Milestone Policy

Confirmation of Candidature: Milestone 1

Confirmation of candidature will take place 12 months FTE (PhD) or 6 months FTE (MPhil) after commencement.

The purpose of this milestone is to ensure that:

- the candidate receives appropriate feedback in relation to the viability and progress of the research project;
- the candidate has sufficient training and that there are resources available to complete the program within the recommended timeframes; and
- the composition of advisory team is appropriate.

The Confirmation process includes

1. Written report: The Confirmation Report is to be emailed to the Postgraduate Administrative Officer (PGAO) at least 1 week before the date of the PhD Confirmation interview. The PAO will then distribute these to the Candidature Committee.

2. Oral presentation: The PhD Confirmation Oral Presentation will be delivered within the CAI Tuesday Seminar series, or within a special seminar timeslot that is open to the whole centre if required. The Candidature Committee must be in attendance. It is the candidate’s responsibility to liaise with PGAO to organise an appropriate seminar and Interview date prior to the Milestone due date.

3. Interview with Candidature Committee: The interview will take place immediately after the oral presentation. The Candidature Committee is comprised of the Advisory Team (Principal Advisor and Associate Advisor(s)), plus Assessors. Assessors consist of at least 2 other researchers, one in a directly related field and one from a similar or complementary field. At least one assessor must be based at University of Queensland and be able to act as Chair of the Committee. It is the intention that milestone assessors are able to provide input into the students’ progress throughout the whole candidature, hence it is preferable that these same researchers will also be available to participate in later milestones. Milestone Assessors should be appointed following discussion and input by both the supervisors and the student, and then must be contacted by the supervisor prior to the due date of the

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confirmation. The current Post-Graduate student representative or PGAO may be present at the Candidate’s request.

Verbal feedback will be provided at the Interview.

4. Written Feedback: Written feedback from your Assessors will be provided to you after the Interview. Feedback will summarise strengths and achievements, offer advice and suggestions towards successful completion of Candidature, as well as clearly outline remedial action if necessary.

5. Confirmation of RHD enrolment, request for further clarification or milestone extension: The PGAO will be informed by the chair of the Committee as to the outcome and prepare the relevant documentation to be approved by the PGC.

The Requirements for Confirmation of PhD or MPhil Candidature includes:

**Confirmation Report:**

1. **Aims and significance**
   
   A clear statement on the aims and significance of the project (approximately 1/2 page), including overarching hypotheses.

2. **Literature review**
   
   A concise literature review giving sufficient background information to define why the Candidate’s research project/question is novel and significant.

3. **Work to date**
   
   A brief description of techniques/methods used to date, and some commentary on the relative success or difficulties experienced. Data should be presented as results with a short written description of the findings, including figures and figure legends. Significance of these findings can also be included but a detailed discussion is not a requirement of this milestone. If the Candidate has already prepared a manuscript covering work-to-date, then it should be used as part of the report. The candidate can compile additional supporting data and results in the appendix if required.

4. **Skills & Resources.**
   
   Review relevant skills acquired by the Candidate and comment on any additional skills that need to be mastered. Similarly, review available resources critical to the project, and note any additional resources that are not available. Conclude with an assessment of any constraints or limitations imposed on the project by restricted access to suitable skills (training) and resources. Outline Data Management plan.

5. **Research Plan & Timelines**
   
   A summary of the research plan (experimental objectives, analysis approaches, potential manuscripts, planned travel and presentations and training) for the remainder of the PhD should be prepared in consultation with the Advisory Team and provided as part of this milestone. A timeline detailing the intended schedule leading up to submission should be provided as well.

   Approximate length of 20 pages
It is expected that all written material will be of an appropriate scientific standard by following an appropriate scientific writing style and logical presentation of information. Expectations for Confirmation will be commensurate with the specific RHD Program.

In addition, completion of the on-line research integrity module must have been undertaken prior to the confirmation milestone.

**Oral Presentation:**

Duration: 30 minutes overall, allowing 5 minutes for questions. Questions are welcomed from anyone attending the presentation. The oral presentation should be chaired by the students’ principal advisor.

The oral presentation will take the form of a seminar and provide a clear, concise and logical argument for the overall research project, the work achieved to date, and future research planned, following the format of the PhD confirmation report. The Candidate should demonstrate knowledge and confidence in the proposed research project, the related literature and associated technologies. The Candidature Committee must be in attendance.

**Interview:**

The Candidate should:

- Display knowledge of their research area, including all relevant literature and prevailing theories and paradigms.
- Articulate a clear understanding of aims, objectives and significance of their project.
- Demonstrate sound theoretical and practical knowledge of key technologies and identify areas in need of general and/or specialist training.
- Collate their research findings with a view to future publication.
- Propose a feasible timeline.

**Note:** Expectations for Confirmation will be commensurate with the specific RHD Program. For further information see Appendix 1.

**Other:**

1. Research Integrity Module must be completed prior to M1. [https://cdf.gradschool.uq.edu.au/research-integrity](https://cdf.gradschool.uq.edu.au/research-integrity)
3. The candidate must deliver a three minute presentation of their research as part of the UQ Three Minute Thesis (3MT) competition between M1 and M3.

Attainment of milestone, request for further clarification or milestone extension: The PGAO will be informed by the chair of the Committee as to the outcome and notify the candidate to complete the appropriate documentation on the online Candidature Portal.
Mid-Candidature Review: Milestone 2

Mid-candidature review will take place 12 months FTE (PhD) or 6 months FTE (MPhil) after the official confirmation milestone due date.

The purpose of this milestone is to ensure that:

- the project is on track for completion within candidature duration;
- the candidate’s research and other professional skills are developing appropriately; and
- the composition of advisory team is appropriate.

The Mid-Candidature Review Process and Requirements includes:

1. Written report: This may be in the form of a draft or accepted manuscript in a peer reviewed journal. The Candidate should be first author or if middle author, provide details of a major contribution to the manuscript. Alternatively the written report may be a progress report written in the style of a journal publication with the proposed journal clearly indicated. An outline of work that has been completed since M1 and needs to be completed prior to M3 should be provided.

2. Detailed thesis outline: Outline of intended thesis chapters, including subheadings etc. to indicate the nature of the material to be covered in the introduction and research chapters. This should demonstrate that the thesis has been mapped out thoroughly.

3. Oral presentation: The PhD Mid Candidature Oral Presentation will be delivered within the CAI Tuesday Seminar series, or within a special seminar timeslot that is open to the whole centre. The Candidature Committee must be in attendance. It is the candidate’s responsibility to liaise with PGAO and assessors to organise an appropriate seminar and Interview date prior to the Milestone due date. Duration of presentation: 30 minutes overall, allowing 5 minutes for questions. Questions are welcomed from anyone attending the presentation. The oral presentation should be chaired by the students’ principal advisor.

4. Interview with Candidature Committee: The interview will take place immediately after the oral presentation. The Candidature Committee is comprised of the Advisory Team (Principal Advisor and Associate Advisor(s)), plus Assessors. The current Post-Graduate student representative or PAGA may be present at the Candidate’s request. Candidate to organise with Candidature Committee a mutually suitable time for interview.

Attainment of milestone, request for further clarification or milestone extension: The PAGA will be informed by the chair of the Committee as to the outcome and notify candidate to complete the appropriate documentation on the online Candidature Portal.

Note: Expectations for Mid-Candidature Review will be commensurate with the specific RHD Program. For further information see Appendix 1.

The candidate must deliver a three minute presentation of their research as part of the UQ Three Minute Thesis (3MT) competition between M1 and M3.
Thesis Review: Milestone 3

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

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;
- there is a forum for discussing the mix of disciplinary knowledge required among the thesis examiners to review the breadth of work contained within the thesis;
- the candidate and the advisors have an opportunity to express any reservations or concerns about having any particular individual act as an examiner and the nomination of a chair of examiners can be discussed; and
- the candidate has an opportunity to request an oral thesis examination in addition to a written examination.

- The candidate may discuss career options and mentoring if they wish.

The Thesis Review Process includes:

1. A Thesis Report:
2. Oral presentation: Candidate to liaise with CAI Seminar Co-ordinator to find a suitable time for your presentation. It is not required that this be completed prior to M3 but it must be booked into the CAI seminar schedule.
3. Interview with Candidature Committee: Candidate to organise with Candidature Committee a mutually suitable time for interview.
4. Written Feedback: Written feedback from your Assessors will be provided to you after the Interview.
5. Confirmation of RHD enrolment, request for further clarification or milestone extension. The PGAO will be informed by the chair of the Committee as to the outcome and prepare the relevant documentation to be approved by the CAI PGC.

The Thesis Review Requirements include:

Thesis Report:

1. Thesis title & abstract
2. Detailed thesis outline: Outline of intended thesis chapters, including subheadings etc. to indicate the nature of the material to be covered in the introduction and research chapters. This should demonstrate that the thesis has been mapped out thoroughly.
3. Thesis chapter draft(s): A refined draft of at least one thesis chapter. This can take the form of one or more draft/submitted/accepted peer reviewed scientific publication(s) in which the
Candidate is a key (usually first) author and which reports on research carried out by the Candidate and to be included in the Candidate’s thesis. For multi-authored papers the Candidate must provide a clear statement of their contribution.

4. Any draft manuscripts and/or peer reviewed publications.

5. A timeline for completion and submission of the thesis

Note: An advanced draft of the PhD Thesis Report should be sighted, reviewed and discussed with the Advisory Team prior to distribution to the Candidature Committee. To achieve a quality PhD Thesis report, it is strongly recommended that:

- The Candidate and the Advisory Team have a clear and common perception of the Thesis aims, objectives, outcomes and content.
- The Candidate has seriously committed time and resources to the writing process, and requested and received feedback from the Advisory Team.
- The Advisory Team has engaged with the Candidate and requested and reviewed thesis/chapter drafts in a timely manner.

Oral Presentation:
Completion seminar (45 min) to be given within the CAI seminar series before or soon after the Thesis Review. This will not be assessed but should be seen as an opportunity to present to your colleagues the culmination of 3 years hard work. This need not be completed prior to M3 but does need to be booked into the CAI seminar schedule via the CAI seminar coordinator.

Interview:
The Candidate should demonstrate:

- Ownership of the project, including a solid grounding in the theory driving the research.
- Significant and substantial progress since Milestone 2.
- An ability to critically analyse relevant literature and experimental results.
- An ability to articulate knowledge and research findings.
- A clear plan for preparing a thesis, such that a reasonable portion of the thesis has been drafted and reviewed by the Advisory Team.
- A clear timeline leading to thesis submission.

Verbal feedback will be provided at the interview.
4.60.03 Research Higher Degree Graduate Attributes

Research Higher Degree Graduate Attributes - Policy

Notes:

January 2017 - Updated following periodic review.

1. Purpose and Objectives

This policy outlines the qualities, knowledge, capabilities and skills that should be developed by candidates graduating from RHD programs.

2. Definitions, Terms, Acronyms

RHD - Research Higher Degree
MPhil - Master of Philosophy
PhD - Doctor of Philosophy

3. Policy Scope/Coverage

This policy applies to all RHD students in the MPhil and PhD program.

4. Policy Statement

Research Higher Degrees are of central importance to leading international research universities. Evolving from research doctorates in Germany and the United States, the emphasis has traditionally been on research and scholarship by a candidate that generates new knowledge. While excellence in research activity and outputs continues to be a core element of the RHD, contemporary expectations emphasise the qualities of the graduate. This broadening of scope reflects the view that RHD graduates should be equipped to pursue a wide range of careers. The attributes described below reflect the changing expectations of the RHD. These attributes can be developed while performing discipline-specific research and also via specific research training activities. Through the development of these attributes the University aims to produce graduate researchers who are creative knowledge leaders able to contribute to significantly to their discipline and to the wider community. The process of embedding graduate attributes involves advisory teams, enrolling units and the Graduate School.

5. RHD Attributes

5.1 Disciplinary knowledge and capability

- In-depth, advanced knowledge and understanding of one or more disciplinary area
- Ability to apply theoretical frameworks and research methods in a field or discipline to develop new concepts, formulate research hypotheses or identify new problems and produce original outputs
- Well-developed technical capability that enables collection, synthesis and analysis of data
- Ability to communicate results of research in terms of impact and application of new knowledge
- Ability to make a substantive and independent contribution to knowledge in the discipline and/or formulate and solve problems

5.2 Transferable skills

- Ability to apply original and creative ideas, and analytical and critical thinking skills to generate new knowledge, investigate problems and develop inventive solutions
- Capacity to communicate ideas effectively to a range of audiences inside and outside the field of study or discipline and to the wider community
• Ability to work collaboratively and effectively with others, within a range of teams and contexts, respecting individual roles and responsibilities
• Ability to lead, manage and execute projects within or across disciplines
• Ability to write coherently and convincingly

5.3 Professional Skills

• Developed or developing professional competencies in areas that may include commercialisation and technology transfer, management of intellectual assets, cultural knowledge and cross-cultural communication, entrepreneurship, policy development, research supervision, grant writing and management, and teaching & learning
• Capacity to communicate knowledge for the education of others, which may include teaching and supervision

5.4 Integrity and Ethics

• Clear understanding and practice of the requirements of the responsible conduct of research
• Ability to analyse and describe data and information objectively
• Ability to contribute to open discussion on topics that intersect with disciplinary expertise

6. Comparative Attributes of MPhil and PhD Graduates

Compared with MPhil graduates, PhD graduates should demonstrate a higher level of attainment of the same knowledge, skills, qualities and abilities.

7. Indicators of Successful Attainment of Graduate Attributes

Indicators of attainment of Graduate Attributes will reflect achievement of skills described in section 5. These may include, but are not limited to:

• Successful completion of candidature milestones and RHD
• Publication of peer-reviewed research papers, reports or scholarly works
• Presentation of research at national and international conferences
• Substantive contribution to research and other activities that apply transferable skills
• Quality of analytical and critical thinking skills, writing and oral presentation skills as measured in the assessment of the thesis
• Successful completion and application of competencies that are linked to professional skill development.

4.60.03 Research Higher Degree Graduate Attributes

Guidelines

1. Purpose and Objectives

These guidelines outline processes for embedding graduate attributes at the school/institute or discipline level and indicators for successful attainment of RHD graduate attributes.

2. Definitions, Terms, Acronyms

RHD - Research Higher Degree
MPhil - Master of Philosophy
PhD - Doctor of Philosophy

Approved CAI RHD Committee 16/2/2017
3. Guidelines Scope/Coverage

These guidelines apply to all RHD students in the MPhil and PhD programs and are intended for use in all schools/institutes and disciplines.

4. Guidelines Statement

RHD training provides candidates with the opportunity to acquire graduate attributes through a variety of learning experiences that may vary according to the discipline. Graduates of RHD programs demonstrate their attainment of graduate attributes through a variety of means.

5. Embedding RHD Graduate Attributes - Training and Learning Experiences

All schools/institutes should map the potential experiences of their RHD cohort against the graduate attributes as outlined in the Statement of Research Higher Degree Attributes policy (above). Each school/institute will embed learning experiences that suit their discipline and these learning experiences may be derived from a variety of sources including from within the school/institute, university and discipline/profession.

6. Indicators of Successful Attainment of Graduate Attributes

Indicators are varied and may be discipline specific. Indicators may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Successful completion of candidature milestones
- Successful completion of a thesis
- Submission of satisfactory academic progress reports, including a record of timely completion of project tasks and objectives
- Attendance at research seminars
- Adherence to all ethical and research integrity guidelines.
- Attendance at skills training sessions