

Milestone Two: Mid-candidature review

Overview

Research training at The University of Queensland is research 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.

Supervision and coursework programs are 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.

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 is appropriate.

Timing and Components

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

- a presentation/seminar;
- written work; and
- an interview.

All components of the milestone, including the interview, should be completed by the 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 the milestone by this date, an extension should be requested via the 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 Postgraduate Administration Officer if you have any questions.

1. Presentation / seminar

The candidate will present to disciplinary colleagues at a national or international conference, school seminar, the School of Social Science Postgraduate Research Conference, or another similar forum. In the presentation, the candidate must provide evidence of post-confirmation data collection and/or analysis. The presentation should describe the methods used and present preliminary results. Apart from the Postgraduate Research Conference held in November each year, the School does not organise specific sessions for Mid-Candidature Review presentations. The candidate is expected to find a suitable venue to present his or her research to a disciplinary audience. The selected venue

must be approved by the Postgraduate Administration Officer prior to the presentation. The presentation should take place within three months prior to the milestone due date. Any presentations scheduled outside that timeframe will need to be approved by the Director (Research and Training). You will be required to provide details of your presentation forum, date and topic to the Postgraduate Studies Committee representative at your milestone interview or in your thesis overview document.

2. Written work

Approximately one month prior to the milestone completion date, the candidate must submit a written Mid-Candidature Review Document to the School's Postgraduate Administration Officer. The written work can be a draft thesis data or discussion/analysis chapter (literature review and methodology chapters are not appropriate for this milestone) or a substantial piece of academic writing such as an article submitted for publication to a refereed journal. 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.

The written work will be reviewed by an independent reviewer who will submit a report to the Postgraduate Studies Committee prior to the interview to assist the Committee to determine the progress (quality and quantity) of the candidate's research. It is the responsibility of the advisory team to select a suitable reviewer and invite him or her to undertake the review. Once a reviewer has been selected, the advisory team will provide the Postgraduate Administration Officer with the contact details of the independent reviewer. This information should be provided at least two weeks before the mid-confirmation document is sent out for review. The reviewer will be asked to respond to the following questions:

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

3. Interview

An interview will take place approximately 2-3 weeks after the submission of written work. The interview is conducted with a representative of the Post Graduate Studies 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 Postgraduate Studies Committee may also be present. The expected duration of the interview is 30 minutes. The interview may include time for the candidate to talk with the PGSC without their advisory team present, as well as time for the PGSC 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 School Director (Research and Training) 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 (only one extension of the due date will be granted per milestone);

- or 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 Portal. This request will then be forwarded to the Principal Advisor and the Director (Research and Training) 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 Extensions

PhD candidates may apply for:

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

MPhil candidates who attained confirmation after 1 January 2013 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 to allow for flexibility as required. 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 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, 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 Chair of the Postgraduate Studies Committee and members of their advisory team. It is not necessary for students to repeat their presentation.

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
Thesis Review	42 months	21 months
Submission	48 months	24 months