School of Life Sciences

Faculty of Science and Health

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.

Contents

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	Assess Health and Safety and ethics • Consider Health and Safety and ethics of project	1	2
M1.2	Clarify research topic and demonstrate an understanding of topic and relevant to wider research Research Project Proposal, including (dependent on subject area): • A brief description of the research topic • Present the aims and hypotheses of your research project, together with an explanation of your approach	1	2
M1.3	Assess training needs and knowledge required to undertake research project and complete the thesis. • Training needs to be completed.	1	2

Ahead of the second Supervisory Panel

Milestone	Requirement	Full Time term	Part Time term
M1.4	Demonstration of effective project management through the setting of research goals and prioritisation of activities. • Create a detailed, realistic research plan and timetable which demonstrates the ability to submit within the two year standard MPhil period (four years for part-time students) • 5000-10000 word Literature Review/ Thesis Introduction • Complete Thesis Chapter / or two Draft Thesis Chapters / Papers/ board report (complying with the length / formatting as in Thesis guidelines • Attend Proficio courses and plan for further courses to attend, as appropriate. • 10 minute power point presentation	3	6
M1.5	Subject-specific milestones • Graduate Forum poster presentation	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

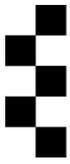| Milestone	Requirement	Full Time term	Part Time term
M2.1	Review training needs and knowledge required to continue with research project and complete the thesis. • Training Needs Analysis to be reviewed. • Attend Proficio courses and plan for further courses to attend, as appropriate.	4	8
M2.2	Demonstrate work of quality and quantity expected at the end of Year 2 • Create a detailed realistic plan of work/timetable for Year 1 which demonstrates the ability to submit within the two year standard MPhil period (four years for part-time students) • Two Draft Thesis Chapters or Papers (developed and show advances from your First-year) • Chapter-by-chapter thesis outline, highlighting sections that are complete, nearly complete, ongoing and planned • Provide a brief narrative/ bullet points indicating the advance since the last Board; or, a third results Chapter (draft or complete).	4	8

Ahead of the fourth Supervisory Panel

Milestone	Requirement	Full Time term	Part Time term
M2.3	Review significance and impact of research and articulate output. For example; • Present research to staff and students at seminars/conferences • Updated Chapter-by- Chapter thesis outline, highlight sections that are complete, nearly complete, ongoing, and planned • One new (or heavily updated / improved) results Chapter ' Paper draft • Updated plan until the thesis submission	6	12
M2.4	Subject-specific milestones • Graduate Forum oral presentation	6	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)*
C1.1	Clear plan to submission • Completed final draft for submission • Timetable of work needing to take place before submission • Submission date agreed	Timeline agreed by Supervisory Panel.
C1.2	• Organise Graduate Forum	Timeline agreed by Supervisory Panel.