

# TRAUMA-SENSITIVE PRACTICE

## Graduate Certificate in Educational Studies

The GCES - Trauma-Sensitive Practice is a four-course experience designed to meet the needs of educators.

Through this certificate, you will:

- *Develop a nuanced understanding of what trauma means/is and understand the obvious and less-obvious causes of trauma*
- *Acquire a critical understanding of "kinds of" trauma and the different theories and approaches used to address trauma in diverse learning environments*
- *Engage in processes and practices such as somatic, contemplative, expressive-centred arts and practices, including reflection that can be used to support psycho-social, emotional, physical, and spiritual learning and trauma-impacted learning*
- *Demonstrate ways to integrate processes and practices such as expressive arts, journaling, movement, contemplation, and reflection across ages and disciplines relevant to your learning contexts*

**APPLICATIONS OPEN:**

**November 1, 2025**

**APPLICATION DEADLINE:**

**April 30, 2026**

**(Start in Fall 2026)**

For more information:

[uab.ca/gces](http://uab.ca/gces)

[gcesinfo@ualberta.ca](mailto:gcesinfo@ualberta.ca)

### Rise to the challenges of teaching every student.

The Graduate Certificate in Educational Studies (GCES) is for teaching professionals and other specialists in educational contexts seeking advanced professional education. The program consists of four-courses (12 credits) centred on trauma-sensitive practice.

The GCES is a cohort-based, part-time, varied-delivery program that suits your schedule and timelines.

## THE PROGRAM

This transdisciplinary four-course sequence is designed specifically for teachers, health-care professionals, and school staff (EAs, consultants, leaders) to build multi-perspectival knowledge and skills required to meet a wide-range of needs of children, youth, and adults, including trauma-based responses. Such understanding will be developed through strategies, methods, and intercultural pathways for diverse learning contexts. Trauma-sensitive pedagogy, trauma-informed practice, and trauma-specialized knowledge, as theory and praxis - with embodied practice integrated throughout - frame and shape the courses comprising the graduate certificate.

The certificate is built to facilitate studying without taking a leave from your career. You will be engaged in authentic tasks and experiences directly linked to your educational context.

## COURSES

- Fall Term I  
*EDU 595 Understanding Multiple Trauma Perspectives*
- Winter Term I  
*EDU 595 Mediating Trauma through Place-Conscious Learning & Relationships*
- Fall Term II  
*EDU 595 Embodying Images: Trauma and the Mythopoetic Imagination*
- Winter Term II  
*EDU 595 Embracing Expressive Processes as Trauma-Sensitive Practice*

*The Graduate Certificate may be laddered into some M.Ed. Programs (see reverse).*

## ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- Four-year baccalaureate degree (or equivalent) from a recognized academic institution and a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.0
- Two years of pedagogic experience
- English Language Proficiency  
*(more information on website)*



**UNIVERSITY  
OF ALBERTA**

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## *Graduate Certificate in Educational Studies*

### Course Descriptions

#### **EDU 595 Understanding Multiple Trauma Perspectives**

Trauma can be personal, familial, cultural, ethnic, and collective (national, religious, geographic). Without a witness and a means to express and release the event, trauma often manifests as a symptom, disturbing multiple areas of functioning (education, health, vitality, relationships, vocation, even financial capacity). Traumatic experiences leave traces, whether large scale—on our pasts, societies, and cultures—or small—on our families, pets, students, patients, and communities, with dark effects imperceptibly passed down through generations. They leave traces on our minds and emotions, on our capacity for joy, vitality, and intimacy, even on our biology and immune systems. This course considers current theories of trauma as well as ways to explore healing trauma through engaging processes that extend beyond the intellectual, such as breathing, grounding, storying, moving, rhythm, image-making, reflecting, and writing—all of which can be integrated into diverse learning context.

#### **EDU 595 Mediating Trauma through Place-Conscious Learning and Relationships**

This course intends to further skills for effective trauma-sensitive practice by focusing on the relational activities of place-conscious learning. Just beyond the introductory eco-critical examination of literature highlighting decolonizing, Indigenist, analytical psychological, and psychogeographical approaches to placeful learning will be opportunities to build capacity through the practice and design of activities to deepen knowledge of: the ethics of place, somatic experiencing, places of otherness, emotional topography, archetypal terrains. Additional time will be allotted for collaborative learning to explore how place-bonding experiences, memories, and relationships can be applied as support for intercultural understanding and the recovery of health in schooling conditions.

#### **EDU 595 Embodying Images: Trauma and the Mythopoetic Imagination**

This course offers in-depth understanding of the relationship between body, words, and memories by focusing on the familial, cultural, gendered, ancestral, and archetypal underpinnings of traumatic responses. It explores and adapts strategies and tools from trauma specialized approaches to trauma relevant to learning spaces. Embodied reading and writing, found poetry, archetypal amplification, fragmentation journaling, and pastiche are gateways to the mythopoetic imagination—a form of metaphorical and symbolic knowing, sensitive to the unconscious movements of the bodymind. The practical objectives of the course are how to use such knowledge for personal wellbeing and to enhance learning with trauma-sensitive instruction and assessment.

#### **EDU 595 Embracing Expressive Processes as Trauma-Sensitive Practice**

This transdisciplinary course further develops the multiple trauma perspectives introduced and developed in the previous courses. It looks more deeply at memory, attachment theory, neural integration (with bilateral and sensorimotor practices), and contemplation. It draws upon place, land, and the arts to enter creative processes so to reconnect deeply with the self and relations. Developing practices (breathing, grounding, visualizing, amplifying, and imagining) in this way helps us move through trauma, loss, grief, and life transitions.

### Laddering into a Master's Degree

The Graduate Certificate in Educational Studies can be laddered into the Master of Education in Educational Studies (MES).

The MES consists of 10 courses (30 credits); eight core courses and two additional electives. Students with a GCES receive 12 credits in advanced standing, reducing the number of courses in the master's to six. Courses are online with synchronous components.

#### Courses in the MES:

EDU 510  
Fundamentals of Educational Research

EDU 514  
Planning for Educational Change

EDU 515  
Conducting Educational Research

EDU 900  
Program Synthesis

Plus two graduate-level electives

Details on the  
MES Ladder Program  
are available at [uab.ca/MESLDR](http://uab.ca/MESLDR)

Contact: [mesinfo@ualberta.ca](mailto:mesinfo@ualberta.ca)

### The GCES can also ladder into the following:

- *Master of Education in Elementary Education - Curriculum and Pedagogy (online and in-person options available)*
- *Master of Education in Secondary Education (in-person only)*

Contact Dr. William Dunn at  
[wdunn@ualberta.ca](mailto:wdunn@ualberta.ca) for details.



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