

RDI INFORMATION DOCUMENT  
January 30, 2025 (v2)

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 pertaining to timetables and program requirements. For further information about application instructions, fees, and related information, please consult the [Faculty of Education](#) and [School of Graduate Students](#) (SGS). *Please note:* should any information in this document differ from 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

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

The Reading Development and Instruction (RDI) diploma and degree programs are rooted in a comprehensive range of scientific research on reading development and instruction, often known as the “science of reading,” the “science of teaching reading,” or “structured literacy”. The theories, skills, and knowledge taught in the RDI program reflect contemporary reading research that many jurisdictions in Canada and elsewhere are adopting to inform curriculum and pedagogy. We focus on systematic and explicit approaches to teaching phonics and associated word recognition skills, fluency, and comprehension. There are modules on executive skills, multilingualism, and (meta) cognitive factors that influence literacy development. We also focus on informal and formal assessment tools, and theory and practice in literacy leadership.

### **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. A degree in RDI also prepares graduates for research-related careers, such as in government or industry, or pursuit of a PhD. All students completing the RDI diploma or degree program are qualified to administer Level B assessments.

### **What 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 focus on developing word reading skill and fluency, which are critical underpinnings necessary for successful independent reading. Course two (ED6471) examines different forms of comprehension, and specifically how oral language development, motivation, and strategy instruction support reading comprehension. In both of these courses, 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 multilingual learners—a diverse group—and how to respond to their educational needs with appropriate and effective pedagogy. This course also introduces principles and practices of standardized assessment. In the fourth course (ED6473) students have further assessment practice that informs instructional design. Students undertake a brief field-based experience in a school to practice assessment administration, scoring, and interpretation, and build their literacy leadership.

### ***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 also examines the role of grammatical knowledge and syntactic awareness in sentence-level reading processes. Instruction and assessment of word-level and sentence-level processes are key areas of focus.

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

This course examines the underpinnings of text comprehension 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 and the RDI master's degree?**

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 to complete the MEd course route, project route, or thesis route. Further details on each 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 and the world. The four core RDI classes are only offered online and therefore can be completed from any location. 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 Brightspace 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 Brightspace or Webex and will be posted through the course shell 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). Please ensure that if you live in western Labrador or other provinces, you are aware of the class times / time zone differences for the course section you register for. You can choose the section that works for your time zone. If that section is full, we work with you to resolve the scheduling issue.

Should you pursue a master's degree, you will 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 other people. In every course, some assignments require individual work. Completing the program only via individual work is not an option. Collaborations can be successful even when the partners live in different time zones, as long as communication avenues remain open.

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

Yes. There is a fieldwork component 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 takes place throughout the term. RDI instructors can help connect you with a school for the fieldwork experience.

**Can I transfer into the RDI MEd from another MUN program or university?**

Yes. Students must request to transfer by September 15 to start in the following Winter semester and may inquire to the Academic Programs Office for instructions to be considered with other applicants for January intake. Transfer can only occur for a January start. 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 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. See [this page](#) for information on tuition.

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

Students enrolled in the Diploma program may request transfer to the MEd, 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 NL 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.

MEd students may qualify for MUN fellowship funding. Information is on the [SGS website](#).

**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.

### ***Key dates in the first four semesters***

Mid-semester 1	Interested students can apply for the MEd thesis route
Mid-semester 2	Provide address for assessment kit to be mailed to you (postage paid) Identify field experience location (school) Begin police check and vulnerable sector check
Mid-semester 3	Interested students can apply for the MEd project route
End of semester 3	Complete police check and vulnerable sector check
Start of semester 4	Arrange field experience (recruit student and plan time for assessment)
Prior to end of semester 4	Decision to transfer from diploma to degree
End of semester 4	Return assessment kit (postage paid) to the Education Library

## **Part 2. Graduate diploma**

The Graduate Diploma in Education (Reading Development and Instruction) is a four-course online graduate diploma with a 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 core RDI courses*

<b>Year 1</b>			<b>Year 2</b>
<b>Winter</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Winter</b>
ED6470	ED6471	ED6472	ED6473

### Part 3. Master's degree (MEd)

The Master of Education (Reading Development and Instruction) has 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 for children who experience reading difficulty.

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

The Master of Education (Reading Development and Instruction) comprises the four courses in the Graduate Diploma, described above, as well as additional program requirements. There are three options to complete the master's degree: course route, project route and thesis route. All MEd routes are equivalent to 10 courses.

- The **course route** consists of the four courses required for the diploma (ED6470, 6471, 6472, and 6473), an introductory research methods course (ED6100), four electives, and an exit course ED6490.
- The **project route** consists of the four courses required for the diploma (ED6470, 6471, 6472, and 6473), an introductory research methods course (ED6100), three electives, and the project which 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), one additional research methods course, and the thesis which is equivalent to four courses.

**All students in the master's program** 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.

#### Details on RDI course route

Students on the course route of the master's program will complete the following requirements in addition to the four core RDI courses and ED6100:

1. Twelve credit hours (4 courses) from relevant electives offered in the M.Ed. program.
2. Students on the course route must complete 6490 Research and Development Seminar in RDI. Normally, students are permitted to register for this course only after all other course requirements have been met, or during the last semester of studies.

### **Details on RDI project route**

Students on the project route of the master's program will also complete the following requirements in addition to the four core RDI courses and ED6100:

1. Nine credit hours (3 courses) from relevant electives offered in the M.Ed. program.
2. Education 6192 Project in Reading Development and Instruction is normally taken at the completion of the course work and is intended to facilitate the conceptualization and writing of a project under the direction of a supervisor. A project is a theoretically based product intended for potential use in educational settings and an accompanying research-based report. For this program, this project shall be reading-focused and developed in consultation with the project supervisor (6 credit hours, or equivalent to 2 courses). Students must complete at least 24 credit hours prior to registering for the project. The project is completed within one semester. Students who started the RDI program January 2024 or later are required to work with a partner on the project.

### **Details on RDI thesis route**

Students on the thesis route of the master's program will also complete the following in addition to the four core RDI courses and ED6100:

1. One of the following research methods 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)

Please note that ED6100 must be completed as a prerequisite before enrolling in any of the research courses listed above.

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 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 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 a program route?**

All three MEd routes are comprehensive programs that provide opportunities to learn essential theories, knowledge and skills about reading development, assessment, and instruction. The course route allows students to take a range of courses as well as the exit course (6490) which entails producing a comprehensive critical literature review. The project includes a one-semester

collaborative creation of a research-based educational product and report including a comprehensive literature review. The thesis route consists of an independent research project resulting in a study that is published in the MUN Library and potentially also publishable as an academic journal article or book chapter. Students interested in pursuing a PhD would likely be best prepared by pursuing the thesis route.

All students are initially admitted on the course route unless accepted into the thesis route upon admission (this applies to students admitted for Winter 2026 start and after). Students wishing to pursue the project or thesis route can apply for these in your first year of the program. The thesis route application takes place in the first semester of studies, and the project application takes place in the third semester of studies. Details will be shared within Brightspace, and you can inquire to the Program Chair or Academic Program Office if you have questions about this process. As for securing a supervisor, in your application for the project or thesis route, in your application you can indicate your research interest and potential faculty members who might be appropriate supervisory fits.

### **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 the appendix for example timelines.

### **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.

Other research courses may vary in the terms they are offered. 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 intended course offerings, but due to various factors, courses offered in a particular semester may vary. The appendix outlines 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 Programs 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 forms and make any other inquiries and arrangements necessary (e.g., program payment). Students will be transferred into the course route by default. If you transfer from diploma to degree, you have nine semesters to complete the degree. If you complete the diploma in four semesters, and if you are admitted to the degree, you have **five remaining semesters** to complete the degree without incurring continuation costs. See the appendix for possible pathways to program completion.



## Appendix – Diploma and Degree Completion Routes

### RDI diploma

Year 1			Year 2
Winter	Spring	Fall	Winter
6470	6471	6472	6473

### MEd Comprehensive course route completion examples

Example	Year 1			Year 2			Year 3		
	Winter	Spring	Fall	Winter	Spring	Fall	Winter	Spring	Fall
Part time example 1	6470	6471	6472	6473	6100 Elec 1	Elec 2	Elec 3	Elec 4	6490
Part time example 2	6470	6471 6100	6472	6473	Elec 1 Elec 2	Elec 3	Elec 4	6490*	
Full time example 1	6470 6100	6471 Elec 1 Elec 2	6472 Elec 3	6473 Elec 4	6490				
Full time example 2	6470 6100	6471 Elec 1	6472 Elec 2	6473 Elec 3	6490 Elec 4				

Please note that part-time students can take 2 classes at a time only in the spring semester.

\*If you work in schools, we advise taking 6490 in the spring if possible, because the workload is more manageable when you are not also teaching.

### MEd Project route completion examples

Example	Year 1			Year 2			Year 3		
	Winter	Spring	Fall	Winter	Spring	Fall	Winter	Spring	Fall
Part time example 1	6470	6471	6472	6473	6100	Elec 1	Elective 2	Elective 3	Project
Part time example 2	6470	6471	6472	6473	6100 Elec 1	Elec 2	Elective 3	Project	
Part time example 3	6470	6471 6100	6472	6473	Elec 1 Elec 2	Elective 3	(Project)		
Full time example 1	6470 6100	6471 Elec 1 Elec 2	6472 Elec 3	6473 Project					
Full time example 2	6470 6100	6471 Elec 1	6472 Elec 2	6473 Elec 3	Project*				

Please note that part-time students can take 2 classes at a time only in the spring semester.

\*If you work in schools, we advise completing the project in the spring if possible, because the workload is more manageable when you are not also teaching.

## MEd Thesis route completion examples

	Year 1			Year 2			Year 3		
Example	Winter	Spring	Fall	Winter	Spring	Fall	Winter	Spring	Fall
Part time example 1	6470	6471 6100	6472	6473	2nd research course Begin proposal	Thesis proposal & ICEHR	Data collection & analysis	Analysis & writing	Complete thesis
Full time example 1	6470 6100	6471 2nd research course	6472 Proposal & ICEHR	6473 Collect data	Data analysis & begin writing	Writing Complete thesis			
Full time example 2	6470 6100	6471 2nd research course	6472 Begin proposal & ICEHR application	6473 Complete proposal & ICEHR	Begin data collection	Data collection & analysis	Writing	Complete thesis	

ICEHR: MUN's [Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research](#)

All theses that involve collecting data from human subjects must be approved by ICEHR. Your thesis supervisor will help you navigate this process.