University of Essex

Institute for Social and Economic Research
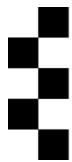
Faculty of Social Sciences

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.

Contents

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

Ahead of the first Supervisory Panel

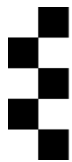| Milestone	Requirement	Full time term	Part time term
M1.1	Assess training needs and knowledge required to undertake research for Paper 1 • Training Needs Analysis to be completed • Attend Proficio courses and plan for further courses to attend, as appropriate	1	1-3
M1.2	Meetings • Attend regular (at least monthly) meetings with your supervisor(s) • Attend ISER PhD student seminars • Attend ISER PhD course lectures • Attend relevant seminars from ISER and other departments	1-3	1-6

Ahead of the second Supervisory Panel (Confirmation Board)

Milestone	Requirement	Full time term	Part time term
M1.3	Choose research topic for Paper 1 and demonstrate potential significance/impact of research, by producing a research paper plan, including (dependent on subject area): • a clear statement of the central research problems/questions to be answered. • Methodological considerations. • Feasibility Report – identifying data sources, access and ethical considerations (especially if experimental work involved) • a project plan, outlining objectives for each stage	2	4-5
M1.4	Demonstrate understanding of chosen topic within the context of the field • Critical Literature Review (where relevant) • Regular attendance at ISER research seminar and research group meetings	3	6
M1.5	Demonstrate the ability to produce work of the quality and quantity in order to complete within the three year standard period • Evidence that academic writing is at (or close to) the standard expected at PhD level, including adequate referencing and language skills • It should be clear that the student is on track to produce a complete draft of Paper 1 by the end of Term 4 (for full-time students; Term 7 for part-time)	3	6
M1.6	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 board report written in a clear and self-reflective style	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

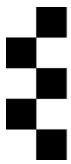| Milestone	Requirement	Full time term	Part time term
M2.1	Review training needs and knowledge required to continue with Paper 2 • Training Needs Analysis to be reviewed • Attend Proficio courses and plan for further courses to attend, as appropriate • Regular attendance at ISER research seminar and research group meetings	4 4-6	7 8-9

Ahead of the fourth Supervisory Panel

Milestone	Requirement	Full time term	Part time term
M2.2	Demonstrate work of the quality and quantity expected at the end of Year 2 • Produce two draft papers: a full draft of Paper 1; a draft of the research undertaken to date for Paper 2 • Evidence that academic writing is at the standard expected at PhD level, or is very close to achieving it. • Report on research undertaken to date	5-6	10-11
M2.3	Review significance and impact of research and articulate output. For example: • Present research to students and staff at seminars/conferences • Write journal articles	5-6	11-12
M2.4	Demonstration of effective project management through the setting of research goals and prioritisation of activities • Create a detailed, realistic plan of work/ timetable for the work on Paper 3 to be carried out in Year 3 • Create a detailed, realistic plan of work/ timetable for Year 3 which demonstrates the ability to submit within the three year standard PhD period (six year for part-time students) • Produce supervisory board report written in a clear and self-reflective style	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

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	Ability to reflect on skills and knowledge development and its application to the research project • Training Needs Analysis reviewed • Regular attendance at ISER research seminar and research group meetings	7	13
M3.2	Demonstrate work of the quality and quantity expected when nearing submission • Papers submitted for publication • Presenting at ISER research seminar, research group meetings or external seminars/conferences	7	14-15

Ahead of the sixth Supervisory Panel

Milestone	Requirement	Full time term	Part time term
M3.3	Clear evidence of progress towards submission • Draft of chapter 1 (introduction) and chapter 5 (conclusion) Completed final draft of thesis for supervisor(s)/ supervisory board comment • Produce a realistic completion year plan. • Produce supervisory board report written in a clear and self-reflective style	8-9	16-18

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 *(To be used as a guide only)*
C1	Clear plan to submission • Final polishing of all chapters. • Timeline of work needing to take place before submission • Submission date agreed	Timeline agreed by Supervisory board.