

**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.

**Year 1 (Full time)**  
**Year 1 and 2 (Part time)**

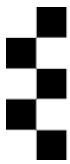
Milestone	Requirement	Term to undertake work <i>(To be used as a guide only)</i>	
		FT	PT
<b>Ahead of the first Supervisory Panel</b>			
M1.1	Assess Health and Safety and ethics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider Health and Safety and ethics of project</li> </ul>	1	2
M1.2	Clarify research topic and demonstrate an understanding of topic and relevant to wider research  Research Project Proposal, including (dependent on subject area): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A brief description of the research topic</li> <li>Present the aims and hypotheses of your research project, together with an explanation of your approach</li> </ul>	1	2
M1.3	Assess training needs and knowledge required to undertake research project and complete the thesis. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training needs to be completed.</li> </ul>	1	2
<b>Ahead of the second Supervisory Panel</b>			
M1.4	Demonstration of effective project management through the setting of research goals and prioritisation of activities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a detailed, realistic research plan and timetable which demonstrates the ability to submit within the two year standard MPhil</li> </ul>	3	6



	<p>period (four years for part-time students)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce a supervisory board report written in a clear scientific paper format and demonstrating critical reasoning</li> <li>5000-10000 word Literature Review/Introduction to Thesis (updated from second term submission)</li> <li>Complete Thesis Chapter / Paper or two Draft Thesis Chapters / Papers (complying with the length / formatting as in Thesis guidelines)</li> <li>Attend Proficio courses and plan for further courses to attend, as appropriate.</li> </ul>		
M1.5	<p>Knowledge and understanding of the Literature</p> <p>5000 to 10000-word Literature Review / Introduction to Thesis</p>	2	4
M1.6	<p>Subject-specific milestones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Graduate Forum poster presentation</li> </ul>	3	6
<p>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: <a href="https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/postgraduate-research/pgr-progress">https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/postgraduate-research/pgr-progress</a></p>			

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

Milestone	Requirement	Term to undertake work	
		<i>(To be used as a guide only)</i>	
<b>Ahead of the third Supervisory Panel</b>		<b>FT</b>	<b>PT</b>
M2.1	<p>Review training needs and knowledge required to continue with research project and complete the thesis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training Needs Analysis to be reviewed.</li> <li>Attend Proficio courses and plan for further courses to attend, as appropriate.</li> </ul>	4	8
M2.2	<p>Demonstrate work of quality and quantity expected at the end of Year 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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)</li> <li>3000 to 5000 word Draft Thesis Chapter or Paper (developed from your First-year Annual Report)</li> <li>Chapter-by-chapter thesis outline, highlighting sections that are complete, nearly complete, ongoing and planned</li> <li>Either two complete Chapters or two Papers that are in draft (e.g. advances of those presented at your End-of-First-Year Board), in which case you should additionally provide a brief (~10- line) narrative indicating the advance since your last Board; or, a third results Chapter (draft or complete).</li> </ul>	4	8
<b>Ahead of the fourth Supervisory Panel</b>			
M2.3	<p>Review significance and impact of research and articulate output.</p> <p>For example;</p>	6	12



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present research to staff and students at seminars/conferences</li> <li>• Updated Chapter-by- Chapter thesis outline, highlight sections that are complete, nearly complete, ongoing, and planned</li> <li>• One new (or heavily updated / improved) results Chapter ‘ Paper draft</li> <li>• Updated plan until the submission of thesis</li> </ul>		
M2.4	Subject-specific milestones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graduate Forum oral presentation</li> </ul>	6	12
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: <a href="https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/postgraduate-research/pgr-progress">https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/postgraduate-research/pgr-progress</a>			

### Completion Period

If, at the 4<sup>th</sup> 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"> <li>• Completed final draft for submission</li> <li>• Timetable of work needing to take place before submission</li> <li>• Submission date agreed</li> </ul>	Timeline agreed by Supervisory Panel.
C1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organise Graduate Forum</li> </ul>	