University of Essex

Department of Government

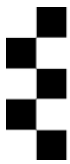**Faculty of Social Sciences**

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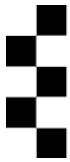
Year 1 (Full time)
Year 1 and 2 (Part time)

Milestone	Requirement	Term to undertake work *(To be used as a guide only)*	
		FT	**PT**
Ahead of the first Supervisory Panel			
M1.1	Assess training needs and knowledge required to undertake research project and complete the thesis. • Training Needs Analysis to be completed. • Attend Proficio courses and plan for further courses to attend, as appropriate	1	1-3
Ahead of the second Supervisory Panel (Confirmation Board)			
M1.2	Choose research topic and demonstrate significance/impact of research • Research Project Proposal, including (dependent on subject area): • Write central research problem/questions to be answered. • Methodological considerations. • Feasibility Report – identifying sources, access and ethical considerations • Create project plan, outlining objectives for each stage. A termly check-in meeting (either in group or individually with the relevant research division head	3	4
M1.3	Demonstrate understanding of chosen topic within the context of the field. • Critical Literature Review (where relevant)	3	5

M1.4	Demonstrate the ability to produce work of the quality and quantity in order to complete an MPhil within the standard period. • Evidence that academic writing is of standard and ability expected at MPhil level, including adequate referencing and language skills.	3	5
M1.5	Demonstration of effective project management through the setting of research goals and prioritisation of activities • Create a detailed, realistic plan of work/ timetable for Year 2. • Produce supervisory panel report written in a clear and self-reflective style	3	6
M1.6	Subject-specific milestones 1) Related to Dissertation 2) Meet professionalization requirements concerning presenting one's work • Research proposal • Literature Review • Substantive chapter Present paper at Graduate Colloquium	3	6
The student has identified whether the research will be using human participants, and has sought and received formal university ethics approval. The student has identified whether the research uses security-sensitive material, and 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)

Milestone	Requirement	Term to undertake work *(To be used as a guide only)*	
		FT	PT
Ahead of the third Supervisory Panel			
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	7-9
Ahead of the fourth Supervisory Panel			
M2.2	Demonstration of effective project management through the setting of research goals and prioritisation of activities. • Create a detailed, realistic completion plan. • Produce Supervisory Panel report written in a clear and self-reflective style	5	10
M2.3	Demonstrate work of the quality and quantity expected for an MPhil at the end of Year 2 (or equivalent for part-time students) • Research completed (empirical and theoretical work, where relevant) Produce sufficient draft chapters/ papers • Produce Supervisory Panel report written in a clear and self-reflective style	6	11-12

	• Present research to students and staff at seminars/conference • A termly check-in meeting (either in groups or individually with the relevant research division head)		
M2.4	Completed final draft of thesis for supervisor(s)/Supervisory Panel comment	6	12
M2.5	Subject-specific milestones • Complete draft of thesis	6	12
The student has identified whether the research will be using human participants, and has sought and received formal university ethics approval. The student has identified whether the research uses security-sensitive material, and 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		

Completion Period

If, at the fourth 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 made by the RSPB, for approval by the Faculty Dean (Postgraduate).

Milestone	Requirement	Term to undertake work *(To be used as a guide only)*
C1	Clear evidence of progress towards submission • Timeline of work needing to take place before submission Department specific attitudes towards submission • Revise and rewrite chapters. • Thesis no longer than 50 000 words	Termly progress report to supervisor and/or board members if necessary