

**Department of Educational Psychology  
University of Alberta**

**The Role of MEd Supervisor (Thesis Route)**

This document is designed to help faculty in the Department of Educational Psychology in the “best practice” of MEd supervision. It should be interpreted as a guide.

**Prior to program commencement**

Help the student to plan his/her coursework

- *Help plan the required courses for the student’s specific program of study*
- *Advise student on suitable optional courses (inside and outside Department)*
- *Place program of coursework on file in the Graduate Student Office*
- *Consult with student when changes are to be made to the program of coursework and place changes on file*
- *Advise student of FGSR 8-hour ethics requirement*

Work out a time-path with the student to complete the program within the required period

- *When coursework should be completed*
- *When the Final Oral examination should be completed*

**First year of program**

Provide early direction in initial research study formulation and planning

- *Discuss general area of research interest*
- *If appropriate, discuss how the student’s research might fit into supervisor’s program of research*
- *Request a 2-3 page outline of proposed research*
- *Direct student towards relevant literature*
- *Discuss possible courses that might be relevant*

Provide regular feedback on the student’s research. Demonstrate interest and enthusiasm in what student is doing

- *Meet with the student at least every two months*
- *Request specific undertakings for each meeting*
- *Discuss various formats for the thesis*
- *Discuss appropriate research methods (quantitative, qualitative, mixed, etc.)*
- *Discuss how chapters or papers should be organised, etc.*

Return written submissions within the time frame negotiated with the student (usually within two weeks)

- *Provide specific and detailed feedback that can be systematically followed by the student*
- *Recommend other "model" theses for student to read*

Provide constructive criticism if the student does not meet professional research standards. Make every effort to identify problems early in the program. Provide advice on reformulating the student's goals and plans, if needed.

- *Provide advice on possible courses that need to be taken*
- *Direct to specific faculty members that might be helpful*
- *Advise on background reading and preparation*
- *Advise on how to develop appropriate writing skills, etc.*
- *Consult with Associate Chair, if necessary*

## **Second year and beyond**

Provide continuous advice and support for the student's research study

- *Establish a regular meeting schedule*
- *Ask students to come prepared with an account of what has been accomplished since last meeting*
- *Ensure the ethics approval form, if required, has been completed and approved before any research with human participants is undertaken*

Provide critical feedback on the student's thesis document

Help the student prepare for the Final Oral examination

- *Mutually agree upon an examining committee for the thesis*
- *Supervisor contacts the examining committee members*
- *Supervisor makes all arrangements for the Final Oral exam, including refreshments*
- *Remind student to prepare and bring CV to the Final Oral exam*

Encourage and support the dissemination of the student's dissertation research

- *See Department document, "Graduate Student Opportunities"*

Provide support for the student's search for post MEd employment

- *Provide extensive and detailed letters of reference*
- *Direct to places advertising employment opportunities (journals, websites, etc.)*
- *Make the occasional phone call*

## Ongoing

Involve the student in existing research programs and encourage and provide opportunities for early dissemination of research

- *See Department document, "Graduate Student Opportunities"*

Help the student complete all documentation requirements for the Department of Educational Psychology, the Faculty of Education and FGSR

- *E.g. applications for travel funding, research assistantships, scholarships; research ethics forms, etc.*

Where possible, provide support and encouragement in time of research, financial or personal crisis

- *Stay current with research funding availability*
- *Consult with Associate Chair*
- *Contact the student if (s)he is absent for an extended period*
- *Continuously monitor the student's progress through the program*

Ensure continuing supervision during any sabbatical leave or leave of absence from the university

- *Inform student early of absences*
- *Provide regular contact via email, telephone, or Skype*
- *If necessary, arrange for an alternate supervisor*

Keep all documentation (emails, letters, forms, notes for meetings/phone calls, notes from examinations, etc.) related to the student's program.

**Prior to meeting with their supervisor, students should be encouraged to review the document, "Student-Supervisor Relationships" distributed by the Graduate Students' Association (GSA) at the University of Alberta.**