



Department of Sociology

Faculty of Social Sciences

Monograph 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. 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.

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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	At the first supervision of the year, supervisor(s) and student to carry out an analysis of the student's training needs for the PhD and complete a training needs analysis form	1	1
M1.2	Attendance: (i) Meet regularly with your supervisor(s), typically every four 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	1
M1.3	Complete the student sections of the Department's supervisory report prior to each supervisory panel	1-3	1-6
M1.4	By the first Supervisory Panel at end of Term 1: I. Confirm the decision to produce a monograph-based thesis II. Produce an improved research proposal including indicating significance of the research	1-3	1-6

Ahead of the second Supervisory Panel (Confirmation Board)

Milestone	Requirement	Full time term	Part time term
M1.6	In advance of Confirmation Panel at the end of Term 3, write a research project plan of a total 15,000 words consisting of the following components: (i) Identify the central research problem/questions (ii) A methodology outline covering data sources, ethics, and feasibility (iii) A critical literature review as a draft chapter of the thesis (at least 6,000 words) (iv) Where necessary, have submitted an application for ethical approval (v) Identify objectives and a plan of work for each stage of the research (vi) Demonstrate the ability to produce work of the quality and quantity to complete a PhD within 3 years (vii) A recommendation for confirmation by the Supervisory Panel has first to be approved by the Department's Research Students' Progress Board and then by the University's Dean of Postgraduate Research Education	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
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M2.1	At the first supervision of the year, 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 (ii) Attend twice-yearly supervisory panels (iii) Attend the Year 2 PhD colloquium and other relevant seminars (iv) Attend Proficior or other courses as appropriate in the light of the reviewed training needs analysis	4-6	7-12
M2.4	Complete the student sections of the Department's supervisory report prior to each panel	4-6	7-12

Ahead of the fourth Supervisory Panel

Milestone	Requirement	Full time term	Part time term
M2.5	By the Supervisory Panel at the end of Term 6: (i) Have completed almost all data collection (ii) Have started data analysis (iii) Produce EITHER a self-reflective report on the data and the data collection process, OR an updated literature and methods section (estimated 10,000 to 15,000 words, approximately 7-8000 words for literature review, 3-6000 words for methods) (iv) In addition to iii, produce either a preliminary or a full draft of one substantive chapter. In cases of intensive data collection taking much of year 2, this preliminary chapter can be of varying length depending on supervisor guidance (v) Across all years, supervisors should take on board Assistant Lecturer (AL) commitments when scheduling May/June Boards, discussing with supervisees before scheduling and avoiding dates of intensive marking periods for ALs (vi) Demonstrate work of the quality and quantity expected for a PhD student at the end of Year 2 (vii) Show effective project management, including a realistic plan of work for Year 3 allowing you to meet the requirements set out below under M3.5	6	12
M2.6	By the end of Term 6 have started to present research at workshops/conferences/seminars	6	12
M2.7	Supervisor(s) and student to discuss student's career plans at least once during the year	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/pgp-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
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M3.1	At the first supervision, review the training needs analysis especially re ability to reflect on skills and knowledge development and its application to the research	7	13
M3.2	Attendance: (i) Meet with your supervisor(s) at least once every 4 weeks (ii) Attend twice-yearly supervisory panels (iii) Attend the Year 3 PhD colloquium (iv) Attend any Proficio courses in the light of the reviewed training needs analysis	7-9	13-18
M3.3	Complete the student section of the Department's supervisory report prior to each panel	7-9	13-18
M3.4	By the first Supervisory Panel of the year have completed data collection	7	13

Ahead of the sixth Supervisory Panel

Milestone	Requirement	Full time term	Part time term
M3.5	By the Supervisory Panel at the end of year: (i) Produce drafts of remaining substantive chapters (ii) Produce a full draft of the methodology chapter (iii) Demonstrate work of the quality and quantity necessary for a PhD (iv) Have at least 80% of your thesis in draft (v) If a Completion Period is necessary, have a detailed plan for submission	8-9	17-18
M3.6	Continue to present research at workshops/seminars/conferences	7-9	13-18

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	Completion Period: (i) You will only be able to have a completion period beyond Year 3 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	