

# INFORMATION DOCUMENT

## Memorial University Faculty of Education

### Graduate Diploma and Master of Education in Reading Development and Instruction



This document provides basic information about the Graduate Diploma and the Master of Education programs in Reading Development and Instruction. The information here pertains to timetables, and program requirements. For further information about program completion requirements, application instructions, program fees, and related information, please consult the websites of the [Faculty of Education](#) and [School of Graduate Students](#) (SGS). *Please note:* should any information in this document be inconsistent with information published by SGS or the Faculty of Education, the SGS/Faculty of Education information is assumed to be correct.

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## **Part 1. General questions about MUN’s Reading Development and Instruction (RDI) programs**

### **What is the focus of the RDI programs?**

The RDI programs are rooted in scientific studies of reading development and instruction. The theories, skills, and knowledge taught in the RDI programs reflect contemporary knowledge of reading research that jurisdictions in Canada and elsewhere are increasingly adopting to inform curriculum design, educational resource selection, and classroom pedagogy.

### **What careers might I pursue with a diploma or degree in RDI?**

Students graduating from the program may take up various reading leadership roles in the educational community, such as school reading specialists, or reading program specialists in school boards or ministries of education.

### **What core content is taught in the RDI programs?**

Both diploma and master’s students take the four core RDI courses listed below. In the first course (ED6470) we examine the early years of reading instruction, with a focus on developing word reading fluency—the first critical underpinning necessary for supporting successful and independent readers. Course two (ED6471) moves forward to examine the underpinnings of reading comprehension—language development and the development of strategic readers through comprehension strategies. In both courses one and two, we consider the full range of readers from typical to struggling, and the pedagogical approaches for supporting all students. In the third course (ED6472) we take a closer look at English language learners—a diverse group—and how to respond to their educational needs with appropriate and effective pedagogy. In the third course we look more closely at assessment, and this course introduces standardized reading assessment and provides practice opportunities. In the final diploma course (ED6473), assessment studies will continue, and students will be provided an opportunity for further assessment practice that will be used to inform instructional design. Normally, where arrangements can be confirmed, students undertake a field-based experience in a school setting.

#### *Course descriptions*

*ED6470 - Word and sentence level reading development and instruction*

This course examines the underpinnings of word identification, including phonological awareness, working memory, orthographic knowledge, and fluency. It will also examine the role of grammatical knowledge and syntactic awareness in sentence-level reading processes. Instruction and assessment of word-level and sentence-level processes are also key areas of focus.

*ED6471 - Text-level reading development and instruction (Prerequisite: ED6470)*

This course examines the underpinnings of text including reading motivation, vocabulary development, and strategies for studying and comprehending text. The cognitive processes underlying reading comprehension will also be of particular interest. Instruction and assessment of text-level processes are also key areas of focus.

*ED6472 - Issues and interventions in reading development and instruction for diverse learners (Prerequisites: ED6470, ED6471)*

This course examines the nature of reading development and instruction for diverse learner populations. Key areas of focus include the nature of second language reading as well as reading difficulties affecting word identification and reading comprehension. Special attention will be paid to assessment issues, principles and practices, including implementing assessments, interpreting results and planning appropriate evidence-based interventions.

*ED6473 - Praxis for reading specialists (Prerequisites: ED6470, ED6471, ED6472)*

This course extends the focus on assessment and instructional planning in prior coursework and addresses issues in literacy leadership. Students will gain further experience in conducting reading assessments of school-age students and developing instructional plans to support student learning in small-group and whole-class settings. Issues in supporting classroom-based educators' practice will also be explored.

### **What is the difference between the RDI diploma program and the RDI master's degree program?**

The diploma is a four-semester, four-course program that terminates with a Graduate Diploma in Reading Development and Instruction. The Master's in Reading Development and Instruction requires the same four courses as the graduate diploma, plus additional courses and either a project or thesis, depending on the route you choose. Further details on each pathway are provided below.

### **Can I earn my master's degree or graduate diploma entirely online?**

Yes. The RDI programs draw students from all over Canada. The four core RDI classes are only offered online and therefore can be completed from any location worldwide. Additional courses for the master's degree are offered both online and in-person; you may choose an entirely online timetable should that best meet your needs.

### **Am I required to be available for live online classes for the four core RDI courses?**

Yes. While core material is available online in the course shell to view at your convenience, every course holds about 6 two-hour sessions per course (about once every two weeks). *You are expected to attend and participate fully in all sessions.* Sessions are held via the course meeting tool or via Webex and will be posted through the course shell or another space as determined by your instructor. Class times are noted on the registration page to guide your selection of course sections; for example, a note of Tuesdays or Wednesdays from 7-9pm (Newfoundland time), means that for about six Tuesdays or Wednesdays during the semester, you must be available to participate live online. All class times are noted in Newfoundland Standard Time, which is 90 minutes ahead of Ontario time (e.g., noon in Ontario is 1:30pm in Newfoundland Standard Time). Please ensure that if you live in western Labrador or other provinces, you are aware of the class times / time zone differences to ensure you are available for the course section you register for. You can choose the course section that works for your time zone. Should that section be filled, we aim to work with you to resolve the scheduling issue.

Should you pursue a master's degree, you will need to take additional courses beyond the four core RDI courses. The additional courses will vary in the requirement for synchronous participation. You should confirm questions related to participation with each course instructor.

**Will I work independently for all course work that is evaluated/graded?**

No. Courses have some assignments in which you will work with 1-3 other people. In every course, some assignments require individual work. Completing the program only via individual work is not an option. Consider your time zone and schedule flexibility when considering this program.

**Will I need access to a school?**

Yes. There is a fieldwork component to complete in course 4 (ED6743) that requires engagement with a student, their parents, and their teacher. The total time on campus will be about 4 hours, but engagement with the school will take place throughout the term.

**Can I transfer into the RDI Master's program from another MUN Education Master's program or university?**

Yes. Students must request to transfer by September 15 and may inquire to the Academic Programs Office for instructions. Applicants can request to transfer and be considered with other applicants for January intake. Transfer can only occur in January of each year. Transfer students are required to take all four core RDI course (6470, 6471, 6472, 6473); no transfer credits are permitted for these four courses. At most, 9 elective credit hours may be transferrable from another MUN program, and the transferred elective courses must be ED6106/6108/6641/6643/6645/6647/6649/6693, or other courses approved by the graduate office. It is possible that not all courses previously taken will be transferrable.

Please note that the cost of the RDI master's program may differ from other MUN master's programs.

**How can I transfer from the RDI diploma program to the RDI degree?**

Students enrolled in the Graduate Diploma program may request transfer to the Master of Education, Reading Development and Instruction prior to applying for graduation. Students holding the Graduate Diploma in Education (Reading Development and Instruction) and accepted to the M.Ed. (Reading Development and Instruction) program will complete up to 12 fewer credit hours dependent upon the chosen program route and the completion date of the Diploma.

### Is funding available for students in the RDI programs?

A Newfoundland and Labrador government bursary may be available for students based in Newfoundland and Labrador who are enrolled in the Master's (or Diploma) in Reading Development and Instruction program. Information can be found [here](#). *Note:* You will need to set up an NLESD or CDLI account to access the application form.

Full-time thesis-route MEd students may qualify for fellowship funding. Information is found on the SGS website or contact [tinah@mun.ca](mailto:tinah@mun.ca).

### What are some key deadlines for the RDI diploma and master's programs?

See the University Diary for the last day to drop courses and other general deadlines.

Mid semester 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide address for assessment kit to be mailed to you and propose field experience location</li><li>• For part-time MEd (degree) students: decide to pursue project or thesis</li><li>• Thesis-route students should begin securing a supervisor</li></ul>
End of semester 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Complete police check and vulnerable sector check</li></ul>
Week 3 in semester 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Arrange for field experience (identify student and arrange time/location for assessment)</li></ul>
Prior to completing 4th course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Decision to transfer from diploma to degree</li></ul>
End of semester 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Return assessment kit to the Education Library</li></ul>

## Part 2. Graduate Diploma

The Graduate Diploma in Education (Reading Development and Instruction) is a four-course online graduate diploma with a strong focus on reading development and instruction. The

diploma is intended as a program of study for students who want to further develop their professional learning and deepen their understanding of reading development to better support classroom-wide instruction, including the instruction of children who experience reading difficulty.

### **What are the requirements for a Graduate Diploma in RDI?**

The requirements for the graduate diploma are to successfully complete and pass the four core RDI courses (6470, 6471, 6472, 6473).

### **How long does it take to complete the diploma?**

The diploma, offered on a part-time basis—one course per semester—takes four sequential semesters to complete. The programs begin with 6470 in the winter semester every year, and the courses must be completed in order (6470, 6471, 6472, 6473). The courses are described above. If you take leave during the four-course program and are not able to complete one of the four courses, you will need to wait until the next time that course is offered to continue with your program of study.

*Timetable of four RDI courses*

<b>Year 1</b>			<b>Year 2</b>
<b>Winter</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Winter</b>
6470	6471	6472	6473

## **Part 3. Master’s degree program**

The Master of Education (Reading Development and Instruction) is an online program with a strong focus on reading development and instruction. The program is intended for students who want to further develop their professional learning and deepen their understanding of reading development to better support classroom-wide instruction, including the instruction of children who experience reading difficulty.

### **What are the requirements for a Master of Education in RDI?**

The Master of Education (Reading Development and Instruction) is comprised of the four courses in the Graduate Diploma, described above, as well as additional program requirements. There are two options to complete the master’s degree: a project route and a thesis route.

- The **project route** consists of the four courses required for the diploma (ED6470, 6471, 6472, and 6473), an introductory research methods course (ED6100), and three electives described below. The project is equivalent to two courses.

- The **thesis route** consists of the four courses required for the diploma (ED6470, 6471, 6472, and 6473), an introductory research methods course (ED6100), and one research course described below. The thesis is equivalent to four courses.

**All students (project route and thesis route)** will complete ED6100 and the remaining program requirements as appropriate to the student's program completion route.

*ED6100: Research designs and methods in education*

An introductory course in research designs and methods. It is intended to cover the broad spectrum of research methods found in published research in education. This course has two main goals: to help students make sense of the research they can be expected to encounter in their graduate program and their professional practice, and to provide the basis for more intensive study in particular research methods required in the conduct of their own research.

Students on the **project route of the master's program** will also complete the following requirements:

1. Nine credit hours to be taken from graduate course offerings in the area of Language and Literacy Studies (ED6106/6108/6641/6643/6645/6647/6649/6693), or other courses approved by the graduate office.
2. ED6192: Project in Reading Development and Instruction. This project shall be reading-focused, developed in consultation with the project supervisor. (6 credit hours). You can request a copy of the syllabus for ED6192 from your advisor.

Students on the **thesis route** of the master's program will also complete the following:

1. One of the following research courses as appropriate to the thesis methodology, chosen in consultation with the thesis supervisor:
  - Qualitative Research Methods (ED6466)
  - Quantitative Research Methods (ED6467)
  - Critical Approaches to Educational Research (ED6468)
  - Theoretical and Methodological Foundations of Action Research (ED6469)
  - Narrative Approaches to Teaching, Learning and Research (ED6909)
2. The thesis shall be focused on an area of inquiry related to reading development and instruction and developed in consultation with the thesis supervisor. Most theses will involve working with human participants. In order to pursue research with human participants, students must complete the [TCPS-2 CORE](#) self-paced course on research ethics and apply for ethics approval. Your advisor will support you with this process.

All courses completed must satisfy the requirements for the Master of Education (Reading Development and Instruction) as outlined in the [MUN School of Graduate Studies Graduate Calendar](#).

### **How do I choose which program route to apply for?**

All students are initially admitted on the project route unless through prior communication with a faculty member thesis supervision is confirmed. Students wishing to pursue thesis can follow procedures, noted below, to investigate thesis supervision possibilities.

Should you wish to transfer to the thesis route, you should seek a supervisor, and when confirmed, complete the [Change of Program form](#). Part-time RDI MEd students interested in a thesis route can consult with RDI program faculty about thesis supervision by the end of the second semester of their program. Full-time RDI MEd students interested in a thesis route should consult the regulations around funding and faculty teaching in the program about potential supervision before the end of the first semester.

### **How long do I have to complete the degree?**

Normally, a Master of Education is completed within two years (full time) or three years (part time). Please see Appendices for example timelines.

### **When should I begin planning my project or thesis?**

Project and thesis supervision is subject to supervisor availability; therefore, students may need to be flexible regarding the scheduling of the project semester and thesis. Thesis-route students should seek a thesis supervisor by the end of the second course. Project supervision should be arranged by the student at least six months in advance of planning the project term.

### **How do I obtain a supervisor for a project or thesis?**

You should contact your advisor as noted upon admission in your program of study to discuss your interest in completing a thesis and to seek supervision. If you need to confirm who your program advisor is, please contact the Academic Programs Office ([muneduc@mun.ca](mailto:muneduc@mun.ca)). Alternately, a meeting may be arranged with the Associate Dean, Graduate Programs, to discuss options and potential supervisor. When you and faculty member have agreed to work together, you will complete the [Change of Program form](#), and forward the completed form to the supervisor, who submits the form to the Academic Program Office.

### **What are the pathways by which I can complete the degree?**

The four core courses in the diploma and degree are offered over four consecutive semesters beginning in the winter semester. Normally, ED6100 is offered each term. You are **strongly advised** to take ED6100 as early as possible. Admission to a second research course to be taken concurrently with ED6100 is subject to permission of the second research course instructor.

Other research courses may vary in the terms in which they are offered, from one year, to another. Likewise, electives are offered in varying terms, from one year, to another. You can consult the Faculty of Education Three Year Course Offering Plan to help guide your course



registration decisions. *Note:* The three-year plan outlines the intended courses offerings, but due to various factors, the courses offered in a particular semester may vary from that plan. Appendices A and B outline possible pathways to program completion.

**What if I have taken ED6100 already when I completed another program?**

You will need to enroll in a different research course to replace ED6100. Consult with your advisor and the Academic Program Office before proceeding.

**Can I transfer from the RDI diploma to the RDI degree?**

Yes. Students admitted to the diploma may transfer to the degree before completing the final diploma course (ED6473). You must contact the Academic Programs office to arrange completion of change of program forms and make any other inquiries and arrangements necessary (e.g., program payment). Students will be transferred into the project route unless a thesis supervisor is secured in advance.

**If I transfer from the diploma to the degree, how long do I have to complete the degree?**

You will have nine semesters to complete the degree. If you complete the diploma in four semesters, and if you admitted to the degree, you have **five remaining semesters** (including spring semesters) to complete the degree without incurring continuation costs. See the Appendices for possible pathways to program completion.

**Appendix A. Examples of Project Degree Completion Routes**

**Part-time – project route**

	Year 1			Year 2			Year 3		
Example	Winter	Spring	Fall	Winter	Spring	Fall	Winter	Spring	Fall
1	6470	6471	6472	6473	6100	Elective 1	Elective 2	Elective 3	6192 (Project)
2	6470	6471	6472	6473	6100 Elective 1	Elective 2	Elective 3	6192 (Project)	
3	6470	6471 6100	6472	6473	Electives 1 & 2	Elective 3	6192 (Project)		

**Full-time – project route**

	Year 1			Year 2		
Example	Winter	Spring	Fall	Winter	Spring	Fall
1	6470 6100	6471 Electives 1 & 2	6472 Elective 3	6473 6192 (Project)		
2	6470 6100	6471 Elective 1	6472 Elective 2	6473 Elective 3	6192 (Project)	

### Transfer from Diploma (part time)

Year 1			Year 2			Year 3		
Winter	Spring	Fall	Winter	Spring	Fall	Winter	Spring	Fall
<i>Transfer before end of semester 1</i>								
6470	6471 6100	6472	6473	Electives 1 & 2	Elective 3	6192 (Project)		
<i>Transfer before end of semester 4</i>								
6470	6471	6472	6473	ED6100 Elective 1	Elective 2	Elective 3	6192 (Project)	

## Appendix B. Thesis Degree Completion Routes

### Part-time - thesis

Example	Year 1			Year 2			Year 3		
	Winter	Spring	Fall	Winter	Spring	Fall	Winter	Spring	Fall
1	6470	6471	6472	6473	6100 & Second research course*	Thesis proposal & ethics application	Data collection / analysis	Data analysis / thesis writing	Complete thesis and submit for examination
2	6470	6471 6100	6472	6473	Second research course	Thesis proposal & ethics application	Data collection / analysis	Data analysis / thesis writing	Complete thesis and submit for examination

\*Taking 6100 and the second research course concurrently is subject to permission of the second research course instructor

### Full-time - thesis

Example	Year 1			Year 2			Year 3		
	Winter	Spring	Fall	Winter	Spring	Fall	Winter	Spring	Fall
1	6470 6100	6471 Second Research Course	6472 Thesis proposal / Ethics application	6473 Data collection	Data analysis / begin writing thesis	Thesis writing / Complete thesis & submit for examination			
2	6470 6100	6471 Second Research Course	6472 Begin thesis proposal / Ethics application	6473 Thesis proposal / Ethics application	Begin data collection / analysis	Data collection/ analysis	Thesis writing	Thesis writing / Complete & submit for examination	

### Transfer from Diploma (Part time)

<i>Transfer before end of semester 1:</i>								
Year 1			Year 2			Year 3		
Winter	Spring	Fall	Winter	Spring	Fall	Winter	Spring	Fall
ED6470	ED6471 ED6100	ED6472	ED6473	Second research course  Begin thesis proposal	Thesis proposal / Ethics application	Data collection/ analysis	Complete data analysis / Begin thesis writing	Complete thesis & submit for examination
<i>Transfer before end of semester 4:</i>								
ED6470	ED6471	ED6472	ED6473	ED6100  Second research course*  Begin thesis proposal	Thesis proposal / ethics application	Data Collection / analysis	Complete data analysis / Begin thesis writing	Complete thesis & submit for examination

\*Taking 6100 and the second research course concurrently is subject to permission of the second research course instructor