



Department of Economics

Faculty of Social Sciences

PhD Students Milestones

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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**Year 1 (full-time) (No part-time option in Year 1)****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 PhD research projects and complete the thesis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register for two core Economics PhD research training modules in Autumn Term out of those currently offered (EC991, EC993, and EC995) based on planned research areas and discussions with Graduate Director (PhD). • Reach agreement on EC990 and PhD thesis supervision with a suitable supervisor, in discussions with Graduate Director (PhD) by end of Autumn Term. 	1	N/A

Ahead of the second Supervisory Panel (Confirmation Board)

Milestone	Requirement	Full Time Term	Part Time Term
M1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Moodle to complete Training Needs Analysis form in conjunction with thesis supervisor by end of Spring Term. • Plan for Proficio or other training courses in discussion with supervisor 	2	N/A
M1.3	<p>Choose research topic and demonstrate significance/impact of research.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete EC990 (research project plan) in line with issued guidelines. • Obtain a mark of at least 60 in EC990 by providing clear evidence of the ability to produce original research at the PhD level. This evidence may be either a self-contained complete research paper building toward a full substantive PhD chapter or a substantive research proposal for multiple PhD chapters by the student which meets at least the following minimum requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The paper or proposal clearly identifies the field of study for the research and outlines the key research question(s) being studied and planned to be studied, including a description of the future research that would develop the submitted research paper or proposal into the draft of at least one substantive PhD chapter by the end of Term 4. (This is the Autumn Term of the following academic year for full-time students. Please contact the Department for part-time students' deadline.) ii. It includes a brief critical review of the most important relevant literature. It must include a bibliography, containing full and accurate references to the literature cited in the paper. iii. It provides evidence of the student's ability to produce original research. This can be empirical work, theoretical work, or a combination of the two and must meet the following conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. It must clearly specify the research question and methodology for investigation. b. It must contain the results of original preliminary research analysis by the student and must clearly demonstrate that the specified research question and methodology are worthy of investigation for PhD research. 	3	N/A



	<p>c. For theoretical research, a well-developed model and results must be provided, which may take the form of extending or modifying existing models.</p> <p>d. For empirical research, a well-developed methodology and empirical analysis must be provided. This may take the form of utilizing existing data if the data needed for research question are still in the process of being obtained. The sources of and the process by which this new data will be obtained must be clearly specified.</p> <p>e. The previous condition also applies when empirical work takes the form of calibration exercises common in macroeconomic research.</p> <p>f. Research that combines theoretical and empirical work must meet the criteria outlined above for at least one of the two.</p>		
M1.4	<p>Demonstrate understanding of chosen topic within the context of the field.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain mark of 60 or higher in EC990 and two chosen modules out of EC991, EC993, EC995. Attend RSS seminars in Spring and Summer Terms Present the research project proposal (EC990) in Summer Term RSS to research students and staff 	<p>3</p> <p>2-3</p> <p>3</p>	N/A
M1.5	<p>Demonstrate the ability to produce work of the quality and quantity in order to complete within the standard period.</p> <p>Have successfully completed original research work and research training in economic research at the level required for PhD research as evidenced by a mark of at least 60 in each of the following.</p> <p>i. EC990 research project (see above for details). In particular, it should be clear that the student is on track to produce a draft of the first substantive PhD chapter by the end of Term 4 (please consult Department for part-time students' deadline).</p> <p>ii. Two modules out of EC991, EC993, EC995, which cover current methodology and research topics in core areas of economic research. Students are trained in and assessed for their understanding of the methodology, questions, production of original work, and understanding of existing frontier research literature through assignments, presentations of own research and other research, and research reports.</p>	<p>3</p>	N/A
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"> Create a detailed, realistic plan of work/timetable for Year 2. Produce Supervisory Panel report written in a clear and self-reflective style. 	<p>3</p>	N/A

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 2 and 3 (Part-time)****Ahead of the third Supervisory Panel**

Milestone	Requirement	Full Time Term	Part Time Term
M2.1	Review training needs and knowledge required to continue with research project and complete the thesis. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training Needs Analysis to be reviewed by supervisor • Attend Proficio or other courses as previously planned and plan for further courses to attend, as appropriate. 	4	Check with dept

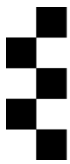
Ahead of the fourth Supervisory Panel

Milestone	Requirement	Full Time Term	Part Time Term
M2.2	Demonstrate work of the quality and quantity expected at the end of Year 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce written research work of sufficient quality and quantity for two complete chapters or one complete chapter and one draft chapter (as specified in the supervisory panel report) commensurate with the standard required for a PhD in Economics. • Draft of first chapter expected by end of Autumn Term, with complete chapter expected by end of the year • Draft of second chapter expected by end of the year, including evidence that student is on track to produce complete chapter by end of Autumn Term of the following year. 	6	Check with dept
M2.3	Review significance and impact of research and articulate output. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present research in RSS during Spring Term • Attend RSS during Autumn, Spring, and Summer Terms <p>Examples of other possible activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present in workshops or conferences • Write research papers that would be suitable for submission to peer-reviewed academic journals based on doctoral research. 	5 4-6	Check with dept
M2.4	Demonstration of effective project management through the setting of research goals and prioritisation of activities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a detailed, realistic plan of work/ timetable for Year 3. • Produce Supervisory Panel report written in a clear and self-reflective style 	6	Check with dept

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 4 and 5 (Part-time)

Ahead of the fifth Supervisory Panel

Milestone	Requirement	Full Time Term	Part Time Term
M3.1	Ability to reflect on skills and knowledge development and its application to the research project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training Needs Analysis reviewed • Completed written work of sufficient quality and quantity to provide clear evidence and they are in a position to write up the remainder of the thesis and submit within 12 months. 	7	Check with dept
M3.2	Demonstrate work of the quality and quantity expected at the end of Year 3 (or equivalent for part-time students) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed written work of sufficient quality and quantity for three complete dissertation chapters or two complete chapters and one draft chapter (including the introduction and the conclusion section of the dissertation) and only minor work remains. • Complete second chapter expected by end of Autumn Term. • Draft or complete third chapter expected by end of the year 	7	Check with dept

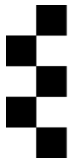
Ahead of the sixth Supervisory Panel

Milestone	Requirement	Full Time Term	Part Time Term
M3.3	Review significance and impact of research and articulate output. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present research in RSS during Autumn Term • Attend RSS during Autumn, Spring, and Summer Terms Examples of other possible activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present in workshops or conferences • Write articles for submission to peer-reviewed academic journals based on doctoral research. 	7 7-9 9	Check with dept
M3.4	Demonstrate ability to complete within the maximum period. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce a realistic plan for the completion period up to 1 year, in termly instalments. • Produce supervisory panel report written in a clear and self-reflective style 	9	Check with dept

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).

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>

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 5 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	Clear evidence of progress towards submission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed work for supervisor / Supervisory Panel per the approved termly completion period. • Provide a clear plan by term for submission within 1 year completion period if extension needed on previously approved plan. 	Termly reporting to supervisor / Supervisory Panel prior to submission. (Maximum term 12 for full-time students. Please consult Department for part-time students' deadline)