

Milestone Three - Final Thesis 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.

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 or 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.

Timing and Components

Thesis review will take place 12 months FTE (PhD) or 6 months FTE (MPhil) after the official mid-candidature milestone due 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:

- 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 Thesis Review 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 similar forum. In the presentation, the candidate must provide evidence of post-Mid Term Review analysis and writing. Apart from the Postgraduate Conference held in November each year the School does not organise specific sessions for Final Thesis 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. The date, venue and topic of the presentation should also be provided to the Postgraduate Committee representative at the milestone interview.

The presentation should:

- put forward a central argument from the thesis;
- demonstrate high level skills in communication and presentation;
- demonstrate an ability to answer questions and engage with critical commentary; and
- demonstrate that a PhD standard has been achieved by way of intellectual contribution and critical analysis.

2. Written work

Within approximately one month before the milestone due date, the candidate must submit a written Final Thesis Review Document to the School's Postgraduate Administration Officer. The candidate must provide evidence of post-Mid-candidature Review writing. This will comprise the following mandatory components:

- a thesis overview that summarises the proposed or completed content of each chapter, and comments on the extent of the draft and work still to be completed. This can be done as a table;
- a timetable for submission; and
- 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.

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

- a list of conference presentations; and
- a list of any publications deriving from the thesis.

The written work is reviewed by an independent reviewer who will advise the Postgraduate Studies Committee. The appropriate reviewer will be selected, and invited to undertake the review, by the advisory team. It is the responsibility of the advisory team to provide the Postgraduate Administration Officer with the contact details of the independent reviewer at least two weeks before the final milestone document is sent out for review. The reviewer will be asked to comment specifically on whether or not a PhD standard has been achieved by way of intellectual contribution and critical analysis.

3. Interview

An interview will take place approximately 2-3 weeks after the submission of written work. The interview is conducted with the Chair of the Postgraduate Studies Committee, 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 Postgraduate Studies Committee may also be present. The expected duration of the interview is 45 minutes, but may be longer if required. 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 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 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 completed Milestone request is uploaded by the student 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 Candidate via the 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