Interim Report Guide

Equivalences to the Requirement for a Master’s Thesis for Admission to the Doctoral Program
Interim report
(Equivalents to a Master’s Thesis
for Admission to the Doctoral Program)

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Table of contents

1.0 Equivalents to a Master’s Thesis for Admission to the Doctoral Program ....................... 3
   1.1 Possible Equivalents ........................................................................................................... 3
      1.1.1 Research Paper (Memoir) ....................................................................................... 3
      1.1.2 Scholarly Publication ............................................................................................... 3
      1.1.3 Research Report ....................................................................................................... 3
   1.2 Evaluation of Equivalents ............................................................................................... 4

2.0 Interim Report ..................................................................................................................... 5
   2.1 Admission Requirements ............................................................................................... 5
      2.1.1 Choice of the Supervisor ....................................................................................... 5
      2.1.2 Responsibilities of the Supervisor of the Interim Report ....................................... 6
      2.1.3 Responsibilities of the student ............................................................................... 6
   2.2 Preparing an Interim Report .......................................................................................... 8
      2.2.1 Registration ............................................................................................................. 8
      2.2.2 Research Courses .................................................................................................. 8
   2.3 Supervision, Forming a Committee and Meetings ....................................................... 8
   2.4 Research Proposal ......................................................................................................... 8
   2.5 Interim Report ............................................................................................................... 9
      2.5.1 Elements of an Interim Report ............................................................................... 9
      2.5.2 Evaluation of the Interim Report before Submission to the GSO ....................... 10
   2.6 Deposit of the Interim Report to the GSO ................................................................. 10
      2.6.1 Evaluation of an Interim Report ............................................................................ 10
   2.7 Defense ....................................................................................................................... 11
   2.8 Application to the Doctoral Program .......................................................................... 11

3.0 Responsibilities of the Graduate Studies Office ............................................................ 11

4.0 Office of the Ombudsperson ......................................................................................... 12
1.0 Equivalents to a Master’s Thesis for Admission to the Doctoral Program

To be admitted to the doctoral program at the Faculty of Education, students must demonstrate that they are able to complete a research project at a standard expected at the Master’s level. This requirement is usually demonstrated by the completion of a Master’s thesis.

The Admissions Committee may consider the following alternatives to a Master’s thesis: 1) a major research paper (memoir), 2) a scholarly publication, or 3) a report of empirical research. In the three cases, the candidate must be the sole or first author and the work must have been completed prior to application to the doctoral program. These documents must demonstrate a candidate’s aptitude for producing a research manuscript, preferably on an education-related subject, at the master’s level.

The submission of any of these documents does not guarantee admission to the doctoral program. The review of a submitted document will take place within the Faculty of Education by the Admissions Committee as part of the evaluation process of an application for admission.

1.1 Possible Equivalents

1.1.1 Research Paper (Memoir)

The research paper (memoir), shorter than a thesis, presents extensive research and a rigorous methodology. The applicant must show the ability to conduct a research project and work independently in a scholarly manner, just as with a thesis. In some disciplines (e.g., Criminology, Social Work), the research paper may be either a case study or take the form of a more theoretical paper.

1.1.2 Scholarly Publication

An empirical research article or book chapter, preferably related to education, published in either a peer-reviewed journal or book may serve as an equivalent. The candidate must be the sole or first author. In the event that the material is a collaborative effort, the candidate must provide a statement signed by the co-authors detailing the nature and amount of work contributed by each member of the editorial team.

1.1.3 Research Report

The candidate may submit, for the purpose of obtaining an equivalency, an empirical research report, preferably related to education, that may have been prepared at his or her place of work, independently, or as part of a graduate studies course. The candidate must be the sole or first author.

In the event that the report has multiple authors, the candidate must provide a statement signed by the co-authors detailing the nature and amount of work contributed by each member of the editorial team.

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1 Equivalences accepted by the University of Ottawa are not necessarily accepted by other universities. The submission of a document does not guarantee admission to the doctoral program.
1.2 Evaluation of Equivalents
The following dimensions are used to evaluate the applicant’s research abilities based on the submitted documents:

1. Depth of subject knowledge
2. Methodological rigour
3. Validity of results and conclusions
4. Conformity with the usual standards of presentation of academic writing.

IMPORTANT

If the admissions committee is of the opinion the subject of an applicant’s master’s thesis or equivalent lacks sufficient connection to the field of education (e.g. a thesis in natural or physical sciences), it may require the applicant to undertake an interim report. This is to enable the applicant to become familiar with the norms and expectations of research and writing in education (such as the organisation of a thesis).

If the admissions committee feels that the completion of an applicant’s master’s thesis or equivalent was too long ago, it may require the applicant to undertake an interim report, in order that they may bring up to date their familiarity with the field of research.
2.0 Interim Report
A person who does not have an MA with thesis or an equivalent to a thesis may seek admission to the PhD program. In order to demonstrate the required research competence, the candidate may write an Interim Report.

The Interim Report must satisfy requirements similar to those of an MA thesis in education. The procedures, however, are determined by the Faculty of Education rather than by the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (FGPS).

Permission to register for the Interim Report is granted by the Admissions Committee. Applicants should complete an Application for Registration to the Interim Report form – the procedures to follow are shown on the back of the form.

Completion of an interim report does not necessarily guarantee admission to the doctoral program.

2.1 Admission Requirements
The admission requirements for the Interim Report are listed below.

1. Hold a Master’s degree in Education or another discipline;
2. Have a B.Ed. degree or basic credits in education;
3. Have a strong academic record, with at least a B+ average;
4. Have submitted a three- or four-page summary of their research interests;
5. Have submitted the name of a professor interested in supervising their work for the duration of the Interim Report project.

Also, the candidate must obtain the permission of the Admissions Committee to enroll in EDU 8999 Interim Report.

2.1.1 Choice of the Supervisor
The student must find a supervisor to guide him or her through the preparation of the interim report.

At the University of Ottawa, only professors who are members of the FGPS may supervise graduate students. Before approaching a professor to supervise, students are advised to investigate the professor’s field of research, to read some of his or her publications and, if possible, to meet with the professor and discuss the project. In many instances, professors agree to supervise students before their admission to the Interim Report. Nevertheless, the final decision is taken by the Admissions Committee, based on their evaluation of the applicant’s file.

The nature of the relationship between a student and his or her supervisor of the interim report depends on many factors, such as compatibility of research interests and working styles, willingness to accept suggestions, respect, and personalities. In a bilingual Faculty, it is also important that a student and their supervisor are both comfortable with their shared working language, for both oral and written communication. Essentially, the student and
the supervisor of the interim report must be a good “fit” and they must be able to work together.

In order to assist in the choice of a supervisor, the Faculty of Education displays online profiles of its professors. These profiles include a description of the professor’s area of specialization and titles of a few of their recent publications. These profiles are helpful not only in finding an interim report supervisor, but also in choosing members of the committee which will assist the interim report supervisor(s) in advising the student. Once the choice of the supervisor for the interim report is made, the supervisor and the student must complete the Application for Registration to the Interim Report form and submit it to the Academic Secretariat, Graduate Studies (Lees, E-113).

The interim report supervisor is under no obligation to supervise the student if they are subsequently admitted to the doctoral program. The possibility of continuing to work together should be discussed with the project supervisor.

2.1.2 Responsibilities of the Supervisor of the Interim Report
The supervisor of the interim report has the same responsibilities as a supervisor of a Master’s thesis. He or she should ensure that the candidate demonstrates the aptitudes for university-level research and the ability to follow all the steps in the research process.

He or she should also ensure that the candidate adopts a style and format appropriate for the interim report (APA or another recognized style).

In particular, the supervisor of the interim report should:

1. Complete the Application for Registration to the Interim Report form.

2. Meet with the candidate to supervise the research process and provide feedback on the drafts of the chapters of the report.

3. Form a committee composed of at least two professors of which one must be a member of FGPS;

4. Assist the candidate to prepare a proposal and the application to the Office of Research Ethics and Integrity, if required.

5. Arrange a meeting with the committee to discuss their feedback to the candidate.

6. Arrange the time and place of the private defense. (The date of the defence remains tentative until all evaluation reports are received.)


2.1.3 Responsibilities of the student
The student conducts the research for which he/she is responsible as a researcher-in-training. In other words, he/she is the principal author of the interim report, but works under
the supervision of an approved researcher. The student is expected to provide the time and attention necessary to conduct their research, to develop a degree of autonomy in their work and to communicate regularly with their supervisor. More specifically, the student should:

1. Adopt a work ethic, systematically plan work, establish realistic deadlines, and generally organize his or her program;

2. Contact the office of the Vice-Dean Research (ext. 4892) to complete a request form for a work space in the Graduate Students’ work area;

3. Meet regularly with the Interim Report supervisor in order to discuss the research project, review of the literature, theoretical framework, data collection procedures, the types of raw data that are obtained, and discuss interpretations of those data;

4. Keep the supervisor informed of his or her registration status, course registration, activities, absences and so on;

5. Prepare meetings to discuss work updates;

6. Submit sections of the Interim Report to the supervisor at regular intervals;

7. Ensure a high standard of written work to facilitate the advancement of the Interim Report;

8. Prepare necessary material for regular meetings with the Interim Report committee;

9. Complete the Progress Report form every semester with the Interim Report supervisor; and

10. Respect the academic regulations of FGPS, the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa’s regulations, and consult specific services when required (e.g., the International Office, InfoService, Financial Services, etc.).
2.2 Preparing an Interim Report

2.2.1 Registration
The student registers to the Interim Report (EDU 8999) as a special student, according to University of Ottawa procedures and maintains registration until the research paper is completed.

2.2.2 Research Courses
Candidates should register for at least one course in methodology, preferably EDU 6290 Research in Education, if available, or a qualitative or quantitative research methods course (e.g., EDU 6191, EDU 7190, EDU 7396, or EDU 7397). The choice of course should be discussed with the interim report supervisor.

These courses will not be credited as part of the doctoral program. Students registered in one of these courses concurrently with the Interim Report must register full time during that session. If they are registered to the Interim Report only, they must register part-time in accordance with FGPS regulations.

2.3 Supervision, Forming a Committee and Meetings
The Interim Report should be completed within 1 academic year (three sessions) of initial registration. For extensions to this time limit, students should submit a request setting out their reasons to the Director of Graduate Studies. This request must be supported by the Interim Report supervisor. The final decision is taken by the Director of Graduate Studies. Such approvals are made on an exceptional basis.

The student prepares the interim report under a supervisor plus a committee of two other professors, and at least one of whom must be a member of FGPS. Once the committee has been formed, the supervisor completes the Committee Member List form and submits it to the Graduate Studies Office (GSO).

There should be at least three (3) meetings of the committee:
1. to discuss and provide input into the proposal for the interim report,
2. to make comments and suggestions on the report,
3. to attend the student’s defense of the interim report.

The student is responsible for completing a progress report jointly with their supervisor at the end of each session (Fall, Winter, Spring/Summer). The progress report should be submitted to Graduate Studies Office (Lees, E-113).

2.4 Research Proposal
The student must prepare a proposal for the Interim Report project. While the Interim Report can take many forms, it is likely to include one of 1) an analysis of empirical data, 2) an analysis of curriculum or policy documentation or 3) an analysis of documents in the public domain etc. The research proposal must be accepted by all of the committee members.
This proposal should contain, with the agreement of the supervisor:

- An introduction
- A research problem
- A conceptual or theoretical framework
- A review of the literature
- A proposed methodology
- A section on the contribution to knowledge

The proposal is strictly limited to 25 pages, excluding the references, tables, figures, and appendices. Additionally, preparation of an acceptable proposal usually requires several drafts. However, when students implement the suggestions of their supervisor and edit their work carefully, the process may be expedited.

The draft of the proposal is given to the committee to read, and the members provide feedback **within 10 working days**. The supervisor then arranges a meeting with the committee and the candidate to discuss the feedback and decide if the candidate may proceed with the research.

The supervisor completes the *Approval of the Interim Report Research Proposal* form and submits it to the Graduate Studies Office. If the proposal does not meet the requirements as judged by the members of the committee, the student must make revisions to the proposal and obtain permission of the supervisor to re-submit it to the committee.

Once the proposal has been approved by the committee, the project must be submitted to the Research Ethics Board for approval if it involves research involving human beings.

### 2.5 Interim Report

#### 2.5.1 Elements of an Interim Report

The Interim Report takes the form of a traditional monograph of 50-60 pages, excluding the references, tables, figures, and appendices. It should normally include the following elements:

- Title page
- Introduction
- Research problem
- Review of the literature
- Conceptual or theoretical framework
- Research question(s)
- Methodology (participants or subjects, instrumentation, procedures, data analysis)
- Presentation of findings or results
- Discussion and limitations of the study
- Theoretical and practical implications and contribution to the field of education
2.5.2 Evaluation of the Interim Report before Submission to the GSO
When the supervisor and the student both feel the draft of the interim report is ready to be evaluated, the candidate provides each member of the committee with a copy for evaluation.

The thesis supervisor must send an e-mail to edugrad@uottawa.ca to validate and approve the deposit of the interim report by the student.

The members have 10 working days to provide feedback. The supervisor organizes a meeting between the student and the committee to discuss the feedback.

The candidate makes revisions and corrections, if necessary, and submits the final version to the Graduate Studies Office.

2.6 Deposit of the Interim Report to the GSO
Three copies of the final version of the interim report are deposited at the GSO (Lees, E-117). The candidate should also send an electronic copy to EDUGRAD@uottawa.ca.

The director of graduate studies delegates the task of evaluating the interim report to the committee. The two members of the committee have 10 business days to evaluate the final version of the interim report, using the Interim Report evaluation form and submit the completed form to the GSO along with comments.

2.6.1 Evaluation of an Interim Report
The interim report is evaluated using the same dimensions as for a Master’s thesis. These dimensions are:

1. Understanding of the topic and its contribution to knowledge
2. Research methodology
3. Validity of results and conclusions
4. Conformity with the usual standards of presentation of academic writing.

The evaluation of the written report can have three outcomes:

1. The report is accepted for defense. In this case, the student proceeds to the oral defense.
2. The report requires substantial revision to meet the criteria required; a revised version of the report must be submitted to the examiners within 4 weeks. The new version should be submitted to the GSO and is re-evaluated by the committee.
3. The report fails to meet the required criteria. In this case, the interim report may be revised and re-submitted to the committee, with the approval of the supervisor,
within 1 session. The student would register for EDU 8999 again. It is expected that the members of the jury will clearly justify their reasons for this verdict.

2.7 Defense
If the reports are favourable, a private defence is arranged by the candidate’s supervisor and he or she assumes the role of the Chair of the defense. The members of the committee must attend the defense.

At the defense the candidate gives a 20 minute presentation of the research. Each committee member questions the candidate, according to the order established at the beginning of the defense. The supervisor may also ask questions.

The Chair asks the candidate to leave the room and the members of the committee determine the verdict: Satisfactory or Not Satisfactory. The verdict is recorded on the Evaluation of the Oral Component of the Interim Report form and submitted to the GSO by the supervisor.

If the candidate receives a failing grade, he or she has the right to try again. He or she may re-register in EDU 8999, make the revisions, and undergo a second defense. A candidate may have only two opportunities to receive a passing grade for the interim report. It is expected that the members of the jury will clearly justify their reasons for the verdict of NS.

2.8 Application to the Doctoral Program
The student may submit an application to the doctoral program at any time.

The supervisor of the interim report is under no obligation to agree to supervise the student in the doctoral program. Successful completion of the interim report does not guarantee admission to the doctoral program.

3.0 Responsibilities of the Graduate Studies Office
The responsibilities of the GSO are as follows:

a) Receive requests;
b) Keep a file on the topic of the research and the name of the supervisor who is directing the interim report, as well as the names of the committee;
c) Receive the evaluation forms and inform the candidate of the decision before the date of the defense is determined;
d) Keep all the student’s forms in a file.
4.0 Office of the Ombudsperson

At the Office of the Ombudsperson, it all starts with listening. We offer a safe place where members of the university community* can seek advice, assistance and information to resolve an academic or administrative problem in a confidential, independent, and impartial manner. We can also examine final decisions to ensure fairness.

*students at all levels of study, candidates for admission, graduates and alumni, professors and fellows, affiliated researchers, administrators, employees and support staff.