



Department of Psychology

Faculty of Science and Health

MPhil Students

Postgraduate research milestones ensure that students are making sufficient progress during their studies, to submit within the appropriate period, and to provide a supportive framework to guide students through the various stages of their research. 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* use the milestones to guide judgements on progress and to shape a recommendation. It is recognised that every research journey is different and that, whilst the milestones provide an overarching framework of expectations, a degree of flexibility is also required based on the 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.

For students who have switched between FT and PT status, the expected terms for completing milestones may require adjustments, which you should discuss with your supervisors, as well as with the PGR psychology administrator and the PGR Director, as needed, and with your supervisory panels. This is because there is not a one-to-one alignment of milestones between the FT and PT timelines.

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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	<p>Identify the research topic with provisional research question(s) and consideration for significance and viability of research.</p> <p>Develop an appropriate plan for progression of project during the next phase (up to second supervisory panel). For those using secondary data analysis extensively, identify any challenges in accessing and, if necessary, securing the data. Security-sensitive data can require university registration.</p> <p>Assess training needs and knowledge required to undertake research project and complete the thesis, subject to current plan development, in discussion with your supervisor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training Needs Analysis to be completed ▪ Consider Proficio courses (if applicable at this stage) ▪ Consider auditing PS908 or PS946-7-AU and PS947-7-SP, where appropriate ▪ Consider auditing PS953, PS946-7-AU, or PS947-7-SP to improve statistics knowledge, where appropriate ▪ Consider PS912 to develop research skills ▪ Attend department (or other) research seminars <p>Compulsory: Produce supervisory panel report written in a clear and self-reflective style, circulate to panel in advance of meeting.</p>	1	1-2

Ahead of the second Supervisory Panel

Milestone	Requirement	Full Time term	Part Time term
M1.2	<p>Develop the ability to produce work of the quality and quantity to complete a MPhil.</p> <p>Produce a report (approximately 10,000 words, hence '10k report') including, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Central research questions ▪ Methodological considerations ▪ Feasibility report—identifying sources, access and ethical considerations ▪ Project plan, outlining objectives for each stage ▪ Demonstrate familiarity with literature and methodology <p>Compulsory: Submit this (first) 10k report to supervisors in advance of second supervisory panel, to the SP chair prior to the SP meeting and afterwards to PGR Administrator when submitting the SP report.</p>	1-2	1-5



M1.3	<p>Demonstration of effective project management through the setting of research goals and prioritisation of activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have a realistic plan of work/timetable for the next stage ▪ Commence data collection, if appropriate ▪ Attend Proficio courses and plan for further courses to attend, as appropriate <p>Compulsory: Produce supervisory panel report, circulate to panel in advance of meeting.</p>	1-2	1-4
M1.4	<p>Demonstration of presentation skills.</p> <p>Compulsory: Poster presentation at department PGR conference (annually in May); milestone term (shown as start month) will depend on degree starting term. Presentation at an external conference can be substituted with permission of PGR Director</p>	Oct: 3 Jan: 2 Apr: 4	Oct: 6 Jan: 5 Apr: 4

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	<p>Demonstration of effective project management through the setting of research goals and prioritisation of activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a detailed, realistic completion plan ▪ Collect and analyse data of one or more experiments. 	2-4	5-7
M2.2	<p>Demonstrate knowledge of statistics for psychologists.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analyse data of one or more experiments 	2-4	5-7
M2.3	<p>Demonstrate work of the quality and quantity expected for an MPhil at this stage of degree.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revise 10k report based on supervisor feedback ▪ Develop draft of thesis ▪ Evidence that academic writing is of standard and ability expected at MPhil level, including adequate referencing and language skills. <p>Compulsory: Produce supervisory panel report, circulate to panel in advance of meeting.</p>	4	7



Ahead of the fourth Supervisory Panel

Milestone	Requirement	Full Time term	Part Time term
M2.4	Clear evidence of progress towards submission. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Submit complete near-final draft of thesis to supervisor ▪ Submission date finalised Compulsory: Produce supervisory panel report, circulate to panel in advance of meeting, outlining timeline of any work needed before submission. Submit current thesis draft version to SP chair also in advance of meeting.	6	12
M2.5	Demonstration of presentation skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider presenting at PGR conference (depending on timing of degree start) ▪ Take up opportunities to present at academic conferences, where possible 	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 <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 ▪ Submission date agreed 	Timeline agreed by Supervisory Panel