

The below information is for HDR students enrolled under the **College of Medicine and Public Health** and their supervisors and outlines the College specific requirements and processes for the HDR Milestones. This information can be used in conjunction with the [Office of Graduate Research webpage](#) and the [HDR Policies and Procedures](#).

Milestones are a compulsory part of HDR candidature and are required to be completed by all HDR students and their supervisors regularly (usually annually) based on the student's individual HDR timeline. This process is to ensure that HDR students have an opportunity to highlight and track their HDR achievements, professional development completed and to plan the next 6 or 12 months of candidature. Milestones are a snapshot of a point in time to assess if HDR students are progressing at an appropriate rate for their stage of candidature and effectively working towards a timely completion of their degree.

**Major Milestones** refers to the Confirmation of Candidature, Mid Candidature Review and Final Thesis Review. **Interim Milestones** refers to the Interim Confirmation of Candidature, Interim Mid Candidature Review, Interim Final Thesis Review and Interim Post Final Thesis Review (required for Part Time students and/or those enrolled beyond the Final Thesis Review).

#### **Milestone Requirements**

There are three parts to every **Major Milestone**; a presentation, an interview with a Thesis Milestone Panel (outlined below) and the online milestone form in [Inspire](#). Students must complete the presentation and interview component **before** finalising the online form and all parts should be completed before the due date.

Interim milestone reviews require an evaluation of progress and an assessment of the student's written work. **[Note: Interim Milestones do not require an oral presentation]**

To complete the milestone students will require the following mandatory materials:

- Copy of relevant **Ethics Approval**
- **Written Work** - for example Literature Review and Research Proposal or Draft (Confirmation of Candidature or Interim Pre-CofC), Draft Chapters, Papers or copies of published work (Mid Candidature and Interim Reviews) or Draft Full Thesis (Final Thesis Review & Interim Post Final Thesis Review)
- **Turnitin Report** in accordance with the Academic Integrity Policy (Access HDR Turnitin box via the REST FLO site – self enrol via the <https://flo.flinders.edu.au/course/view.php?id=49767>)
- **Evidence of Oral Presentation with Written Feedback (for Major Milestones)** – (further information in Oral Presentation section below) Presentation must be completed and written feedback needs to be uploaded into [Inspire](#) by the Student
- **Completion Plan** – a plan must be uploaded into [Inspire](#). The OGR has templates available [Completion Plan](#) or [GANNT planning chart](#)

For each milestone, the student and supervisor must complete the necessary form through [Inspire](#). HDR students must complete and upload all requirements of the milestone **before signing off** on the milestone form in [Inspire](#), supervisors **do not** have the ability to upload documents into milestones. Students should not sign off on their milestone until they have presented work to their assessors, and have assessor's comments to upload to [Inspire](#).

#### **Thesis Milestone Panel**

Within the first 6 months of FTE (Full Time Equivalent) candidature a Thesis Milestone Panel should be formed by the Principal Supervisor (with assistance from the Theme HDR Academic Advisor). The Thesis Milestone Panel will comprise of the Principal Supervisor, Associate Supervisor/s and 1-2 independent assessors. The

independent assessor/s will ideally be part of the panel throughout the candidate's degree but will not be the thesis examiners.

When selecting assessor/s consider the following:

- (i) Assessor must be free from real or perceived bias, either for or against the candidate, or the supervisor or the project. They may be a member of staff or have adjunct status at Flinders University or another tertiary institution (e.g. Uni of SA or Uni of Adelaide, or SAHMRI or SARDI). They must be available to attend the student's presentations and meet with the student at the assessment panel meetings which will be held after the oral presentations at Confirmation of Candidature and Mid-Candidature points, and ideally at the Final Thesis Review Milestone point. The same assessors should be present at all three milestone presentations/meetings, unless circumstances change
- (ii) Assessor will be knowledgeable in the discipline and will be research active, thus ensuring that their knowledge of the field or area of professional practice is current. i.e. they should meet the requirements for registration as a supervisor at Flinders (<https://www.flinders.edu.au/content/dam/documents/staff/policies/academicstudents/hdr-supervisor-procedures.pdf>)
- (iii) Assessor must hold a qualification equivalent to or higher than the degree for which the thesis is being examined, or possess equivalent professional experience as determined by the College HDR committee
- (iv) Assessor will have empathy with the theoretical framework used by the candidate
- (v) Assessor will be made familiar with the requirements of Flinders University, and the essential parts of the Course Rules governing the particular degree (<https://www.flinders.edu.au/content/dam/documents/staff/policies/academicstudents/higher-degrees-research-policy.pdf>)
- (vi) Assessor will be asked to provide written feedback to the Theme HDR Academic Advisor and the Student to be uploaded into [Inspire](#) following the Confirmation of Candidature seminar and after reading the submitted Literature review/Research proposal.

### **Oral Presentation (Major Milestones)**

For each **Major Milestone** review, the **Principal Supervisor** will arrange a milestone review session with the members of the Thesis Milestone Panel and the Theme HDR Academic Advisor. The oral presentation will be arranged by the student and/or supervisor for the Major Milestone presentations. These are preferably held in one of the College Seminars at 3 allocated times during the year (late February, June and September - 2 days each) or may be held at any reasonable time to suit the milestone due date, students may also utilise the university wide milestone events offered by the Office of Graduate Research. These seminars will be open to other students and staff of the College. Ideally interviews with the Thesis Milestone Panel will be held directly after each seminar. The CMPH HDR Committee would prefer that PhD students aim to conduct the Confirmation of Candidature seminars and interview 7-9 months after commencement, however they must be completed by 12 months (refer to the Milestone Timetable 4.1 of the [HDR Progression Procedures](#)). The earlier point is recommended to enable students to address any issues by the 12 month point, thus preventing a lengthy Confirmation of Candidature process.

The Thesis Milestone Panel (all supervisors and assessor/s) will receive all documentation in advance (minimum of two weeks before the booked presentation) (including the research proposal and literature review for Confirmation of Candidature and thesis chapters and papers/published work for Mid Candidature Review). The scheduled presentation and interview will be attended by the chosen Assessor/s, the student, and the supervisory team. Other College staff and students will be invited to attend the presentation and question time components only.

For Confirmation of Candidature and Mid Candidature Review the review meeting will proceed as follows:

1. The student provides an overview of their progress. In the case of a Confirmation of Candidature milestone, the student must present their research proposal
2. Questions and feedback for the student (from Assessor first, and then open to the audience)
3. The Assessor/s will meet with the student and supervisors together and then individually to provide feedback. The Theme HDR Academic Advisor will be present at both meetings
4. Written comments and feedback from the Assessor/s will be forwarded to the student and to the supervisory team as soon as possible (to be uploaded under the 'independent assessor's comments' section of the milestone **by the student**)
5. Once the student signs off the milestone the Supervisor will review and sign off and it will be allocated to the HDR Coordinator who will confirm the recommendation (see below).

The HDR Coordinator must decide whether the student should be allowed to proceed with their studies as intended, or if modifications to their research program may be necessary. In general, the HDR Coordinator will choose from one of the following recommendations based on the Assessor/s feedback and the information and documentation provided by the student and supervisor in the milestone form in [Inspire](#):

1. **Continuation of Candidature** - The student's progress is satisfactory, and they should continue with their studies, or, in the case of a Confirmation of Candidature, they should begin their research program as proposed (subject to minor revisions if necessary).
2. **Recommend Upgrade to PhD** (if currently a Masters by Research) – This option is only used at the Interim Pre-Confirmation or Confirmation of Candidature Milestone. The student has demonstrated that the project has the scope and scale required of a PhD and the student is capable of completing a PhD in the expected duration of candidature. Student and supervisor will also be required to complete the 'Degree Transfer or Significant Change to Project' form in [Inspire](#).
3. **Recommend Downgrade to Masters** (if currently a PhD student) – The student's progress is not considered to be at the standard of a PhD, but is at the standard of a Masters by Research. The student and supervisor will be required to complete the 'Degree Transfer or Significant Change to Project' form in [Inspire](#).
4. **Recommend 3 Month probationary period to resubmit the milestone:** The student has been identified as experiencing difficulty progressing and significant modifications to the research program are necessary. The student may be asked to submit a revised draft, revised chapters, or a revised research proposal, as the case may be, and/or deliver another presentation within 3 months (exclusive of any leave).
5. **Recommend Ongoing or Escalating Difficulty Progressing** (only once a student has already had a 3 month probationary period). The student's progress is unsatisfactory. The student will receive an ongoing or escalating difficulty progressing letter from the Office of Graduate Research and will be given 10 working days from the date the letter is issued to arrange a meeting with the Office of Graduate Research and your supervisor/s to discuss actions that can be completed by you within a specified timeframe to rectify your ongoing or escalating difficulty progressing.

The student will get a notification from Inspire with details of the HDR Coordinator's recommendation and a link to view their completed milestone.

Document produced by the Office of Graduate Research on behalf of  
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