

Essex Law School

Faculty of Arts and Humanities

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/decision. The milestones reflect the minimum requirements that students should meet if they are to be on a trajectory to complete on time. Therefore, if a student is seeking to complete and submit their PhD within three years, it would be necessary that they discuss this with their supervisors to develop a programme of work that provides a more rapid trajectory. It is recognised that every research journey is different, and that whilst the milestones provide an overarching framework of expectations, it may be necessary to adjust the programme of work, based on the trajectory and scope of research. For example, the nature of work that 'critically engages with the literature' may vary depending on the research project and therefore a degree of flexibility may be given in this regard.

Therefore, 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	Assess training needs and knowledge required to undertake research project and complete the thesis. Complete the Training Needs Analysis in order to do so.	1	1
M1.2	Demonstrate understanding of chosen topic within the context of the field with a critical literature review. The critical literature review should include a draft working paper (at least 5,000 words excluding footnotes) that provides a holistic overview of the planned project.	1	2-3
M1.3	Attend and complete LW987 Postgraduate research and methods training module. (For Spring and Summer term starters, the module should be completed within the first year, before the second supervisory panel).	1	1

Ahead of the second Supervisory Panel (Confirmation Board)

Milestone	Requirement	Full Time term	Part Time term
M1.4	Attend Proficio courses and plan for further courses to attend, as per Training Needs Analysis.	2	4
M1.5	Choose research topic and demonstrate significance/impact of research with a revised research project proposal, including the following; • Write central Research problem/questions to be answered. • Methodological considerations. • Feasibility Report - identifying sources, access and ethical considerations. • Create project plan, outlining objectives and timelines for each stage. • Assess potential need for ethics approval.	2	4
M1.6	Demonstrate the ability to produce work of the quality and quantity in order to complete within the three-year standard PhD period (six years for part-time students), in the following ways; • Evidence that academic writing is of a standard expected at PhD level, including adequate referencing and language skills • Produce a piece of written work that draws upon and critically engages with the literature and research area in which the thesis is situated (this could be a draft chapter). Usually this will build on drafts provided for and discussed at the M1 interim board. However, the piece must be sufficiently analytical to demonstrate the capacity to produce work of PhD quality. This output should not be less than 10,000 words in length, excluding footnotes.	3	5
M1.7	Demonstrate effective project management through the setting of research goals and prioritisation of activities, with the following steps; • Create a detailed, realistic plan of work/ timetable for Year 2. • Student to produce a report for each supervisory board written in a clear and self-reflective style. This report should be sufficiently robust that when read alongside the supervisory board report, these documents will satisfy the Progress Committee regarding the candidate's progress against the relevant milestones.	3	6



M1.8	Demonstrate the ability to articulate research ideas to academic staff and external subject areas specialists. To do this the student must present their work at the School of Law Annual PGR Research Conference.	3	6
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Further guidance relating to the expectations of a Law / Human Rights PhD can be found in the Essex Law School Postgraduate Research Student Handbook.

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>

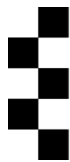
Year 2 (Full time), Year 3 and 4 (Part time)

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, in the following ways; • Training Needs Analysis to be reviewed • Review and revise ethical issues where relevant	4	7
M2.2	Demonstrate work of the quality and quantity expected at the end of Year 2 by keeping producing chapters that are of PhD quality.	4	8-9

Ahead of the fourth Supervisory Panel

Milestone	Requirement	Full Time term	Part Time term
M2.3	Attend Proficio courses and plan for further courses to attend as appropriate.	5	10
M2.4	Produce half of the thesis, maintaining the essential quality component of a PhD dissertation. (NB Students undertaking significant levels of fieldwork during M2 to demonstrate that they will produce half of the thesis for term 6 for FT students and term 12 for PT students.)	5	11
M2.5	For students undertaking significant levels of fieldwork during M2, produce half of the thesis, maintaining essential quality component of a PhD dissertation.	6	12
M2.6	Review significance and impact of research and articulate output, in the following ways; • Student to present research at the School of Law Annual PGR Research Conference • Student to present research to academic and peers at appropriate seminars / conference • Student to present where appropriate, their research at external academic events in line with Training Needs Analysis	6	11
M2.7	Demonstrate effective project management through the setting of research goals and prioritisation of activities, in the following ways; • Create a detailed, realistic plan of work/ timetable, which demonstrates the ability to meet all required milestones to enter a completion period at the end of Year 3 (six years for part-time students).	6	12



	Student to produce a report for each supervisory board written in a clear and self-reflective style. This report should be sufficiently robust that when read alongside the supervisory board report, this document will satisfy the Progress Committee regarding the candidate's progress against the relevant milestone.		
M2.8	A significant proportion of any subject specific field work should be completed by the end of year 2.	6	12

Further guidance relating to the expectations of a Law / Human Rights PhD can be found in the Essex Law School Postgraduate Research Student Handbook.

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 3 (Full time), Year 5 and 6 (Part time)

Ahead of the fifth Supervisory Panel

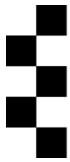
Milestone	Requirement	Full Time term	Part Time term
M3.1	Demonstrate the ability to reflect on skills and knowledge development and its application to the research project, by reviewing the Training Needs Analysis.	7	13
M3.2	Demonstrate work of the quality and quantity expected when nearing submission, in the following ways; - Research completed: theoretical, empirical, and experimental work, where relevant. - Produce a realistic plan for the completion of remaining chapters.	7	14-15

Ahead of the sixth Supervisory Panel

Milestone	Requirement	Full Time term	Part Time term
M3.3	Show clear evidence of progress towards submission, in the following ways; - Completed final draft of entire thesis, in 'late draft' or more advanced form, for supervisor(s) / supervisory board comment - Student to produce a report for each supervisory board written in a clear and self-reflective style	8-9	16-18

Further guidance relating to the expectations of a Law / Human Rights PhD can be found in the Essex Law School Postgraduate Research Student Handbook.

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 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 The candidate will agree upon a detailed timeline of work to take place to demonstrate that the thesis will be ready for submission. Submission date agreed and planning for viva in conjunction with supervisor(s).	Timeline agreed by supervisory board.