# Process for Supervision:

Students are not eligible to apply for supervisory assignment until the successful completion of EDUC 6093. Students will then submit their request for supervisory assignment to the Associate Dean (Research). This request must include the following information:

* statement of research inquiry;
* tentative theoretical area(s) of research;
* proposed methodological approach(es);
* request for preferred supervisor articulating why their choice aligns with their proposed research, and;
* two alternate supervisors in the event their first choice is unavailable.

The area of research must fall within the field of Education and be connected to the student’s degree (in Adult Education or Educational Leadership).

The Associate Dean (Research), in consultation with the student’s supervisor, will solicit other research active faculty to serve on the thesis committee.

# Research Proposal:

After completing their coursework and receiving their supervisory assignment, the student will submit their thesis proposal to the Associate Dean (Research) within six months, who will assign it to two internal readers (faculty members wholly unconnected with the student’s research committee) who will provide written feedback for the student to consider. The supervisor, in consultation with committee members, will confirm with the student what revisions are necessary before applying to the Associate Dean (Research) for final approval to proceed with the proposed research.

# Research Ethics:

All proposals must include as an appendix verification of TCPS2Core completion and, at a minimum, a statement pertaining to research ethics.

For proposals that do not require formal approval from the University Research Ethics Board (REB), a statement explaining why this approval is not required is sufficient.

For proposals involving data collection from human subjects, or otherwise requiring REB approval, an REB application must accompany the final proposal, whereby approval to proceed with research is sought.

The Yorkville University REB meets monthly, with applications due one week before the scheduled meeting. In addition to Yorkville REB approval, the settings of research, including most school boards, post-secondary organizations, and other organizations, require their own ethics approval. No data may be collected before receiving ethics approval from both the Yorkville University REB and other ethics bodies, where appropriate. The University REB will issue a Research Certificate once all conditions for ethics are met.

Only after obtaining permission to proceed from the Associate Dean (Research), who will verify receipt of all necessary approvals, is the candidate permitted to begin their thesis research.

In consultation with their supervisor, students will submit progress reports to the Associate Dean (Research) every six months. This report will assist in structuring academic progress and planning for key milestones.

Should the student take longer than 12 months to complete their research, they will be required to submit a Research Ethics Renewal Form, along with a request for extension through the Research

# Thesis Examination and Oral Defence:

The intention of thesis examination and oral defence is two-fold: it provides graduate students an opportunity to defend their research; and it serves as a celebration of the student’s knowledge in their areas of inquiry. All students in the research-based pathway will be required to complete both the thesis examination and oral defence before the degree may be conferred. Both these requirements help promote the quality of graduate research undertaken by students in the program.

Thesis examination cannot be scheduled until the supervisor and committee members have reviewed the student’s completed thesis in its entirety against graduate level standards for academic theses, including research material related to the thesis area. The supervisor’s signature on the *Notice of Examination Form* serves to acknowledge that the entire thesis meets the minimum standard for graduation and is ready to be progressed to *Thesis Examination*.

Thesis examination begins when the thesis is distributed to an internal and an external examiner by a Neutral Chair. The internal and external examiners may not discuss the thesis amongst themselves, with the student, nor with the supervisor or committee members. The supervisor may, however, continue to discuss the thesis with the student to support preparation for the oral defence. The student is not permitted to submit revisions while the examination is in progress. Examiners have four weeks to complete their examination of the written thesis and submit their assessments to the Neutral Chair. If an examiner suspects that academic misconduct has occurred in the thesis, they must contact the Associate Dean (Research) immediately.

Examination reports assess the written thesis as one of the following:

* **Pass with No Revisions.** Oral defence can be scheduled.
* **Pass with Minor Revisions.** The supervisor will inform the student of the necessary corrections. Students will be provided one month from the date of the examination to complete these changes. The supervisor will withhold their signature until satisfied with the revisions. Oral defence can be scheduled.
* **Major Revisions Required.** At least one examiner considers the revisions to be major. Major revisions typically involve clarification of research framework or research findings. Major revisions must be completed and submitted to Associate Dean (Research) within six months of the date of examination. The supervisor and one or more examiners may withhold their

signatures until satisfied with the revisions. The oral defence cannot be scheduled until supervisor and committee members are satisfied with the revisions.

* **Fail.** The student is permitted one resubmission no sooner than six months and no later than 12 months from the first exam date. No decision is made on the oral defence.

Once assessments are received from both internal and external examiners, the Neutral Chair will forward the assessments to the student’s supervisor and supervisory committee.

If the assessments are **Pass with No Revisions** or **Pass with Minor Revisions,** the oral defence of the thesis is undertaken by the candidate. Normally, at least four weeks’ notice is given to the University community concerning the date, time, and place of the oral defence. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to schedule the oral defence, and to recommend all examining committee members to the Associate Dean (Research) in accordance with policy.

## Processes and Procedures for Oral Defence:

The examination committee, which is approved by the Associate Dean (Research), is convened to make a recommendation of the final outcome of Thesis Examination and Oral Defence to the Dean.

The examination committee should consist of:

* supervisor;
* supervisory committee;
* the internal examiner: a member of the Faculty of Education whose research aligns with the thesis to be defended but who has not served on the student’s supervisory committee;
* the external examiner who has a well-established research profile in the student’s area of inquiry and who has experience evaluating theses at the graduate level, and;
* an additional member of University academic staff to serve as non-voting Neutral Chair.

The oral defence is chaired by the non-voting Neutral Chair. The Neutral Chair is not permitted to vote, ask questions, or otherwise participate in the examination. The role of the Neutral Chair is to ensure that the examination is conducted in an equitable and efficient manner.

Immediately following the public presentation of the thesis, the oral examination of the candidate is held. Normally, the public presentation and examination will not exceed 120 minutes.

Examiners must be present, either in person or via teleconference, during the entire public presentation and questioning process as well as the post-examination discussion and vote.

All examiners must be given the opportunity to question the student, and the questions must be relevant to the thesis document and public presentation material.

The oral defence is normally open to the public but only members of the examination committee may question the student.

Any procedural irregularities must be reported to the Associate Dean (Research) within five working days of the examination date, regardless of the outcome of the examination.

Upon conclusion of the public presentation and oral defence, the examining committee meet on camera to arrive at a unanimous decision, agree on any changes to be made to the thesis, and determine who will be responsible for ensuring that these changes are made.

## Recommendations at the Conclusion of Oral Defence

The examination committee must recommend the outcome of the oral defence by indicating one of the following:

# Unanimous Pass.

* **Unanimous Fail.** If a decision of unanimous fail is reached on the oral defence, the oral component must be retaken within six months from the date of examination.

# Failure to reach unanimous decision.

Post-examination recommendation to the Associate Dean (Research) must be unanimous. If it is not unanimous, the Associate Dean (Research) will decide the outcome of the thesis and the oral defence.

## Retake of Failed Examination

In the case of a failed oral defence, one resubmission will be permitted, and a new examination will be required. A revised thesis must be submitted at least four weeks in advance of the new oral defence.

A second failure of the thesis or the oral examination will result in the student being required to withdraw. In the case of failed outcomes, students have the right to appeal.

The composition of the examination committee normally will remain the same. Upon the recommendation of the Associate Dean (Research) and approval of the Dean, an examiner may be replaced.

## Appeals of Decisions Regarding Thesis Examinations

Student Appeals of decisions regarding the process for or outcome of thesis examination may be made to the Appeals Committee in accordance with the University Appeals Procedures.