Department of Sociology

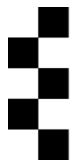# Faculty of Social Sciences

Journal-based MPhil 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. Students should determine whether they will produce a monograph- or paper-based dissertation during year 1 and should then read reference to chapters and/or papers below as relevant to their thesis format.

Contents

University of Essex

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	Supervisor(s) and student to carry out an analysis of the student's training needs for completion of the MPhil and complete a training needs analysis form	1	1
M1.2	Attendance: (i) Meet regularly with your supervisor(s), typically at least once every 4 weeks (ii) Attend twice-yearly supervisory panels (once a year for part-timers) (iii) Attend Year 1 PhD colloquium and other relevant seminars. (iv) Attend any courses needed, including Proficio courses	1-3	1-3
M1.3	Complete the student sections of the Department's supervisory report prior to each supervisory panel.	1-3	1-3
M1.4	(i) Confirm the decision to produce a journal paper-based thesis (ii) Produce an improved research proposal including indicating significance of the research (iii) Where necessary, have submitted an application for ethical approval for data collection for at least the first paper	1	3

Ahead of the second Supervisory Panel

Milestone	Requirement	Full time term	Part time term
M1.5	(i) Identify the central research problem questions and produce a tentative plan for the second paper. (ii) Produce a draft of one of the two papers or, if not, a literature review and outline of the methodology for both (in either case this should amount to approx., 8,000 words. (iii) Demonstrate the ability to produce work of the quality and quantity to complete an MPhil within 2 years.	3	6

Has the student and supervisory team considered whether the research will be using human participants, and if so, has sought and received formal university ethics approval.

Has the student and supervisory team considered whether the research uses security-sensitive material, and if so, 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

Milestone	Requirement	Full time term	Part time term
M2.1	Review training needs analysis with supervisor(s), considering whether previously identified needs have been met, and whether new needs have arisen/can be identified	4	7
M2.2	Attendance: (i) Meet with your supervisor(s) at least every 4 weeks		

			Full time term	Part time term
	(ii) Attend twice-yearly supervisory panels (iii) Attend the Year 2 PhD colloquium and other relevant seminars (iv) Attend Proficio or other courses as appropriate in the light of the reviewed training needs analysis		4-6	7-9
M2.3	Complete the student sections of the Department's supervisory report prior to each panel.		4	9
M2.4	Where necessary secured ethical approval for any data collection for the second paper.		4	9

Ahead of the fourth Supervisory Panel

Milestone	Requirement		Full time term	Part time term
M2.6	(i) Have produced a full draft of two journal papers (ii) Have plans in place for the submission of one of the papers to an appropriate journal (iii) Produce an outline of the additional Introduction and Conclusion to the thesis as a whole (iv) Demonstrate work of the quality and quantity expected for an MPhil (v) If a Completion Period is required have a detailed plan for submission		6	10-12
M2.7	Start to present research at workshops/ conferences/ seminars		6	12
M2.8	Supervisor(s) and student to discuss student's career plans at least once during the year		4-6	10-12

Has the student and supervisory team considered whether the research will be using human participants, and if so, has sought and received formal university ethics approval.

Has the student and supervisory team considered whether the research uses security-sensitive material, and if so, 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

Completion Period

If, at the 4th supervisory Panel, a student isn't on track to submit their thesis by the end of year 2 (year 4 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 *(To be used as a guide only)*
C1	Completion Period: (i) You will only be able to have a completion period beyond Year 2 if you have completed the tasks set out in 5. above. (ii) Completion periods are granted on a termly basis by the Dean for Postgraduate Research Education following a recommendation by the Research Students Progress Board (iii) If a completion period is required, you must produce a clear plan for final completion with an agreed submission date	