

PHD Progression Checklist

Graduate Program in Education (GPE) | Faculty of Education, York University

Revised July 2026

1. Registration and Continuous Enrolment

☐	Maintain continuous registration (fall, winter, and summer terms) including payment of applicable fees, through to and including the term in which all program requirements are successfully completed. Why this matters: Blocks are placed on registration if you don't maintain continuous registration. This can result in loss of terms to complete your degree, loss of funding, suspension of approval for studies with ethics approval, holds on milestone progression and oral exams, petitions to appeal FGS decisions, and withdrawal from the program.
☐	Once coursework is complete and you are working on a DP/CE, enrol in EDUC 6000 (non-credit registration placeholder) each term.

2. Supervisor and Supervisory Committee Milestones

☐	Once you have met with your assigned supervisor, have the supervisor officially assigned by submitting a Supervisor and Supervisory Committee Approval form to the Faculty of Graduate Studies SSC portal by the end of Term 2. Supervisors must accept the role via a system notification link. Why this matters: It is essential that supervisors and their students begin developing a relationship early to understand your research goals and provide appropriate and ongoing guidance (for example, literature review on background, theories, and methodologies to inform your work). FGS blocks registration after term 5 if a supervisor is not listed in the SSC portal to signal that this is a necessary step to complete before moving forward.
☐	Hold regular meetings with your supervisor. FGS suggests supervisors meet with their grad students once a month and requires a meeting at least once per term. Keep notes or a log of meeting dates and key decisions on timelines.
☐	By the end of Term 8 or before, have your supervisory committee officially assigned by submitting a second Supervisor and Supervisory Committee Approval form to the SSC portal to make any changes to supervision and include two committee members, who must be appointed to the Faculty of Education (externals may be added in consultation with the GPD). Committee members must accept the role in the SSC portal via a system notification link. Your supervisor must also be finalized by this time. If roles have changed then a change in supervision form must be submitted to the SSC portal. FGS will block registration after term 8 if you do not have a finalized supervisor and committee in place to support submission of your proposal milestone. Why this matters: In your supervision meetings, you should be having conversations about the shape your proposal is taking and who might be aligned with relevant expertise to support it as committee members. Your supervisor may approach potential members on your behalf or ask you to meet with them first. In some limited circumstances, you or your supervisor may decide that another supervisor and/or committee member is a better fit as your thinking about the proposal develops.

3. Dissertation Proposal Development/Comprehensive Exam (DPCE)

Consult both the [FGS guidelines](#) for Dissertation Proposals and our [Faculty's policy on our combined DPCE process when preparing your document](#). **The recommended length is between 35 pages to a maximum of 50 pages double-spaced, not including references**, as students are expected to consolidate their knowledge into a concise and focused proposal.

☐	Begin work on your Dissertation Proposal/Comprehensive Exam in consultation with your supervisor and committee. Students and supervisory committees must consider the feasibility of research proposals to align with term and funding limits and ethics guidelines on whether ethics review is required. At minimum, the proposal must include: a purpose/goals statement in accessible language, a literature review situating the purpose and conceptual framing of the study, research question(s), proposed methodology with rationale and anticipated timelines, and expected contribution to knowledge, including proposed format of the thesis . Include the title, supervisor name, and committee members.
☐	Share draft proposals with supervisory committee members and incorporate their feedback. This is a scholarly skill of responding to peer review that requires learning to understand and navigate diverse perspectives – ask your supervisor for guidance in this process.
☐	By the beginning of term 9, if not before , obtain approval from all committee members to proceed to the Dissertation Proposal/Comprehensive Oral Examination (DP/CE). Why this matters: FGS blocks registration after term 9 if the proposal is not submitted for approval to the proposal milestone portal.

4. Scheduling the DP/CE

☐	Confirm that you are registered as active for the term in which the Comprehensive Exam is scheduled to take place. The exam cannot be scheduled without this confirmation.
☐	Submit the completed and signed Request for Comprehensive Exam form to gradprogram@edu.yorku.ca at least 2 weeks prior to the scheduled exam. Include all required committee signatures.

5. Complete Proposal Milestone

☐	Supervisor submits the completed and signed Comprehensive Exam Final Report (Oral Examination Report) to gradprogram@edu.yorku.ca for GPE review.
☐	In consultation with your supervisor, complete any required revisions and upload the approved proposal to the FGS Proposal Milestone Portal . Fill out all necessary forms on this portal, which includes questions about whether ethics approval is required. Email your supervisor, committee members, gradprogram@edu.yorku.ca and the GPD so that they can be watching for system notifications, as they all need to complete their approval in the portal. Why this matters: This process can take 2-4 weeks but should not take more – please keep the GPD informed.

6. FGS Proposal Approval

IMPORTANT: FGS will review your proposal via the Graduate Proposal Milestone Portal to check if an ethics application is required. **Please note this can take up to 8 weeks.** An identification code will be sent to you once this review is complete. **DO NOT** begin your research until you have received approval from FGS.

	PATHWAY A: No ethics review required
☐	Once FGS proposal approval confirms that your project does NOT require ethics approval, proceed to work on your dissertation.
	PATHWAY B: Ethics review required
☐	While waiting for GPD/FGS review to confirm if ethics review is required, complete the mandatory TCPS tutorial prior to conducting any research involving human participants and consult with your supervisor on the components of your ethics application. Why this matters:

	- The certificate of completion is required to upload as part of your online ethics application. It is a mandatory Government of Canada training module for all researchers doing research with human participants. York's office of research ethics also has guidance that must be followed in preparing components of your application, and your supervisor must also sign approval of the completed application. - Please also note that research with Indigenous communities, research with children and adolescents, and research on sensitive topics often requires extra time and may require additional ethics approvals beyond York's ethics application process
☐	Once FGS proposal approval is confirmed, they will provide you with an identification code which you will need to submit your ethics protocol separately to the Research Ethics Portal. We recommend working with your supervisor on drafting components of the ethics application, such as recruitment plans and informed consent letters, while waiting for this code. Do NOT begin data collection until both approvals are confirmed: FGS proposal and ORE ethics. Why this matters: If you begin data collection prior to these approvals, you may be liable to lawsuits. Research with human participants is subject to legal regulations in Canada which require research ethics approval and ongoing institutional oversight.

7. Dissertation Research/Preparing for the Oral Exam

IMPORTANT: Check the [FGS Important Dates page](#) for **graduation eligibility deadlines** and plan your exam and submission timeline accordingly. We recommend scheduling of oral exams **not later than the beginning of your last term**, to allow time for organizing the examination committee, scheduling the exam, completing revisions as required, and preparing/uploading the formatted accepted thesis.

☐	Conduct your research under the supervision of your supervisory committee and draft your thesis. Consult the FGS guidelines for the Preparation and Examination of Dissertations throughout.
☐	Once your supervisory committee agrees the thesis is ready for oral examination and have secured 2 arms-length examiners (one internal from York, one external from another institution), your supervisor must submit a completed and signed Recommendation for Oral Examination form to gradprogram@edu.yorku.ca at least 7 weeks prior to day of exam to allow time for GPE and FGS approval. Why this matters: external examiners will be contacted directly by FGS to provide a written report about the examinability of the thesis prior to the scheduled date of exam.
☐	The Graduate Program Assistant will initiate the exam request via the Graduate Oral Exam Portal, in consultation with the GPD. Supervisory committee members and the GPD must confirm via the portal before submission to FGS for final approval. They should be monitoring their emails for system notifications.
☐	Provide an e-copy pdf of your thesis to each member of your supervisory committee no less than 20 business days before the oral examination. For the internal (arms-length at York) and external (arms-length from another institution) examiner, either your supervisor or the GPE Office can send the copy. If you would like the GPE Office to send it with a memo from the Graduate Program Director, contact gradprogram@edu.yorku.ca and submit your e-copy at that time.

8. The Oral Examination and Post-Exam Steps

☐	Immediately following the oral exam, your supervisor submits the completed and signed Oral Examination Report to gradprogram@edu.yorku.ca for GPE and FGS approval. FGS will not open your Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) record until this form is received.
If revisions are required	
☐	Work through revisions in consultation with your supervisor. "Specified" revisions must be completed within 3 weeks for editorial revisions or 3 months for minor revisions . A major revision may require more time (FGS policy effective September 2026).
☐	Once revisions are complete and your supervisor approves them, your supervisor submits the completed and signed Revisions Approved Memorandum to gradprogram@edu.yorku.ca for GPE and FGS approval. The ETD record cannot be opened until FGS receives this form.

9. Copyright and Permissions

Address copyright early, ideally before or during the writing stage. Permission requests can take significant time and will delay your ETD submission if left too late.

☐	Review your thesis for any third-party copyrighted material (tables, figures, images, maps, graphs, previously published chapters or sections) that is not covered by the fair dealing provisions of the Canadian Copyright Act.
☐	If copyright permissions are required, contact copyright holders as early as possible and retain copies of all requests and approvals.
☐	Submit copies of any required copyright permissions to the Graduate Milestones and Progression Coordinator at FGS before finalizing your ETD submission.

10. Final ETD Submission

IMPORTANT: Your degree completion date is the date your final ETD submission is accepted by FGS, not the date of your oral examination. You remain responsible for active registration and all tuition fees until that date.

FGS will open your ETD record only after receiving all of: the Oral Examination Report (passed), the Revisions Approved Memorandum (if applicable), and any required copyright permissions. You will receive an email with login instructions once your record is open.

☐	Format your final thesis according to FGS organizational and technical requirements. Key requirements include: letter-size pages (8.5 x 11 in.), minimum 10pt font (12pt recommended for body text), 1.5 or double line spacing, 1-inch minimum margins, no running headers, consistent page number location, and an abstract not exceeding 150 words. Review the FGS Thesis and Dissertation Formats Guide before submitting.
☐	Convert your thesis to a single PDF file (Adobe Acrobat 5.0 or higher compatible). The ETD system accepts only one primary PDF.
☐	Log in to the ETD system using your Passport York ID (link and any other materials necessary to sign will be provided in the FGS email). Complete all six sections: Begin Submission, Update Details (abstract up to 150 words, subjects, keywords), Upload Files, Review Distribution Licences, Submit for Review, and Check Status.
☐	In the Review Distribution Licences section, upload your signed LAC licence and accept the YorkSpace Non-Exclusive Distribution Licence and the ETD Licence Agreement.

☐	Click 'I accept and submit for review' on the Submit for Review tab. Once submitted, your status moves to 'Under Review' and further changes require contacting the Graduate Milestones and Progression Coordinator.
☐	Monitor your ETD record status. If your submission is returned for formatting corrections, make the changes and resubmit. Once accepted, this the date of your degree completion.

11. Graduation

☐	Apply to graduate online. Watch for convocation and graduation information in program emails and on the FGS Important Dates page.
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Key Resources and Links

GPE program contact	gradprogram@edu.yorku.ca
GPE Current Students page	https://www.yorku.ca/edu/students/graduate-students/
Graduate Studies Portals (incl. SSC, Proposal, & Oral Exam)	https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/students/current-students/graduate-portals/
YU Research Ethics Portal	https://www.yorku.ca/research/yuethicsreview/
FGS Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines	https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/students/current-students/thesis-and-dissertation/
FGS Important Dates	https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/students/current-students/registration-enrolment/important-dates/
Convocation/Graduation	https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/students/current-students/registration-enrolment/apply-to-graduate/