**MSVU: 9001/8013** **MSVU: 9002/8023**
Fall 2020	**MSVU: 9003/8033** **StFX: 9004/8043**
Winter 2021	**Acadia: 9005/8053**

Multi-Mode Tri-University Learning Platform

To ensure doctoral students' full-time engagement with all components of the doctoral program, learning activities will be offered through a combination of onsite, face-to-face contact with Supervisors, committee members and/or instructors and a hybrid e-learning platform (entailing distance-based technology combined with face-to-face meetings as deemed pedagogically appropriate). This is referred to as the *multi-mode principle.*

Virtual technologies can augment and enrich synchronous learning and doctoral student collaboration amongst the three participating institutions. To ensure ongoing enrichment of the community of learners emergent from the two onsite July courses, several doctoral courses will be delivered during the fall and winter semesters using the e-learning platform (see below), each of theories, methods and a content-focused seminar (plus any special topics). The multi-mode principle will be applied to ensure a pedagogically appropriate combination of face-to-face and technology is employed.

An e-learning platform might be put in place for the Comprehensive Portfolio, thus enabling individual doctoral students from the three partner institutions to stay in virtual-touch with each other as each works independently with their Supervisory Committee at their home institution on the research components of their Portfolio (from July to July).

The specific e-learning platforms comprise different technologies at partner universities (bearing in mind the multi-mode principle noted above):

- *Acadia University* uses the Moodle Learning Management System (dubbed ACORN by Acadia) to facilitate the distribution of course notes, communication with students, setting and grading quizzes, create assignments, arrange discussions, and much more.
- *Mount Saint Vincent University* uses Blackboard Collaborate and also the Moodle Learning Management System (LMS). Collaborate is a software program that provides in-class web, video, and audio solutions for real-time online learning and collaboration. It features high-quality voice over the Internet and robust interactive functionality. Moodle is used to distribute course notes, communicate with students, set and grade quizzes, create assignments, arrange discussions, and much more.
- *St. Francis Xavier University* uses the Blackboard Collaborate and Mes Amis to deliver course material and to facilitate virtual communication among students, and between students and the instructor.

Guidelines for Recording Portfolio, Proposal, and Dissertation Defences

Making the decision to record:
The student/candidate has the right to decide if they want to record the event, or not.

If the event is to be recorded, the IDAC office will be notified; the student and supervisor may use Collaborate or Zoom to record the event. The recording will be stored with the IDAC office.

At an event to be recorded:
Announcement at the beginning of the presentation or defence: "Today's event is to be recorded; following this event, the student/candidate will decide if the recording is to be made accessible for educational purposes."

Following the event:
The student has the right to watch, delete, and/or share the recording of the event.
The student has one week to advise the IDAC office if the recording is to be made accessible to others using the Release of Recording Consent Form (Appendix A).

Making the recording accessible:
Signing of a consent letter: The student authorizes the storage and sharing of the recording.

Part 6 — Library Holdings

Doctoral students and faculty in the Educational Studies PhD have access to a wide range of library resources in the Novanet consortium (Nova Scotia's university and college libraries) both in person and online. This includes books, e-books, print and electronic journals, article databases, and institutional repositories (containing theses and faculty research papers). Additionally, each of the libraries offers Document Delivery services from libraries across Canada at no charge (with international service available for hard-to-find items).

Each of the libraries has in-person and e-mail library research assistance available year round, and an Education Liaison Librarian with whom you can book individual research appointments. There is a chat-based "Live Help" service available during Fall, Winter, and Summer Session I terms. All of these services are available to doctoral students and faculty.

For information on how to access information from participating institutions, please consult the Education Librarian as listed below:

Acadia University
Education Liaison:
Anthony Pash
Email: Anthony.pash@acadiau.ca
Phone (902)585-1734

Mount Saint Vincent University
Education Liaison:
Sandra Sawchuck
Email: Sandra.sawchuck@msvu.ca
Phone (902)457-6526

St. Francis Xavier University
Education Liaison:
Meghan Landry
Email: mlandry@stfx.ca
Phone (902)867-5153

Furthermore, most faculty members belong to professional associations and attend respective conferences that generate proceedings or online versions of the conference papers, all of which augment access to scholarly communications for faculty and doctoral students.

Part 7 — Grades and Grading Policies

Grading Scheme

Students will be graded according to the grading scheme below:

MSVU			Acadia University			St. Francis Xavier University		
Alpha	% range	GPA	Alpha	% range	GPA	Alpha	% range	GPA
A+	94-100	4.3	A+	94-100	4.3	A+	94-100	4.3
A	87-93	4.0	A	87-93	4.0	A	87-93	4.0
A-	80-86	3.7	A-	80-86	3.7	A-	80-86	3.7
B+	77-79	3.3	B+	77-79	3.3	B+	77-79	3.3
B	73-76	3.0	B	73-76	3.0	B	73-76	3.0
B-	70-72	2.7	B-	70-72	2.7	B-	70-72	2.7

Each partner university also has some combination of the following grade codes with respective policy guidelines:

- Incomplete
- In Progress
- Deferral
- Pass
- Fail
- Failure due to Academic Offense
- Withdrawals and/or Dropped Course
- Audit

Ph.D. students will be graded according to the system in place at their home university. Students may not continue in the program with a failing grade. Under normal circumstances, any student receiving a grade below B- in any graded course will be required to withdraw from the Ph.D. program. They do have the option to appeal a grade.

Grade Changes

Each home university has Academic Regulations for grade changes made by the course instructor after a grade has been submitted.

Student Appeals

Each home university has Academic Regulations for student grade appeal procedures.



Academic Offenses

Each home university has Academic Regulations for student academic offenses and appeal procedures. Academic offenses include but are not limited to:

- plagiarism;
- cheating;
- misrepresentations (including but not limited to obtaining special consideration for one's academic work, submitting fraudulent documents, and failing to disclose or falsifying previous higher education study when applying); and,
- other (including but not limited to selling, purchasing, borrowing or lending academic work for submission for academic credit).

The institution that records an academic integrity offence applies its own policies when managing the case and communicates the result to the student's home institution.

Class Attendance

Regular attendance is expected of all university students. Each home university has Academic Regulations pertaining to class attendance and consequences for attendant actions.

Course Evaluations

All doctoral students will have the opportunity to evaluate their course instructor(s) and respective course(s). The Doctoral Program Administrative Assistant to the IDAC will administer and oversee course evaluations, following existing policies at each respective university. Normally, course evaluations will be carried out during the final week of

Part 8 — Research Ethics

Home University Research Ethics Offices

Any research involving humans requires prior approval. Doctoral students are encouraged to work closely with their Supervisor and Committee and access services at respective home university research offices:

Acadia University
Research Ethics Board
http://reb.acadiau.ca/
214 Horton Hall
smaitzen@acadiau.ca
585-1407

Mount Saint Vincent University
University Research Ethics Board
http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/research/researchethics/default.aspx
Evaristus 238
brenda.gagne@msvu.ca
457-6350

St. Francis Xavier University
Research Ethics Board
http://www.mystfx.ca/research/ethics/
Room 717 Nicholson Tower
reb@stfx.ca
867-2393

External Research Ethics Resources

Doctoral candidates can gain further information about research ethics at the following organizations:

- Tri-Council Policy Statement http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/tcps-eptc/
- National Council on Ethics for Human Research http://www.ncehr-cnerh.org/en/
- Interagency Advisory Panel on Research Ethics http://pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/tcps-eptc/readtcps-lireeptc/
- The Belmont Report http://ohsr.od.nih.gov/guidelines/belmont.html
- Canadian Association of Research Ethics Boards http://www.careb-accer.org/
- CIHR guidelines for research with Aboriginal Peoples http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/29339.html
- Research Involving People in Developing Countries http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/About-us/Policy/Policy-and-position-statements/WTD015295.htm
- Canadian National Defence: Research Involving Human Subjects http://www.admfincs.forces.gc.ca/dao-doa/5000/5061-0-eng.asp
- Ethical Guidelines for Conducting Research Involving Homeless People http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/homelessness/index.shtml
- The Research Ethics Blog http://researchethicsblog.com/
- Canadian Privacy Act http://www.priv.gc.ca/legislation/02_07_01_01_e.cfm



Part 9 — The Portfolio

In lieu of a traditional comprehensive exam written upon completion of doctoral-level course work, the Inter-University Doctoral Program is designed so doctoral students complete a comprehensive Portfolio during their course work. This Portfolio has to be successfully presented and passed before doctoral students can enrol in the Dissertation course.

The Portfolio is intended to contribute to and reflect doctoral students' intellectual progress and learning. It must help advance their research program and contribute to the development of their research plan and their Dissertation. The Portfolio is a tool for research and scholarship as well as personal and intellectual growth. Students are allowed, and encouraged, to use course work assignments as artifacts.

Time Line for Completion of the Portfolio

Throughout the first four semesters of their program (July-June), doctoral students will assemble a scholarly, academic Portfolio, which they will submit for examination to their Supervisory Committee and an External Examiner before undertaking their Proposal and Dissertation (GEDU 9100/EDUC 899Z and 8990). Normally, the Portfolio is submitted at the end of the 14-month residency (the first year of the doctoral program), but this process can be delayed (mainly for pedagogical reasons), in which event the Portfolio must normally be presented by July of the second year of the program (e.g., if admitted in 2011, the Portfolio must be presented, at the latest, by July 2013).

Initial Portfolio Agreement Form

Normally by April 30th of the first year (upon completion of GEDU 9001/9002/EDUC 8013/8023), the Supervisor and the doctoral student will sign and file, with the Doctoral Program Office, an *Initial Portfolio Agreement Form*, setting out intended artifacts for inclusion in the Portfolio, appreciating that these artifacts may and can change during the next 12-24 months. Students will compile the elements of this Portfolio in negotiation with their Supervisor, under the auspices of their Supervisory Committee.

Also due on April 30th of the first year is an initial draft of the narrative that accompanies the collection of artifacts comprising the Portfolio (see below for more details on what should be included in the narrative). The narrative is a crucial piece of evidence of intellectual growth and preparedness for movement onto the Dissertation. It is anticipated that several iterations of the narrative will emerge during the creation of the Portfolio, culminating in the final version submitted with the Portfolio for examination.

More Details on the Narrative

The multiple iterations of the narrative prepared during the full-time residency will include the following dimensions. Ongoing iterations of the narrative are not required to be submitted to the Doctoral Program Office, nor are they graded, per se, by the Supervisory Committee. The emergent narrative serves as a record of progress along the journey towards the oral examination:

- a summary of the contents of the Portfolio (artifacts should be labelled or otherwise identified) and a rationale for the organization of the collection,
- a statement of how each artifact meets the five competency areas set out in Table 4,
- a statement of the student's role in preparing each artifact (individual or multi-authored),
- a statement of the doctoral program objective(s) (see p. 6) and student outcomes (see Appendix 2) that are being met by each artifact,
- a statement setting out the intellectual synergy reflected in the collection, and
- a reflective statement about the process and how the activities/contents address the student's research goals and professional development goals.



Process for Completing the Portfolio

Doctoral students will gather artifacts to demonstrate competence in five principal areas (see Table 4). All elements of the Portfolio will be initiated and completed as part of the doctoral program. Students are allowed, and encouraged, to use course work assignments as artifacts. It is expected that the majority of artifacts will be completed during the program. However, artifacts completed prior to the commencement of the program are acceptable if further augmented by ongoing theoretical, methodological or philosophical learnings during the course of doctoral level courses (in consultation with the Supervisory Committee). Normally, students will include two or three items from *each* of the five principal areas, to a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 15 items (see Table 4).

Table 4 — Five General Areas of Knowledge and Competencies for Portfolio

General Knowledge	In-Depth Knowledge	Research Knowledge and Competencies	Professional and Collegial Competencies	Teaching and Instructional Competencies
broad familiarity with understanding of prominent social scientific and educational theoretical traditions and trends related to educational studies	thorough and detailed knowledge of a range of issues in their specific doctoral focus area theme(s)	demonstrate research competence and critical analysis of current research and methodological issues	demonstrate a range of professional competencies that will enhance active professional engagement	range of teaching competencies demonstrative of readiness to assume the role of teacher and mentor in academia and other educational/ training contexts

General Knowledge:

Students will be required to demonstrate a broad understanding of prominent social scientific and educational theoretical traditions and trends. Students will include artifacts that demonstrate their wide-ranging familiarity with theories related to educational studies. While specific artifacts will be determined in consultation with the Supervisory Committee, examples of items in this area might include:

- *Article for peer review surveying general trends or themes in educational studies*
- *Scholarly working paper demonstrating broad historical and conceptual knowledge*
- *Wide-ranging literature review surveying a significant issue or movement in the social sciences or education*
- *Conference attendance review*
- *Annotated bibliography on a broad conceptual topic field/travel report*
- *Evidence of original/creative contribution to research in the field*
- *Comprehensive conference paper*



In-Depth Knowledge:
Students will demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of a range of issues in their specific doctoral focus area. While specific artifacts will be determined in consultation with the Supervisory Committee, examples of items in this area might include:

- *Article for peer review focused on field of study*
- *In-depth scholarly working paper focused on field of study*
- *Literature review leading towards preparation of Dissertation Proposal*
- *Annotated bibliography on specific research topic*
- *Art installation*
- *Evidence of original/creative contribution to research in the field*
- *Focused conference paper*

Research Knowledge and Competencies:
Students will demonstrate research competence and critical analysis of current research and methodological issues. While specific artifacts will be determined in consultation with the Supervisory Committee, examples of items in this area might include:

- *Review of literature related to issues in research*
- *Scholarly article on methodological issue*
- *Submission for ethics review*
- *Data analysis, including consideration of methodological issues*
- *Annotated bibliography related to issues in research*
- *Evidence of original/creative contribution to research in the field*

Professional and Collegial Competencies:
To help prepare students for active professional engagement, they will demonstrate a range of professional competencies. While specific artifacts will be determined in consultation with the Supervisory Committee, examples of items in this area might include:

- *Curriculum Vitae*
- *Proposal for funding to recognized granting council*
- *Article, essay, or book assessment or review*
- *Draft of scholarly article for submission*
- *Conference paper/participation*
- *Art or performance adjudication*
- *Evidence of significant support to professional organization*
- *Evidence of significant contribution to community-based organization*

Teaching and Instructional Competencies:
To ensure that students will be prepared to assume the role of teacher and mentor in academia and other educational/ training contexts, students will demonstrate a range of teaching competencies. While specific artifacts will be determined in consultation with the Supervisory Committee, examples of items in this area might include:

- *Evidence of undergraduate or graduate teaching*
- *Academic seminar presentation*
- *Theatre in education performance*
- *Arts-based instruction*
- *Evidence of curriculum development, needs assessment or program evaluation*

In-Progress Assessment of the Portfolio

The Portfolio will be a central organizing feature of the doctoral student's experience (comprising 20% of the required course units/credit hours) and will be developed while taking courses during the 14 month residency (with the option to extend if justified). To maintain relevancy and rigour, and to ensure that the generation of the artifacts and the narrative aid doctoral students in demonstrating readiness to undertake PhD work, both the student and the Supervisory Committee will complete an in-progress (formative) assessment of the progress being made on the Portfolio, using a form designed for this purpose by the IDAC.

This mid-way assessment will help both parties come to an agreement about the degree of progress to date (see form for degrees of completion). All parties will agree and sign off on which artifacts are complete, need further work and/ or have been removed and replaced with others. This form will be filed with the Doctoral Program Office and entered into the student's file.

Preparing the Portfolio for Submission and Presentation

Media for Submission

The medium or media used to submit the Portfolio will depend on the nature of its contents (respecting many ways of knowing and sharing knowledge). It may be presented in a conventional form, such as a binder, but non-traditional venues will also be accepted (art installations, drama, videos, pod casts, and other technologies). Whatever form the Portfolio takes, the exhibits must demonstrate competence in all of the five knowledge areas, per Table 4.

Submitting the Portfolio to the Supervisory Committee

Once the Portfolio has been completed, normally by June 30th at the end of the full-time residency, the student will submit copies (artifacts and narrative) to all Supervisory Committee members and request that they review it over the next few weeks, in preparation for the oral presentation. Working through the IDAC, the student and the Supervisory Committee (in consultation with the External Examiner) will arrange a convenient meeting time.

Although uncommon if there has been sufficient, ongoing input and direction, should any Supervisory committee member wish the student to revise or address concerns (prior to sending the Portfolio to the External Examiner), these concerns shall be communicated in writing with sufficient time to enable the student to address them (at his or her discretion). Should the student choose to address these concerns, he or she shall undertake these tasks, allowing for sufficient time for the committee to review the revisions prior to sending it to the External Examiner. It is *this* version of the Portfolio (artifacts and narrative) that is given to the External Examiner two weeks prior to the oral examination.

See the Section on Portfolio Examination for criteria for grading, for passing or failing and the policy for a failed Portfolio.

The Portfolio Examination

The doctoral student will present publicly the contents of his or her Portfolio to members of the Supervisory committee, the External Examiner, fellow doctoral students, and the public, normally during the summer seminar at the end of the full-time residency (extensions are possible for pedagogical reasons).

During the oral presentation, the doctoral student will expound on the Portfolio, commenting on the artifacts and drawing heavily on the narrative prepared for the oral examination. The Examiners will have an opportunity to propose and discuss intellectual points of interest with the student, all the while gauging the doctoral student's readiness to undertake doctoral-level research in the form of a Dissertation. Such research introduces new ideas to the profession, outstretches current thinking, generates path-breaking, leading edge contributions, discovers new truths and pushes the intellectual boundaries of the discipline.

To that end, the Portfolio examination (presentation) will provide doctoral students with the opportunity to demonstrate the extent to which they have synthesized prior and emerging knowledge into a **substantive intellectual awareness** (conceptual, theoretical, methodological (research paradigms) and analytical) that enables them to successfully undertake and complete a research study (Dissertation) that contributes to and extends scholarship within the discipline of education.

Grading the Portfolio Examination

For several weeks prior to the Portfolio oral examination (presentation), the Supervisory committee and the External Examiner will have been assessing the Portfolio in preparation for the doctoral student's oral presentation. Assessing the Portfolio is irreducibly an interpretive act. By its nature, the doctoral student's narrative provides his or her interpretation of the contents and the process attendant to the creation of the Portfolio. Through its own interpretative process, the Supervisory committee and the External Examiner also will bring their own interpretation to the Portfolio and to the doctoral student's oral presentation.

The Portfolio will be graded as a pass or fail, with Examiners judging both (a) the contents (artifacts and narrative) and (b) the doctoral student's oral presentation of the Portfolio. A set of criteria has been developed by the IDAC for the assessment process, all the while open to interpretation both by the doctoral student and the Examiners:

1. *contents* (contains all required material, especially 2-3 items in each of the five principal competency areas set out in Table 4, and the Narrative);
2. *intellectual scope* (collection represents evidence of intellectual progress, evidenced by both the actual artifacts and the accompanying Narrative);
3. *relevance* (artifacts and Narrative are appropriate in that they enable the Examiners to judge student's competency in five principal areas as set out in Table 4);
4. *depth* (student's academic stance per artifacts and Narrative is supported by intellectually rich interpretation, critique and analysis);
5. *academic rigour* (high level of scholarship, indicative of progress towards meeting doctoral student outcomes (see Appendix 2) and five principal areas as set out in Table 4);
6. *intellectual accuracy* (clarity, correctness and rigour when using any concepts, principles and theories);
7. *coherence of organization* (the logic used to arrange the collection enabled the articulation of intellectual connections);
8. *quality of oral presentation* (ability to field questions and intellectually engage with the audience); and,
9. *writing mechanics/technical* (spelling, grammar, punctuation, referencing style, et cetera) (other criteria if art-based artifacts).

Mode of Participation During Oral Examination

Parties to the Portfolio oral presentation may participate in person or via video or teleconference, *if* circumstances warrant.

Notice of Pass or Fail

In a private session immediately following the presentation and question period (on the same day), the Supervisory committee and the External Examiner will decide whether the oral examination warrants a pass or fail grade. Once a decision of Pass or Fail has been reached, the Examiners will complete and sign the Portfolio Examination Assessment Report form. The doctoral student will be informed about the outcome of the Portfolio examination immediately following the Supervisory Committee's decision, on the same day. The Portfolio Examination Assessment Report form will be filed with the Doctoral Program Office.

If Pass, Change in Status to Doctoral Candidate

If the doctoral student successfully presents his or her Portfolio in the oral examination, he or she becomes a *Doctoral Candidate* and is eligible to enrol in the Proposal and Dissertation course.

Policy for Failed Portfolio

Normally, a failed Portfolio oral examination will result in termination from the doctoral program, even if other doctoral courses have been successfully completed. Doctoral students may petition for a re-submission. To do this, they would submit a letter of petition to the IDAC within 30 days of the Portfolio examination form confirming the failing grade. This letter would describe the doctoral student's rationale for a second submission and examination. If the IDAC approves the re-submission (in consultation with the Supervisory Committee), the doctoral student may resubmit within three to six months. The same Supervisory Committee and External Examiner will assess the second submission and oral presentation. If the doctoral student fails on the second attempt, the doctoral student will be terminated from the doctoral program. As well, normally, if the doctoral student fails to provide the re-submission within the three to six months allotted for the task, the failing grade stands and he or she will be terminated from the program.

Expectations for Attendance of Other Doctoral Students

It will be important that doctoral students in the program make all efforts to attend one another's oral examinations in order to provide mutual support, to benefit from knowledge sharing, and to prepare them for what to expect in their own oral examination. Typically, the Doctoral Program Administrative Assistant to the IDAC will post notices via email to notify doctoral students when and where a Comprehensive Portfolio examination is taking place.



Part 10 — The Proposal

Upon successfully passing the Comprehensive Portfolio oral examination, doctoral candidates are eligible to register in GEDU 9100/EDUC 899Z and begin to work on their Proposal, leading to their scholarship for their Dissertation. This Proposal must show evidence of strong research and scholarly promise, clearly identify the topic or area of the study within the context of literature in the field, and represent a significant and substantial contribution to the field of study.

The Proposal will be defended publicly, normally within six months, but no more than one year, following the successful completion of the Comprehensive Portfolio. There is no External Examiner for the Proposal. It will be permissible for students to attend a virtual Dissertation *Proposal* defence that can be conducted using videoconferencing technology. The following procedures will be followed for the Proposal defence:

- The candidate will provide the Supervisory Committee with a copy of his or her Proposal no fewer than three weeks before the Proposal defence is scheduled.
- The Proposal defence will be scheduled in consultation with the student and participating committee members. In collaboration with participating institutions, the IDAC will ensure that the student's university of record posts public notification of the defence two weeks prior to the date.
- At the defence, the candidate will present the Proposal, answer questions from the Supervisory Committee, and discuss the implications of the research.
- Candidates will be informed as to whether the Proposal has passed examination immediately following the Proposal defence meeting, via signatories on the *Dissertation Proposal Approval Form*.

Part 11 — The Dissertation

While still registered in GEDU 9100 (Acadia students now register in EDUC 8990), doctoral candidates normally will defend their Dissertation within three years after their Comprehensive Portfolio examination (normally, four years into the program). Those doctoral students who opted to postpone their Portfolio oral examination until the end of their second year of the program, normally will defend their Dissertation within five years of starting the program. The intention of this timeline is to allow for a year of residency (courses and Portfolio), a year to complete the Proposal and two to three years to complete the Dissertation. The final defence of the completed Dissertation will take place no later than five years after entry into the doctoral program, unless an extension is granted by the IDGC and the candidate's University of Record. The final Dissertation defence shall be conducted at a face-to-face meeting. The Dissertation final defence will be completed according to the following guidelines:

- The Dissertation final defence will not be scheduled unless the candidate is currently registered in GEDU 9100/EDUC 8990, has completed all academic and IDAC-required program requirements (GEDU 9001-9010/EDUC 8013-8109, 899Z), and has paid all due fees (including the program continuation fee).

- In consultation with the Supervisory Committee, the doctoral Supervisor will recommend a list of suitable External Examiners for the Dissertation, people who are at arms length from the candidate (at least four names). While the External Examiner will usually be engaged in aligned research, he or she will not be known personally or professionally to the candidate, and must be from a university outside the Program. IDAC will rank order the Examiners from this list and submit their selection for approval by the candidate's University of Record's Graduate Studies Office. The Office of Graduate Studies will contact the first Examiner to arrange details of the examination. This process will continue until an Examiner can be found who agrees to serve on the Committee. In the event that an Examiner cannot be found, the Office of Graduate Studies will direct IDAC to contact the Supervisory Committee for another roster of Examiners, and the process will begin again until someone can be identified.

- The External Examiner will serve as a third reader. The External will read the near final (penultimate) draft of the Dissertation and send written approval to the Supervisory Committee that s/he feels it is ready for defence.

- If the External Examiner cannot provide this approval, s/he must prepare a written statement setting out pertinent issues perceived as shortcomings significant enough to delay the oral defence (i.e., weak theoretical underpinnings, misalignment between research methodology and research design, issues of rigour in method(s) and/or analysis protocols). The External Examiner's statement (which should be returned within one month of receiving the draft and will be added to the candidate's file) will be shared with the candidate who will work with their Committee to address the concerns, at which point the Dissertation will be sent back to the External Reviewer again.

- When the External Examiner has approved the thesis as ready for defence, the Dissertation defence date will be scheduled in consultation with the candidate, participating committee members and the External Examiner (all signatories on the *Dissertation Defence Notice Form*). Assisted by participating institutions, the IDAC will insure that the candidate's University of Record posts public notification of the Dissertation defence two weeks prior to the date.

- The penultimate copy of the Dissertation (already approved by the External Reviewer as ready for defence) will be submitted to each member of the candidate's Supervisory Committee a minimum of 30 working days (six weeks) before the proposed defence date for review and feedback. In the meantime, the External Examiner will be asked to prepare for his or her attendance at the Dissertation Defence Examination in person or via video or teleconference.



- At the defence, candidates will present their Dissertation and discuss the implications of their research. Candidates then will answer questions from the External Examiner, from the Supervisory Committee and, in closing, from the public gallery.

- In a private session immediately following the presentation and question period, the External Examiner and Supervisory Committee will decide on the acceptability of the Dissertation. Candidates will be informed about the outcome of the Dissertation defence immediately following the committee decision, on the same day. The Examiners will return with one of the following four assessments:

A. *Unconditional pass*

The External Examiner and members of the Supervisory Committee, including the Dissertation Supervisor, sign a *Dissertation Defence Assessment Form*. Candidates can submit the Dissertation to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for printing without revision.

B. *Conditional pass with minor revisions*

The External Examiner and members of the Supervisory Committee, *excluding* the Dissertation Supervisor, sign the *Dissertation Defence Assessment Form*.

Candidate is required to complete minor revisions that do not require substantial alteration of the content, argument or implications of the thesis before submitting the Dissertation to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for printing.

The Dissertation Supervisor will be entrusted to oversee the completion of these revisions and will withhold her/his signature from the *Dissertation Defence Assessment Form* until the revisions identified at the defence are satisfactorily completed.

The candidate must normally complete all revisions within one month of the Dissertation defence.

C. *Conditional pass with major revisions*

The External Examiner signs the *Dissertation Defence Assessment Form,* but Supervisory Committee members and Dissertation Supervisor do not.

Candidate is required to complete major revisions that include alteration of the content, argument or implications of the thesis before submitting the Dissertation to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for printing.

The Supervisory Committee will be entrusted to oversee the completion of these revisions and will withhold their signatures from the *Dissertation Defence Assessment Form* until the revisions identified at the defence are finished.

The candidate must complete all revisions within one month of the Dissertation defence.

D. *Fail*

The External Examiner and Supervisory Committee do not sign the *Dissertation Defence Assessment Form* accepting the thesis.

The candidate is required to withdraw from the PhD program and is not permitted to resubmit the Dissertation for approval.

Candidates will be notified in writing of completion of their Dissertation and all doctoral study requirements within two weeks following their submission of a final and approved copy of their Dissertation to library at their University of Record, according to the requirements for thesis submissions at that institution.

Part 12 — Student Resources

On-Campus Resources

All three universities have long-standing Student Affairs offices, with their own Deans or Directors. They exist to provide students with resources to help to develop the students' potential. Because all three universities already have graduate programs, these offices will be able to handle issues faced by doctoral students: time management, perhaps housing, finances and money, stress management, personal counselling, health, writing resources and specialized support for students with disabilities.

- Acadia University http://students.acadiau.ca/student-services.html
- Mount Saint Vincent University http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/studentservices/default.aspx
- St. Francis Xavier University http://www.stfx.ca/resources

Graduate Student/Studies Associations

Doctoral students are encouraged to track policy and issue-related conversations at several national graduate-related associations (their websites, documents, briefs and conferences):

- *Association of Canadian Deans of Education* (ACDE) brings together the Canadian deans and Directors of education to focus on the governance and development of faculties and departments of education http://www.csse-scee.ca/associations/about/acde
- *Canadian Federation of Students* (CFS) enables students' unions to collectively pool their voices and resources http://www.cfs-fcee.ca
- *National Graduate Caucus (*NGC) is a separate caucus within the CFS uniting the 60,000 graduate student members of the CFS. The NGC is the largest graduate student organisation in Canada, and the only one with an office in Ottawa to lobby federal decision-makers. http://www.cfs-fcee.ca/ngc/english/ngc.php
- *Canadian Association for Graduate Studies* (CAGS) brings together 57 Canadian universities with graduate programs, two national graduate student associations, the three federal research-granting agencies and organizations having an interest in graduate studies. http://www.cags.ca/pages/intro.php
- *Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences* (CFHSS), represents more than 50,000 researchers in 72 scholarly associations, 75 universities and colleges, and 6 affiliates and is the national voice for the university research and learning community in these disciplines http://www.fedcan.ca
- *Canadian Association of University Teachers* (CAUT) represents 65,000 teachers, librarians, researchers and other academic professionals and general staff, is an outspoken defender of academic freedom and works actively in the public interest to improve the quality and accessibility of post-secondary education in Canada http://www.caut.ca
- *Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada* (AUCC) works in an advocacy role with governments to promote higher education in Canada, including issues such as funding, research, international programs, and improved student assistance http://www.aucc.ca



Part 13 — Graduation

Doctoral candidates graduate from the institution that is home to their Supervisor. In place at each home university are specific policies and procedures with regard to graduation and convocation procedures. For further information, please refer to home university websites as well as to the home university office of Graduate Studies in Education.

Acadia University	*Mount Saint Vincent University*	*St. Francis Xavier University*
http://convocation.acadiau.ca	http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/studentservices/registrarsoffice/convocation/default.aspx	http://www.stfx.ca/about/convocation
http://gradstudies.acadiau.ca	http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/programsdepartments/graduatestudiesgeneralinformation/default.aspx	http://www.mystfx.ca/academic/graduate-studies/index.html

Appendix 1

Qualifying Research Paper

Why a Qualifying Research Paper? (QRP)

First, the purpose of the QRP is to demonstrate that the applicant is *capable* of conducting research at the level required of a master's thesis.

Second, the purpose of the QRP is to demonstrate the applicant's *potential* for undertaking the advanced research activity expected in a doctoral program.

Independent Nature of the QRP

The QRP is an independent research study. The applicant *assumes complete responsibility* for the research, including the identification of a research problem, explication of the theoretical framework, a detailed literature review, and the research design process, all in a manner commensurate with the rigour appropriate for the research methodology employed. The QRP must be submitted at the time of application. It becomes a key component in the admission decision process.

Four Modes of Expression Accepted for the QRP

A. The QRP requirement can be fulfilled by submitting an original piece of research undertaken specifically for the purpose of applying for admission to the Inter-University Doctoral program in Educational Studies.

B. The QRP requirement can be fulfilled by submitting research that the applicant has conducted prior to applying for admission to the PhD program. This includes the four following research-based initiatives:

- peer reviewed publication/conference paper;
- an expansion or re-working of a study conducted prior to applying to the doctoral program;
- rigorously adjudicated, research-based scholarship such as: an independent graduate project, an independent or directed studies course project; an arts-based or community-based research initiative, or other artifacts of ways of knowing; and
- research that was part of the applicant's work responsibilities, including the following. In each case, to demonstrate the independent nature of the scholarship, the applicant must expressly describe his or her role in the conceptualization of the submission and provide supporting documentation from others involved with the work:
    - government policy reports,
    - independent agency research reports, and
    - curriculum development/implementation that has been reviewed and/or adopted

C. The QRP requirement can be fulfilled by submitting a research paper that uses data already obtained by someone else, which is properly accredited. In such a case, care must be exercised to ensure there is adequate room for the demonstration of the applicant's initiative and originality and ability to undertake independent research.

D. The QRP requirement can be fulfilled by submitting a fully-documented research Proposal that demonstrates an applicant's ability to conceptualize, plan and/or implement a major initiative reflecting originality and the intellectual ability to think conceptually, at the abstract level, but with a practical and/or policy focus, if relevant.

http://faculty.msvu.ca/educationphd/Prospective_Students/Apply_Now/Qualifying_Research_Paper.pdf

Appendix 2
Inter-University PhD in Educational Studies Doctoral Student Outcomes

The ability of the graduates of this doctoral program to step into the role of educational researcher is contingent upon several factors:

- what they know when they leave the program (knowledge),
- what skills and competencies they acquire during the program (skills), and
- the affective gains that they experience (principles, attitudes, new meanings, value systems, beliefs, ideologies).

The **Knowledge-Attitudes-Skills (KAS**) identified for this doctoral program reflect the outcomes perspective required by the MPHEC. They are designed to augment doctoral students' development in preparation for them to become *educational researchers who will be public intellectuals concerned with supporting education and learnings for social change*.

Knowledge

- A comprehensive, detailed and well-founded understanding of educational theory, especially the historical and philosophical study of education;
- A sophisticated theoretical grasp of the history and philosophy of inquiry in the social sciences and education;
- In-depth, focused knowledge of several issues in educational studies related to curriculum studies, literacies, lifelong learning, inclusive education, education foundations and leadership, and psychological aspects of education;
- A thorough understanding of a substantial body of knowledge that is at the forefront Educational Studies; and,
- A substantive knowledge of a wide range of methodological approaches to research and attendant methods for data collection and analysis.

Attitudes

- Respect and appreciation for the scope of the area that they are exploring within the context of the limitations of their own work as well as the discipline of education, including an appreciation for the complexity of knowledge and the potential contributions of other interpretations, methods and disciplines;
- Intellectual independence and autonomy to remain engaged and current and be able to evaluate the broader implications of applying educational knowledge to complex leadership situations (capacity to be a professional, educational researcher and leader);
- A keen sense of self-awareness leading to engagement in meaningful reflection about their place in the discipline;
- Respect for the need to follow a flexible course of action leading to personal self-sufficiency and professional achievements;
- Awareness of, and adherence to, professional codes of conduct and standards as they practice and engage in research;
- Leadership through successful guidance and mentoring of co-workers and co-learners, and do so by articulating an empowering vision and helping others reach their full potential (transformative leadership instead of transactional leadership); and,
- Contributions to society through active citizenship engagement (local, national and global) thereby respecting the link between research and civic and social responsibilities.

Appendix 2 (Continued)

Skills

- Apply advanced analytical and creative skills, particularly in relation to theory development, leadership and evaluation;
- Demonstrate full expertise in one or more specific research methods;
- Demonstrate a well-honed capacity to teach in the university context;
- Demonstrate excellent writing and research skills essential in contemporary scholarly contexts;
- Apply conceptual understanding and methodological competence to: generate new knowledge at the forefront of the field of education, make informed judgments about complex disciplinary issues that might require conceptualizing new methods and perspectives, and produce original research or advanced scholarship that qualifies for peer review and merits publication;
- Undertake pure, applied and/or interpretative research conducted at an advanced level, and apply the knowledge gained in ways that contribute to, advance and push the intellectual boundaries of the discipline;
- Communicate complex and/or ambiguous ideas, issues and conclusions, clearly and effectively (in this case, through course work, the Comprehensive Portfolio (with over 10 knowledge artifacts) and a Dissertation);
- Communicate effectively, concisely and correctly in written, spoken and visual forms to a variety of audiences using a variety of media;
- Employ interpersonal skills with advisors and fellow colleagues thorough one-on-one as well as network relationships, at the university and in the wider community;
- Use reflective, rational, and critical thinking to gather and interpret information in order form judgments;
- Analyze and solve problems by understanding and synthesizing current knowledge (entails appreciating the relationships between disciplines, ideas and contexts);
- Apply creative and divergent thinking leading to the conception of new ideas and practices with the intention to improve and advance current knowledge (they will be intellectually curious and will value interdisciplinary inquiry);
- Demonstrate teaching competence explaining complex concepts in various contexts and adjusting instructions fully respecting their teaching style and others' learning styles;
- Manage research environments (manage finances, people, processes) and be able to report to appropriate officials;
- Translate research into knowledge that is understandable to non-specialists so as to bring highest benefits to society; and,
- Actively strive to bring their research to appropriate knowledge users and decision makers.