

PhD/MPhil Milestone Two

Mid-Candidature Review Milestone Requirements

Overview

Research training at The University of Queensland is research and professional development. It is more than a thesis. It is 'training in research' plus 'training by research'. It is expected that Higher Degree Research candidates will acquire and develop the following attributes:

- knowledge and skills in the field of study;
- effective communication skills;
- critical judgment and research skills;
- independence and creativity; and
- ethical and social understanding.

The HDR program is intended to develop these attributes. Graduates are required to demonstrate attainment of these attributes through a variety of means, including successful attainment of three academic milestones.

Milestone Two: Mid-Candidature Review

The purpose of this milestone is to ensure that:

- the project is on track for completion within candidature duration;
- the candidate's research and other professional skills are developing appropriately; and
- the composition of advisory team remains appropriate.

Timing and Components

Mid-Candidature review will take place 12 months FTE (PhD) or 6 months FTE (MPhil) after the official confirmation milestone date. The components of the milestone are:

- written work; and
- an interview.

Both milestone components should be completed by the milestone due date. The exact due date for each student is set by the Graduate School and is noted on SI-Net. If the student is unable to meet the requirements of the milestone by this date, an extension should be requested to the Graduate School via a formal application through the Candidature Management Portal.

Students should consult with their advisory team before submitting a request for an extension and familiarise themselves with Graduate School policies on extension requests. Please contact the Higher Degrees by research Liaison Officer (HLO) if you have any questions.

1. Written work

The candidate must submit a written Mid-Candidature Review document. The written work can be a draft thesis chapter involving data, analysis and/or discussion, or a substantial piece of academic writing (such as an article submitted for publication to a refereed journal). Literature review and methodology chapters are **not appropriate** for this milestone.

The candidate is also required to submit an overview document of thesis progress to date. Please note that this written work must demonstrate that the student has collected and begun to analyse the data central to the thesis.

External review of written documents

The written work will be reviewed by an independent reviewer, who will submit a report prior to the interview to assist the HDR Committee to determine the progress (quality and quantity) of the candidate's research. The reviewer will be asked to respond to the following questions:

- Are the data and methods appropriate to address the research aims?
- Has enough of the right type of data been collected or is more work required?
- Is the candidate at a level consistent with being two-thirds of the way through their project?

The student and the advisors are jointly responsible for identifying a suitable external reviewer and submitting the student's written work to the reviewer approximately 4 weeks prior to the scheduled interview day. This should allow sufficient time for the reviewer to read and return comments in time for discussion during the Mid-Candidature Review interview. It is the joint responsibility of the student and the advisory team to ensure that the document is provided to and returned by the reviewer prior to the Mid-Candidature Review interview.

Further details on the process of managing the external review of milestone documents is available in a separate set of guidelines (see [here](#)). These include links to template emails for advisors to contact reviewers.

2. Interview

An interview will take place approximately 2-3 weeks after the submission of written work. The interview is conducted with the Director of Research Training (DHDR) or a representative of the HDR Committee, the candidate and advisory team. The reviewer of the Mid-Candidature Review document may also be present at the interview. At the candidate's request the student representative on the HDR Committee may also be present. The expected duration of the interview is 30-45 minutes.

The interview may include time for the candidate to talk with the HDR Committee representative without their advisory team present, as well as time for the HDR Committee representative to meet with the advisory team without the candidate. The interview provides an opportunity for further feedback to be provided to the candidate, and to discuss approaches to dealing with any issues that may interfere with successful progress toward final review.

At the completion of the interview, the DHDR (or their delegate) may recommend:

- That the milestone has been achieved.
- That an extension of the due date be granted for achieving the milestone (usually of up to three months FTE), in which case the candidate can revise the written work which will then be reviewed and another interview conducted;
- That the candidate has not achieved the milestone and is liable for review of candidature. Review of candidature can be initiated following either the first or second attempt at the milestone.

If the milestone is achieved, a Milestone Attainment request is uploaded by the candidate via the Candidature Management Portal. This request will then be forwarded to the Principal Advisor and the DHDR for their approval and sign-off. If an extension of the due date is granted, the appropriate request is made by the student via the Candidature Management Portal.

Milestone Extensions¹

PhD candidates who attained their Confirmation milestone prior to January 1st 2019 may apply for:

- Up to 3 x 3 month (FTE) extensions during their candidature, including submission.

¹ Please see UQ Policy and Procedures Library 4.60.05 higher Degree by Research Candidature Progression for more information

PhD candidates who attained their Confirmation milestone after January 1st 2019 may apply for:

- Up to 2 x 3 month (FTE) extensions during their candidature, including submission.

MPhil candidates may apply for:

- Up to a maximum of 4.5 months (FTE) during their candidature, including submission, with no request exceeding 3 months in duration.

No more than two extensions may be used per milestone. The timing and use of the extensions is at the discretion of the candidate and their advisory team. Further extensions will only be approved on a case-by-case basis where the candidate experiences events which have direct impact on the progress of research. For example, this may include:

- partial or total destruction of research samples or data due to natural disasters leading to the research being unable to be recreated within the maximum extension period;
- failure of essential equipment leading to research being unable to be recreated within the maximum extension period.

Where an extension is being sought, the request via the Candidature Management Portal must be submitted to the Graduate School at least 2 weeks prior to the milestone due date.

Candidates who are unable to achieve milestones due to a change in personal circumstances (e.g., illness and work commitments) should discuss taking temporary leave from candidature with their advisory team.

Students granted an extension are required to revise their written documents and resubmit them for review approximately one month prior to the milestone due date. They will then be required to attend interview with the DHDR and members of their advisory team.

Candidates who do not achieve a milestone after the following periods of FTE candidature will be liable for a review of candidature:

	PhD	MPhil
Confirmation	18 months	9 months
Mid-Candidature Review	30 months	15 months
Final Thesis Review	42 months	21 months
Submission	48 months	24 months