

School of Computer Science and Electronic Engineering

Faculty of Science and Health

PhD Students

Postgraduate Research milestones are used to ensure students are making sufficient progress during their studies, and to provide a supportive framework to guide students through the various stages of their research. The Milestones should also help to keep students on track to submit within the appropriate period. PGR supervisors should talk through the relevant milestones during supervisory meetings and they should be referred to on a regular basis.

Supervisory Panels and Research Students' Progress Boards will use the milestones to reflect on the level of progress being made, ahead of making a recommendation. Whilst the milestones are specific for each department and type of course, it is recognised that every research journey is different, and that whilst the milestones provide an overarching framework of expectations, a degree of flexibility should be given, based on the trajectory and scope of research.

Students and supervisors are encouraged to supplement these milestones with individual research plans which take into account the specifics of an individual research project and the individual circumstances of the PGR student.

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**Year 1 (Full time), Year 1 and 2 (Part time)****Ahead of the first Supervisory Panel**

Milestone	Requirement	Full time term	Part time term
M1.1	Ability to write and speak coherently about the proposed research and its context. Brief technical report on the work done so far, including familiarisation and technical tools.	1	2
M1.2	Assess training needs and knowledge required to undertake research project and complete the thesis. Complete Training Needs Analysis.	1	2

Ahead of the second Supervisory Panel

Milestone	Requirement	Full time term	Part time term
M1.3	Re-assess training needs and knowledge required to undertake research project and complete the thesis. Proficuo courses attended and plan for further courses to attend.	3	6
M1.4	Choose/narrow down the research topic and demonstrate significance/impact of research. Research Project Proposal, including (dependent on subject area): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Central research problem/questions to be answered. ▪ Methodological considerations. ▪ Project plan, outlining objectives for each stage. 	3	6
M1.5	Demonstration of effective project management through the setting of research goals and prioritisation of activities. Detailed, realistic plan of work/ timetable for Year 2.	3	6
M1.6	Technical ability to be demonstrated by example. Working prototype, demonstration, or simulation appropriate to the technical area of research, created substantially by the student and showing an appropriate level of technical competence.	3	6

The student has identified whether the research will be using human participants, and has sought and received formal university ethics approval.

The student has identified whether the research uses security-sensitive material, and has sought and received formal university registration of this material.

The Supervisory Panel will make a recommendation to the Research Students' Progress Board, ahead of the next academic year. Further information regarding Supervisory Panels and Research Students' Progress Boards can be found here: <https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/postgraduate-research/pgr-progress>

**Year 2 (Full time), Year 3 and 4 (Part time)****Ahead of the third Supervisory Panel (Confirmation Board)**

Milestone	Requirement	Full time term	Part time term
M2.1	Demonstrate understanding of chosen topic within the context of the field. Critical review of the research literature relevant to the topic.	4	7
M2.2	Demonstrate the ability to produce work of the quality and quantity required to complete within the three year standard PhD period (six years for part-time students). Evidence that academic writing is of standard and ability expected at PhD level, including adequate referencing and language skills. Suitable evidence is draft or submitted papers or a report.	4	7
M2.3	Demonstrate novelty of research questions and show how to address them. Draft or submitted papers, or discussion at the Supervisory Panel.	4	7
M2.4	Review training needs and knowledge required to continue with research project and complete the thesis. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training Needs Analysis to be reviewed. ▪ Proficio courses attended and plan for further courses to attend. 	4	7

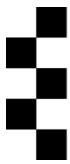
Ahead of the fourth Supervisory Panel

Milestone	Requirement	Full time term	Part time term
M2.5	Demonstrate work of the quality and quantity expected at the end of Year 2. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Draft chapters/papers ▪ Report on research undertaken to date 	6	12
M2.6	Review significance and impact of research and articulate output. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Present research to students and staff at seminars/conferences ▪ Draft journal article(s) 	6	12
M2.7	Demonstration of effective project management through the setting of research goals and prioritisation of activities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Detailed, realistic plan of work/ timetable for Year 3 which demonstrates the ability to submit within the three year standard PhD period (six years for part-time students). 	6	12

The student has identified whether the research will be using human participants, and has sought and received formal university ethics approval.

The student has identified whether the research uses security-sensitive material, and has sought and received formal university registration of this material.

The Supervisory Panel will make a recommendation to the Research Student Progress Board, ahead of the next academic year. Further information regarding Supervisory Panels and Research Student Progress Boards can be found here: <https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/postgraduate-research/pgr-progress>

**Year 3 (Full time), Year 5 and 6 (Part time)****Ahead of the fifth Supervisory Panel**

Milestone	Requirement	Full time term	Part time term
M3.1	Ability to reflect on skills and knowledge development and its application to the research project Training Needs Analysis	7	15
M3.2	Demonstrate work of the quality and quantity expected when nearing submission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Research completed (experimental, empirical and theoretical work, where relevant) ▪ Draft chapters/papers. 	7	15

Ahead of the sixth Supervisory Panel

Milestone	Requirement	Full time term	Part time term
M3.3	Clear evidence of progress towards submission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Completed draft of chapters for supervisor(s)/ supervisory panel comment. Plan of thesis (chapter headings and main sub- headings) 	8	16

The student has identified whether the research will be using human participants, and has sought and received formal university ethics approval.

The student has identified whether the research uses security-sensitive material, and has sought and received formal university registration of this material.

The Supervisory Panel will either confirm to the Research Student Progress Board that the student is ready to submit their thesis, or recommend that a period of completion is required (see below).

Completion Period

If, at the 6th supervisory Panel, a student isn't on track to submit their thesis by the end of year 3 (year 6 for Part time students), a recommendation for a period of completion can be requested from the RSPB, for approval by the Faculty Dean (Postgraduate)

Milestone	Requirement	Term to undertake work <i>(To be used as a guide only)</i>
C1.1	Clear plan to submission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeline of work needing to take place before submission • Draft thesis or chapters. 	Timeline agreed by Supervisory Panel.