

Essex Business School

Faculty of Social Sciences

Sustainable Transitions 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.

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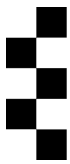
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**Year 1 (Full time), Year 1 and 2 (Part time)****Ahead of the first Supervisory Panel**

Milestone	Requirement	Full time term	Part time term
M1.1	<p>Assess training needs and knowledge required to undertake research project and complete the thesis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training Needs Analysis to be completed in consultation with supervisor. • Undertake initial training in interdisciplinary research. Undertake initial training in secondary (and if applicable) tertiary disciplines. • Other training modules with assessment to be completed as applicable. • Attend Proficio courses and Insite workshops • Regular attendance at department and external research seminars • Plan for further courses to attend, as appropriate. • Formulate and record in a document a realistic project plan detailing plans and specific objectives for the First year to achieve the remaining sub-components of milestone 1 and provision plans for subsequent years. 	1	1-3

Ahead of the second Supervisory Panel (Confirmation Board)

Milestone	Requirement	Full time term	Part time term
M1.2	<p>Assess training needs and knowledge required to undertake research project and complete the thesis (continued).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training modules with assessment to be completed as applicable. • Attend Proficio courses and Insite workshops • Regular attendance at department and external research seminars • Plan for further courses to attend, as appropriate. • Formulate and record in a document a realistic project plan detailing plans and specific objectives for the First year to achieve the remaining sub-components of milestone 1 and provision plans for subsequent years. • Training plan to be reviewed and submitted with supervisory panel documentation as part of evidence of progress. 	2	4
M1.3	<p>Choose research topic and demonstrate significance/impact of research.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Project Proposal, including (dependent on subject area): • Write central research problem/questions to be answered. • Methodological considerations. • Integration of interdisciplinary components • Evaluate progress against the project plan formulated for M1.1 and revise if necessary. • Feasibility report-identifying sources, access and ethical considerations 	2	4
M1.4	Demonstrate understanding of chosen topic within the context of the field.	3	5



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical literature Review 		
M1.5	<p>Demonstrate the ability to produce work of the quality and quantity in order to complete within the standard period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence that academic writing is of standard and ability expected at PhD level, including adequate referencing and language skills. One of the following should be provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft methodology chapter Detailed outline of the conceptual framework (This is equivalent to approx. 20% of overall thesis) 	3	6
M1.6	<p>Demonstration of effective project management through the setting of research goals and prioritisation of activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate progress against the project plans formulated for milestone 1.1 and revise if necessary. Supervisory Panel reports written in a clear and self-reflective style. 	3	6
M1.7	<p>Consideration of Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student must have an annual meeting with their Impact Advisor 	2-3	5-6

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.

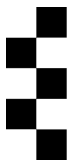
Has the student and supervisory team considered whether the research uses security-sensitive material, and if so, has sought and received formal university registration of this material.

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	<p>Review training needs and knowledge required to continue with research project and complete the thesis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Needs Analysis to be completed. Review of the integration of interdisciplinary components Attend Proficio courses and Insite workshops Regular attendance at department and external research seminars Plan for further courses to attend, as appropriate. <p>Demonstration of effective project management plan through the setting of research goals and prioritisation of activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing detailed, realistic plans of work/ timetable for the next six months which demonstrates the ability to submit within the three-year standard PhD period (six years for part-time students) Supervisory Panel report written in a clear and self-reflective style 	4	7-9

**Ahead of the fourth Supervisory Panel**

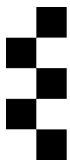
Milestone	Requirement	Full time term	Part time term
M2.2	Review training needs and knowledge required to continue with research project and complete the thesis. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend Proficio courses and Insite workshops Regular attendance at department and external research seminars Plan for further courses to attend, as appropriate. 	5	10
M2.3	Demonstrate work of the quality and quantity expected at the end of Year 2. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drafts of following chapters: Literature review Methodology At least one data analysis chapter Report on research undertaken to date (this is equivalent to approx. 60% of overall thesis) 	5	11
M2.4	Review significance and impact of research and articulate output. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation of research project to staff and students at annual PhD conference Student must have had at least one annual meeting with their Impact Advisor 	6	12
M2.5	Demonstration of effective project management through the setting of research goals and prioritisation of activities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing detailed, realistic plans of work/ timetable for the next six months which demonstrates the ability to submit within the three-year standard PhD period (six years for part-time students) Supervisory Panel report written in a clear and self-reflective style Evaluate progress against the project plans formulated for milestone 2.1 and revise if necessary. Training plan to be reviewed and submitted with supervisory panel documentation as part of evidence of progress 	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 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 3 (Full time), Year 5 and 6 (Part time)

**Ahead of the fifth Supervisory Panel**

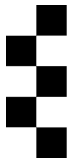
Milestone	Requirement	Full time term	Part time term
M3.1	<p>Ability to reflect on skills and knowledge development and its application to the research project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training Needs Analysis reviewed • Review of the integration of interdisciplinary components • Regular attendance at department research seminars • Demonstration of effective project management plan through the setting of research goals and prioritisation of activities. • Continuing detailed, realistic plans of work/ timetable for the next six months which demonstrates the ability to submit within the three-year standard PhD period (six years for part-time students) • Supervisory Panel report written in a clear and self-reflective style • Training plan to be reviewed and submitted with supervisory panel documentation as part of evidence of progress 	7	13
M3.2	<p>Demonstrate work of the quality and quantity expected when nearing submission or equivalent for part-time students)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research completed (experimental, empirical and theoretical work, where relevant) • Minimum 4 draft chapters (This is equivalent to approx. 80% of overall thesis). 	7	14-15

Ahead of the sixth Supervisory Panel

Milestone	Requirement	Full time term	Part time term
M3.3	<p>Clear evidence of progress towards submission.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing detailed, realistic plans of work/ timetable for the next six months. • Supervisory Panel report written in a clear and self-reflective style • Completed final draft of thesis for supervisor(s)/ supervisory Panel comment (This is equivalent to approx. 100% of completed thesis). • Submit Approval of Thesis Title form • Timeline of work needing to take place before submission with a clear plan to submission. • Submission date agreed • Evaluate progress against the project plans formulated for milestone 3.1 and revise if necessary. 	8-9	16-18
M3.4	<p>Consideration of Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student also to have at least one annual meeting with their Impact Advisor 	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 Students' 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 sixth 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 made by the RSPB, for approval by the Faculty Dean (Postgraduate).

Milestone	Requirement	Term to undertake work <i>(To be used as a guide only)</i>
C1.1	Administrative milestones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeline of work needing to take place before submission Clear plan to submission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission date agreed 	Timeline agreed by Supervisory Panel