

StFX Master of Adult Education (M.Ad.Ed.) Winter 2026 -Spring 2028

The Master of Adult Education (M.Ad.Ed) program at St. Francis Xavier University focuses on the links between theory and practice in a variety of sectors that involve adult education and learning, including community contexts, community colleges, and the health sector, among others. The 10 courses will concentrate on adult education for those interested in teaching and learning in these various settings. Courses will be presented in a combination of synchronous and asynchronous formats, and time frames (late afternoon, evening, and some weekends). **Starting in Winter 2026**, the 30-credit Master of Adult Education program offers two options:

- a *course-based* option (ten 3-credit courses)
- a *thesis-based* option (six 3-credit courses plus a 12-credit thesis)

Students planning to pursue further studies should consider the thesis-based option.

***Proposed program sequence and outline (numbers correspond to course descriptions below):**

Winter 2026	Spring 2026	Summer 2026	Fall 2026	Winter 2027	Spring 2027	Summer 2027	Fall 2027	Winter 2028	Spring 2028
535	540	545	550	565	560	532 OR 570	3 PRE-SELECTED COURSES (FROM COURSES 10-15 BELOW) TBA		

***Course ordering may be subject to change.**

1. **ADED 535 – Introduction to Adult Education Foundations** - This course provides an introduction to the scope, foundations, and practices of lifelong learning and adult education in Canada. Students will be able to identify and examine the uniquely critically oriented adult education traditions in Canada through conceptual definitions, education settings, historical movements, and social contexts. In addition to developing an understanding of the field, students will have the opportunity to explore their personal and professional relationships to adult education and lifelong learning, with application for their own practice, and gain insight into current and emerging trends in adult education and lifelong learning. Students will complete a detailed learning plan for the completion of the program.
2. **ADED 540 – Adult Learning Theory and Practice** - The intention of this course is to introduce students to the main adult education theories that have dominated the literature of the field, and how these have come to shape our conceptual understandings and practices associated with adult education and learning. This course will introduce students to important theoretical developments in adult education, such as the concepts of andragogy, self-directed learning, perspective transformation, situated learning, experiential learning, and conscientization, as well as accompanying critiques from Indigenous, critical, and feminist perspectives.
3. **ADED 545 – Critical Pedagogies** - The literature on critical pedagogies connects knowledge to power and foster empowering adult learning through the development of critical consciousness and praxis. Critical pedagogies invite students' experiences as material for

reflection and include civil rights and anti-oppression; racial, cultural, gender, and sexualities diversity; Indigenous rights; disability rights; and labour and class. Students will review the research on critical pedagogies and to listen and learn from a diversity of discourses in order to respond to a complex world and promote social, political, and ecological justice. Completion of a critical literature review on a topic of interest is required.

4. **ADED 550 – Continuing Professional Education and Portfolio** - The intent of the course is to introduce students to key concepts and processes of lifelong continuing professional education (CPE). The history of CPE, emergent critical debates (professional identity and professionalism, issues of collaboration, authenticity, power, ethics and leadership, etc.) and best practices in CPE (critically reflective practices, communities of practice, mentoring etc.) will be examined. Future trends and emergent formats such as virtual technology and networking will be explored. The completion of a professional portfolio is a requirement of this course.
5. **ADED 565 – Reading and Critiquing Research in Adult Education** - Learners will engage with academic research through a guided, purposeful approach so as to enhance both learner confidence and ability to understand peer-reviewed scholarship in the field of adult education. Learners will develop techniques to analyze, and critique published research that applies directly to learners' professional life. The course will guide the learner through the process of research with a "consumer's" focus, preparing the learner to discern and utilize research in their own practice. The completion of a critical analysis of research studies is a requirement of this course.
6. **ADED 560 – Qualitative Research in Adult Education: The Practitioner Researcher** - This course introduces students to the qualitative research paradigm, with a particular focus on the adult educator as researcher. The majority of published research in our field is qualitative. The course addresses the major debates and issues in qualitative research in adult education, as well as introduces students to the methodology and methods of qualitative research in adult education contexts. Students learn to develop practitioner research for adult education contexts. The completion of a research plan is a requirement of this course.
7. **ADED 532 – Transformative Learning: Theory and Practice** - This course will focus on the students' personal and professional learning, using the theory of transformative learning, which is a key theoretical framework for understanding and interpreting learning in adults. As a conceptual lens, it allows educators to challenge the taken for granted dictums of society, education, and learning. Learners will examine the theory, from its beginnings in the late 1970s and continuing to present. Particular attention is given to the social transformation possibilities of the theory. The intention is to guide learners to discover the theory and to connect it to their educational practices.
8. **ADED 570 – Critically Reflective Practice and Adults** - This course explores the ways in which adult education and critical pedagogies inform the values, approaches, and methods of critically reflective practices. Through a combination of critical pedagogies and social justice movements from individual and social perspectives, students will gain familiarity with reflective practices across various contexts. Narrative construction, reflection on action, critical incidents, and emerging applications will be investigated in order to generate critical perspectives that shape reflective practice and allow adults to evaluate their lifelong learning.
9. **ADED 528 – Issues in Community Colleges** - This course connects adult education with teaching and learning in a community college context. Through a lifelong learning lens

emphasizing self-direction and solution-based approaches, course content addresses concepts, theoretical orientations and frameworks crucial for diverse and informed understanding about teaching and learning in Canadian community colleges. Critical perspectives illuminate historical and contemporary ways that student populations, non-formal/experiential education, global digital technologies, and professional development and social justice functions and equity intersect and evolve in community college practices.

10. **ADED 531 – Critical Issues in Health and Adult Learning** - This course connects adult education and health with a focus on the evolution of health education, health promotion, and health literacy. Course content addresses health concepts, theoretical orientations, and frameworks (e.g. the Social Determinants of Health/SDoH) which are crucial for a diverse and informed understanding of health inequalities in Canada. Critically reflective work found in adult learning theory illuminates the ways in which knowledge translation/mobilization, digital technologies, population-specific needs, clinical care, ethical, policy, interprofessional practices and other health-related concerns evolve and intersect to support health equity.
11. **ADED 541 - Gender and Adult Education** This course will center gender within adult learning in assorted spaces and practices to engage in a nuanced critical examination of adult education with attention to relevant and current scholarship and practice, while examining the history of building gender equity in adult education. Learners in the course will draw from their own experiences and practice as adult educators and learners to examine adult education through a critical gender lens.
12. **ADED 555 – Work, Learning, and Society: Development in a Professional Setting** - This course examines the intersection of adult education/ learning practices and human resources development in employment settings. Programs and strategies such as competency-based learning, digital platforms, assessment frameworks, portfolios, etc. will be investigated, as will forms of learning and the social, political, economic, and global factors shaping today's workplaces. Drawing on their own experiences, students will explore workplace learning approaches and applications, and consider the impacts of these on individuals, organizations, sectors, and society. The completion of a professional portfolio is a requirement of this course.
13. **ADED 575 – Community Development and Adult Education** - Exploring collective learning for social and economic progress, this course identifies historical and contemporary examples of adult education and community development. Learners in this course examine pedagogical theories and development practice, and assets, barriers, and strategies for inclusive and culturally responsive collective learning for development practice and movements. Critical perspectives illuminate historical and contemporary ways that citizens, popular education, digital technologies, and equity function, intersect and evolve in learning for and in community development.
14. **ADED 580 – Global Issues in Adult Education** – This course will focus on historic and current trends in adult education from a global perspective. With a view to developing a comparative understanding of adult education policy and conceptualizations of adult learning internationally, this course will introduce students to various issues related to adult education in diverse global contexts.
15. **ADED 585 – Program Planning: Theory and Context of Practical Action** - This course focuses on a core area of adult education, program planning theory and practice. The same social, cultural, political and economic factors that influence other human social endeavours

are found in program planning; complex planning processes both influence and are influenced by various contexts, behaviours, locations and purposes. Students will engage with program planning's main theorists and practitioners and will be encouraged to apply theoretical understandings to their practice and in working in diverse contexts and learning communities.

16. **ADED 590 – Arts-based Pedagogies in Adult Education: Theory and Practice** - Arts-based methodologies/pedagogies provide communicative practices that allow inclusion of diversity for a vibrant pluralistic democracy. They foster critical thinking, offer means for expression, provide opportunities for citizens to listen and reflect on various perspectives, and promotes community engagement. The arts provide avenues for exposing problems and outlining possibilities, release the imagination, expand vision, act as bridges between differences, and support resilience. Arts-based methodologies/ pedagogies are used in teaching and research (data collection and representation of findings).

For more information about the program: <https://www.stfx.ca/departments/adult-education>

Updated September 24, 2025