Doctoral Student Handbook

Studies in Teaching and Learning English as a Second Language
Faculty of Education

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Last updated: May 21, 2026

Table of Contents

Table of Contents
Welcome!
Program Description
Program Requirements
    Course Requirements
    Elective courses
    Ethics and Academic Citizenship Requirement
    Professional Development Requirement
    Candidacy and Oral Candidacy Examination
        Research Proposal Expectations
    Ethics Review
    Final Doctoral Examination
Graduation
Graduate Student Services
STUDENT PLAN OF STUDY

Welcome!

Welcome to the Studies in Teaching and Learning English as a Second Language doctoral program at the University of Alberta. This handbook describes the program and explains the procedures for successfully completing it.

We hope that you will find your studies enjoyable and rewarding. It is expected that all students and faculty in the program will keep this handbook as a major source of reference for the program. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the most recent copy of the handbook. This handbook is a guide to help you better understand your responsibilities as a graduate student, the resources available to you, and the regulations and policies that govern your program; however, you are ultimately responsible for making sure that you know all the requirements for completion of your degree.

Please note that regulations of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) are imposed by, interpreted by, and enforced by that Faculty, and our handbook is only a supplementary guide.

This handbook is only one of a number of documents with which students and faculty should be familiar. The contents of the following resources should be reviewed as well:

University of Alberta Calendar (https://calendar.ualberta.ca)

- Ensure that the current academic year has been selected

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
(https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies/index.html)
(https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies/current-students/doctoral-studies.html)

Educational Psychology Administrative Site
(https://sites.google.com/ualberta.ca/ed-psych/home)

Graduate Students Association
(https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-students-association/index.html)

Program Description

The doctoral program in Studies in Teaching and Learning English as a Second Language is designed to prepare students for careers as academics and researchers, consultants, specialist practitioners, and leadership roles in TESL. Programs are highly individualized, depending upon the student's prior education, experience, and interests. The PhD program provides flexibility for the student in terms of course work.

The Faculty in the TESL program are active researchers who have ongoing contact within classrooms, and whose work is published in journals such as *Applied Linguistics, Canadian Modern Language Review, Language Learning, Language Testing, Modern Language Journal, Studies in Second Language Acquisition, System, TESL Canada Journal, TESOL Journal* and *TESOL Quarterly*.

Program Requirements

Doctoral students must be enrolled full time. If you require part-time enrollment due to extenuating or personal circumstances, please contact our graduate students services administrator (essgrad1@ualberta.ca[1]) for information on how to proceed with a permission request.

Students in the doctoral program must:

- complete a minimum of 6 courses (21 credits) plus a dissertation.
- pass an oral candidacy exam.
- pass a final examination, which includes acceptance of a written dissertation and an oral defense of that dissertation

Overall Doctoral program requirements for The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research are described on the Doctoral Studies page.

Course Requirements

1. EDPY 680: Seminar in Teaching English as a Second Language *3 or equivalent

   This seminar will give doctoral students the opportunity to become acquainted with research and theory in educational linguistics. Prominent contemporary topics covered will include form-focused instruction, individual differences, discourse analysis, pragmatics, cognitive processing, pronunciation, oral fluency, learning strategies,

[1] Please note the email address may change. Refer to any notices you may have received from the Faculty of Education.

assessment, instructional methodology, and immigrant settlement experiences. Students will complete extensive reading for this course, and participate in weekly discussions. The final product will be a review and critique of a relevant topic in the form of a paper of publishable quality.

2. EDPY 612: Research Practicum in Psychological Studies in Education *6 or equivalent

   The purpose of this two-semester course is to help students acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to conduct applied research effectively. There are two components to the course: (a) the community research placement and (b) the professional development seminars. The community research placement (8 hours per week) will provide students with an opportunity to acquire experience in doing community-based research. Additionally, in every field there is tacit knowledge that is not covered systematically in most graduate curricula; thus, it is expected that the students' experiences in their research placement will provide exposure to this knowledge. The professional development seminars are designed to address a number of applied research topics, as well as expose students to a number of current professional issues facing those working in the research community.

3. A graduate research methods course *3

Elective courses

A minimum of three 3-credit courses, selected by the student and the Supervisory Committee from a selection of courses currently available.

A PhD student plan of study document may be found on the last page of this manual. Please complete this form in consultation with your supervisor and submit it to our graduate students services administrator (essgrad1@ualberta.ca). Student plans of study vary from year to year so please refer to the student plan of study provided the year you enrolled in the program.

Ethics and Academic Citizenship Requirement

For complete information about this requirement, please refer to the university calendar (https://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=12235#ethics-and-academic-citizenship-requirement).

The FGSR Academic Integrity and Ethics requirement is mandatory for all University of Alberta graduate students and **must be completed by the end of their first term of registration in their degree program.**

The Ethics and Academic Citizenship Requirement for doctoral students consists of two non-credit, self-paced online courses:

- INT D 710 - Ethics and Academic Citizenship (six hours)
- INT D 720 - Advanced Ethics and Academic Citizenship (two hours)

There are no instructional fees associated with this course. Course completion will appear on the student's transcript.

For additional information about INT D 710 Ethics and Academic Citizenship and INT D 720 Advanced Ethics and Academic Citizenship, and how to register, students should refer to the FGSR website.

Professional Development Requirement

For complete information about this requirement, please refer to the university calendar (https://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=12235#professional-development-requirement) and FGSR's website (https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies/professional-development/professional-development-requirement/index.html).

The FGSR Professional Development requirement is mandatory for all newly-admitted University of Alberta graduate students. The University of Alberta Professional Development Requirement includes an individualized career plan document called an Individual Development Plan (IDP) **within 18 months of the program's commencement** and the completion of 8 hours of professional development activities inspired by your career plan.

Candidacy and Oral Candidacy Examination

The candidacy examination occurs once all course work is completed, and typically within 3 years of the start of the PhD program. FGSR doctoral candidacy examinations requirements may be found in the university calendar (https://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=12236)

The candidacy examination is an oral examination, which is primarily intended to assess the student's knowledge of the discipline and their ability to to pursue and complete independent, original research at an advanced level.

Research Proposal Expectations

Prior to the candidacy examination, the student's supervisor will invite two fellow faculty members to serve on the candidacy committee. In consultation with the supervisor, the students will prepare a research proposal (75 pages maximum not including references and appendices; double spaced; 1-inch margins; 12 pt Times New Roman font). APA (7th ed.) format is required.

The research proposal should include the following sections:

- Introduction
- Definitions
- Literature Review
- Methodology
    - Ethical considerations and researcher positionality statement [if applicable])
    - Participant characteristics and recruitment [if applicable]

    - Descriptions of instruments (e.g., surveys; interview guides)
    - Data collection procedures
    - Data analysis
- Potential Contributions of the Study (transformative impact)
- Appendices (include the complete instruments, information letters, consent forms, invitations to participate, and any other material necessary to conduct the study)

Once the supervisor indicates the proposal is ready for candidacy committee review, the student will submit it to all candidacy committee members. Candidacy committee members then review the document and provide feedback. The student responds to the feedback, revises the document and prepares for the oral candidacy examination.

Ethics Review

After the student has passed the oral candidacy exam, as part of the Dissertation research process, candidates must:

- Review the University of Alberta Ethics Review requirements and if required, submit a Research Ethics Board (REB) application.
- Upon ethics approval from the appropriate Research Ethics Board (REB), additional ethics applications may need to be completed
    - Example 1: a Cooperative Activities Program (CAP) application. The CAP process applies to all proposed research projects involving the participation of human participants initiated by, or in collaboration with University of Alberta personnel seeking the involvement with a Cooperative Activities Program (CAP) district. CAP manages research activities involving following Edmonton-area school districts:
        - Edmonton Public Schools
        - Edmonton Catholic Schools
        - Elk Island Public Schools
        - St. Albert Public Schools
        - Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools
            - Please follow the CAP application process for school division approval process. For other types of additional ethics applications, please consult with your supervisor.
    - Example 2: NorQuest College Research Office
    - Example 3: MacEwan University Research Ethics Board
- Students may also wish to complete the Tri-Council's Course on Research Ethics (TCPS 2: CORE) on their own time. This is an self-paced online course that provides an introduction to the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS 2).

Final Doctoral Examination

After conducting the dissertation study, students must successfully complete and defend their doctoral thesis in a formal oral examination. Before the thesis is forwarded to the external examiner, the supervisory committee members must declare in writing to the supervisor(s) either that the thesis is of adequate substance and quality to warrant that the student proceed to the

final examination or that the thesis is unsatisfactory and the student should not be allowed to proceed to the final examination. The purpose of this process is to ensure the thesis is vetted by the supervisor(s) and all supervisory committee members and to verify that it is of sufficient substance and quality to proceed to the final examination.

The scope and quality of the dissertation must represent an advance in knowledge of the candidate's field of study and should be appropriate to form the basis for at least one refereed journal publication describing the methodology and results of the research. The rules and regulations governing final doctoral examinations can be found in the university calendar.

Graduation

On Completion of all requirements
There are two convocations each year, normally held in June and November. Students must apply for graduation on Bear Tracks in accordance with the deadlines published in the Academic Schedule

- note the “Last day for graduate students to apply through Bear Tracks to ensure graduation…” in the Academic Schedule.

Graduate Student Services

Your supervisor does not have the ability to assist you with completing administrative tasks such as manual course registrations or how to enroll in courses on Bear Tracks. However, the Faculty of Education has staff who can assist students with administrative tasks such as registration, leaves, etc. Please consult the material you received during student orientation to determine the appropriate person to contact for assistance.

STUDENT PLAN OF STUDY

Doctoral Program in Studies in Teaching and Learning English as a Second Language (TESL)

NAME: [First, Last]
ID#:
CURRENT ADDRESS:
POSTAL CODE:
TELEPHONE NO:
EMAIL ADDRESS
ADVISOR:

Doctoral students in this program must complete a minimum of 21 course credits, 12 of which are required core course credits, and 9 of which are elective course credits. Students must pass an oral candidacy examination, conduct dissertation research, and then write and defend a dissertation. The program must be completed within 6 years.

	Term/Yr Intended to be Taken (e.g., Fall 2026; Winter 2027)	**Completed (Y/N)**
Pre-requisite course		
EDPY 501 (*3) This course or an equivalent must be taken either prior to admission to the PhD Program, or as the first course completed in the program. It is in addition to the TESL PhD program requirements.		
Required Core Courses		
EDPY 680 (*3) Seminar in Teaching English as a Second Language		
EDPY 612 (*6) Research Practicum in Psychological Studies in Education (or equivalent)		
A 600-level graduate research methods course (*3) (or equivalent)		
Thesis 903		
Elective Courses (minimum 9 credits required)		
1. (*3)		
2. (*3)		
3. (*3)		
4. (*3)		
5. (*3)		
FGSR Academic Integrity and Ethics Training		
INT D 710: Ethics and Academic Citizenship		
INT D 720: Advanced Ethics and Academic Citizenship		
FGSR Professional Development Requirement		

• An Individual Development Plan must be completed within 18 months of program commencement • 8 hours of professional development activities must be completed within the first 3 years see FGSR's webpage for details		
Oral Candidacy Examination		
Final Doctoral Examination		

Date of initial planning | Approval of Advisor | Student Signature

The personal information requested on this form is collected under the authority of Section 33(c) of the Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act for the purpose of documenting students' progression through the PhD program in Studies in Teaching and Learning English as a Second Language. Questions regarding the collection, use or disposal of this information should be addressed to the Faculty of Education, University of Alberta, 11210 - 87 Avenue, Edmonton, AB, T6G 2G5 essgrad1@ualberta.ca