Department of Government

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.
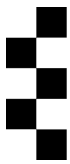
Contents

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	Assess training needs and knowledge required to undertake research project and complete the thesis. • Training Needs Analysis to be completed. • Attend Proficio courses and plan for further courses to attend, as appropriate • Undertake initial training in interdisciplinary research. Undertake initial training in the secondary (and if applicable) tertiary disciplines.	1	1-3

Ahead of the second Supervisory Panel (Confirmation Board)

Milestone	Requirement	Full time term	Part time term
M1.2	Choose research topic and demonstrate significance/impact of research • Research Project Proposal, including (dependent on subject area): • Write central research problem/questions to be answered. • Methodological considerations. • Integration of interdisciplinary components. • Feasibility Report – identifying sources, access and ethical considerations • Create project plan, outlining objectives for each stage. • A termly check-in meeting (either in group or individually with the relevant research division head	2	4
M1.3	Demonstrate understanding of chosen topic within the context of the field. • Critical Literature Review (where relevant)	2	5
M1.4	Demonstrate the ability to produce work of the quality and quantity in order to complete within the standard period. Evidence that academic writing is of standard and ability expected at PhD level, including adequate referencing and language skills. • Evidence that academic writing is of standard and ability expected at PhD level, including adequate referencing and language skills. • Have completed enough written work equivalent to 1/3 of thesis in draft format; i.e., have written 15-20,000 words. • In the case of a monograph-based thesis this should translate into drafts of two main chapters, such as literature review and methodology. • In the case of a journal-based thesis this should translate into a full draft of one paper or substantial literature review and methodology drafts which will inform the overall project	3	5-6
M1.5	Demonstration of effective project management through the setting of research goals and prioritisation of activities.	3	6

	• Create a detailed, realistic plan of work/timetable for Year 2. • Produce Supervisory Panel report written in a clear and self-reflective style.		
M1.6	Subject-specific milestones: 1) Enrol in and successfully complete GV994 and one module of GV970, GV971, GV975, GV976, GV990 and GV992 (depending on own research) • Evidence of satisfactory progress in other modules, as required. 2) Attendance at PhD colloquium and other relevant seminars held in the Department or in other relevant disciplines • Evidence of engagement in colloquium and seminars (at least one presentation and one discussion over the course of the PhD). • Student engagement with Departmental events to be reviewed by Panel and RSPB. 3) Student must have an annual meeting with their Impact Advisor 4) Demonstration of satisfactory progress of dissertation. • To be demonstrated in second PhD supervisory panel. Journal-based PhD: research proposal in complete form and draft of one paper. If you are doing an article-based dissertation, it is ideal to have at least a draft of the first paper circulating over the summer between the first and second year of the PhD programme. Ideally, this paper will be under peer review. • Monograph based PhD: research proposal in complete form and draft of two chapters (typically a literature review or theory & methods chapter). Additional evidence of progress should exist in the form of the preparation or undertaking fieldwork, notes, archival visits etc. • A timeline that maps out how future progress will be achieved in subsequent years • End of first year, preferably evidenced after second board: Approval from the PhD supervisory panel and confirmation by RSPB that the progress is satisfactory.		6

The student has identified whether the research will be using human participants, and has sought and received formal university ethics approval.
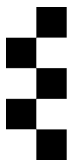
The student has identified whether the research uses security-sensitive material, and has sought and received formal university registration of this material.

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	Review training needs and knowledge required to continue with research project and complete the thesis. • Training Needs Analysis to be reviewed. • Review of the integration of interdisciplinary components.	4	7-9

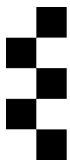|			
	• Attend Proficio courses and plan for further courses to attend, as appropriate. • A termly check-in meeting (either in groups or individually with the relevant research division head)		

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 • Produce draft chapters equivalent to 2/3rds of the number proposed/2 papers • Report on research undertaken to date	5	10
M2.3	Review significance and impact of research and articulate output. For example: • Deliver workshop • Present research to students and staff at seminars/conference • Student must have at least one annual meeting with their Impact Advisor. • Write journal articles	5	11
M2.4	Demonstration of effective project management through the setting of research goals and prioritisation of activities. • Create a detailed, realistic plan of work/ timetable for Year 3. Produce supervisory board report written in a clear and self-reflective style	6	12
M2.5	Specific Departmental Expectations for Second Year Students pertaining to Dissertation • Students doing a 'journal based' PhD should have completed drafts of at least 2 papers. At least one of these papers should have been placed under peer review by the end of the first half of your second year. Ideally a second paper also will be under peer review. It is likely that the first peer reviews will require you to revise your initial submission, and time in the second year should be allocated for this purpose. Students doing a 'monograph based' PhD should have completed drafts of at least 2/3rds of the substantive chapters of their PhD • Enrolment and satisfactory progress in one module of GV970, GV971, GV975, GV976, GV990 and GV992(depending on own research division). • If students are planning an academic career, they should discuss placement projections with their supervisor and other academics and familiarize themselves with the current state of the academic job market. • A revised timetable should be approved by the supervisor to ensure that the thesis will be completed in draft form by the end of the third year of registration (minimum period). • Evidence of engagement in colloquium and seminars (at least one presentation and one discussion over the course of the PhD	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
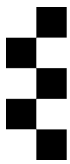
Students' Progress Boards can be found here: https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/postgraduate-research/pgr-progress

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	Ability to reflect on skills and knowledge development and its application to the research project • Training Needs Analysis reviewed • Review of the integration of interdisciplinary components.	7	13-15

Ahead of the sixth Supervisory Panel

Milestone	Requirement	Full time term	Part time term
M3.2	Demonstrate work of the quality and quantity expected at the end of Year 3 (or equivalent for part-time students) • Research completed (experimental, empirical and theoretical work, where relevant) Produce all draft chapters/ at least papers	8	16-18
M3.3	Clear evidence of progress towards submission • Completed final draft of thesis for supervisor(s)/ supervisory board comment	7/8	15/16
M3.4	Subject-specific milestones • Enrolment and satisfactory progress in one module of GV970, GV971, GV975, GV976, GV990 and GV992(depending on own research division). 1) Related to Dissertation • Journal based': draft of all three research papers. Note that failure to do so will require you to seek approval for an extension to the standard period of study. Please note that extensions to the standard period require the approval of the Faculty Dean (Postgraduate) and are not a guarantee. • 'Monograph based': drafts of all substantive chapters of the thesis. • Note that failure to do so will require you to seek approval for an extension to the standard period of study. Please note that extensions to the standard period require the approval of the Faculty Dean (Postgraduate) and are not a guarantee. You will be allowed to go into the completion period only if the submitted papers/chapters are judged to be of a standard deemed appropriate by the Departmental Research Students' Progress Board. 2) Meet professionalization requirements concerning presenting one's work • Presented at least one paper to the PhD Colloquium. By the end of the third year you should aim to have attended relevant conferences, presented papers at them, and to have a plan for submission of your work for publication.		

	3) Student also to have at least one annual meeting with their Impact Advisor.		
	4) Seek to publish one's work • For 'Monograph based' dissertations, students should, with the advice of their supervisors and other academics, seek out potential presses that will turn the dissertation into a published book. • For 'Journal based' dissertations, the third paper should be readied for submission for peer review. The two earlier papers should be either published or in revision for further submission. • Submit the approved thesis to supervisor and Panel members for comments. • Do final corrections. Submit thesis before the end of the academic year.		

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 (To be used as a guide only)
C1	Clear evidence of progress towards submission • Timeline of work needing to take place before submission Department specific attitudes towards submission • Revise and rewrite chapters. • Thesis no longer than 80,000 words. • Evidence of engagement in colloquium and seminars (at least one presentation and one discussion over the course of the PhD).	Termly progress report to supervisor and/or Panel members if necessary