

PhD/MPhil Milestone Three

Final Thesis 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 Three: Final Thesis Review

The purpose of this milestone is to ensure that:

- the work is of a standard to be examined by the expected submission date;
- appropriate feedback about the readiness of the thesis for examination can be given;
- any issues/concerns with the thesis requiring attention can be addressed prior to submission;
- the scope, originality and quality of the thesis are of an appropriate standard.

This milestone constitutes also an opportunity to initiate discussions about thesis examiners.

Timing and Components

Final Thesis review will take place 12 months FTE (PhD) or 6 months FTE (MPhil) after the official Mid-Candidature milestone date. It is expected that the candidate will usually complete this milestone within three months FTE of thesis submission.

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 my SI-Net. If the student is unable to meet the requirements of Final Thesis Review 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 of Research Liaison Officer (HLO) if you have any questions.

1. Written work

The candidate must provide evidence of post-Mid-Candidature Review writing through the following mandatory written components:

- A thesis overview that briefly summarises the proposed or completed content of each chapter, and comments on the extent of their completion rate (this can be done as a table).

- A completed discussion/analysis chapter presenting original material from the study or a submitted journal article. This document should be between 6,000-12,000 words and must not have been submitted as part of the Mid-Candidature Review.
- A timetable for submission.

In addition, the following optional material may be provided as further evidence of satisfactory completion of this milestone:

- A list of conference presentations.
- A list of any publications deriving from the thesis.

External review of written documents

The written documents 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 comment specifically on whether a HDR standard has been achieved by way of intellectual contribution and critical analysis.

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 Final Thesis 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 Final Thesis 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 4 weeks after the submission of the written work. The interview is conducted with the Director of Higher Degree Research (DHDR) or an HDR Committee member, the candidate and advisory team. The reviewer of the Final Thesis 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, but may be longer if required. 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 candidate should be able to address the feedback from the reviewer, and any questions or comments raised by the interview panel.

In addition, the interview provides an opportunity to: discuss the feasibility of the timeline and plan of work to completion, and confirm a realistic submission timeline; identify any factors delaying progress, and develop appropriate responses; and identify any additional resources required.

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 (usually of up to three months FTE) be granted for achieving the milestone, 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 completed Milestone request is uploaded by the student 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 Candidate 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.

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

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