



THE UNIVERSITY  
OF QUEENSLAND  
AUSTRALIA

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# MILESTONE GUIDELINES

SCHOOL OF MECHANICAL AND  
MINING ENGINEERING

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Note:

The Milestone Guidelines outline the standard procedures for students studying Higher Degree by Research (HDR) programs in the School of Mechanical and Mining Engineering.

Students should refer to the Graduate School's website (<https://graduate-school.uq.edu.au/>) and also the UQ Policy and Procedures Library (PPL) (<https://ppl.app.uq.edu.au/>).

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document details the process used within the School of Mechanical and Mining Engineering to progress Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students through their PhD or MPhil program. The process is structured around three milestones, spaced evenly throughout the program.

The purpose of the milestones is to verify that you are making satisfactory progress and are on track to successfully complete your degree. They also serve as assurance to the School and University that you are developing the necessary personal and professional qualities that will distinguish you as a worthy recipient of a postgraduate research qualification from the University of Queensland. These qualities are embodied by the University's graduate attributes outlined in PPL 4.60.03 Higher Degree by Research Graduate Attributes and listed in Appendix 1.

### *The importance of peer review*

The School's milestone process is centered around peer review, the process used by the academic community as an assurance that research represents scholarship of the highest quality.

The ultimate output from your postgraduate studies is your thesis, the formal document that contextualizes your research, describes the conclusions you have reached, and details the investigations and arguments that have led to these conclusions. Your thesis will be examined by established experts in your research field and this examination is arguably the most important peer review activity you enter into on your journey to achieving your PhD or MPhil degree.

Along the way, however, you are encouraged and required to seek peer feedback as often and from as many sources as possible. The continuous review of your work by others, within the University of Queensland and external to it, will help guide you towards the submission of a quality thesis. As a HDR student, you are expected to:

- give presentations of your work to both broad and specialist audiences within the School and to national and international audiences;
- submit your work for publication in peer reviewed journals and/or conferences; and
- engage with others in your chosen field and reflect on how they view and interpret your research findings.

These activities will deliver a stream of constructive feedback on your research beyond that given by your advisory team. They will require you to explain your research to others, sharpen your understanding of your chosen topic, and very likely take it in unexpected, but fruitful, directions.

Experience shows that the final thesis document is most easily written by having three or four published, peer reviewed journal papers which form the bulk of the final thesis document. Experience also shows that examiners are more favorably disposed to a thesis where the material has already been peer reviewed by others.



## 2.0 OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

The three milestones undertaken by all HDR students are:

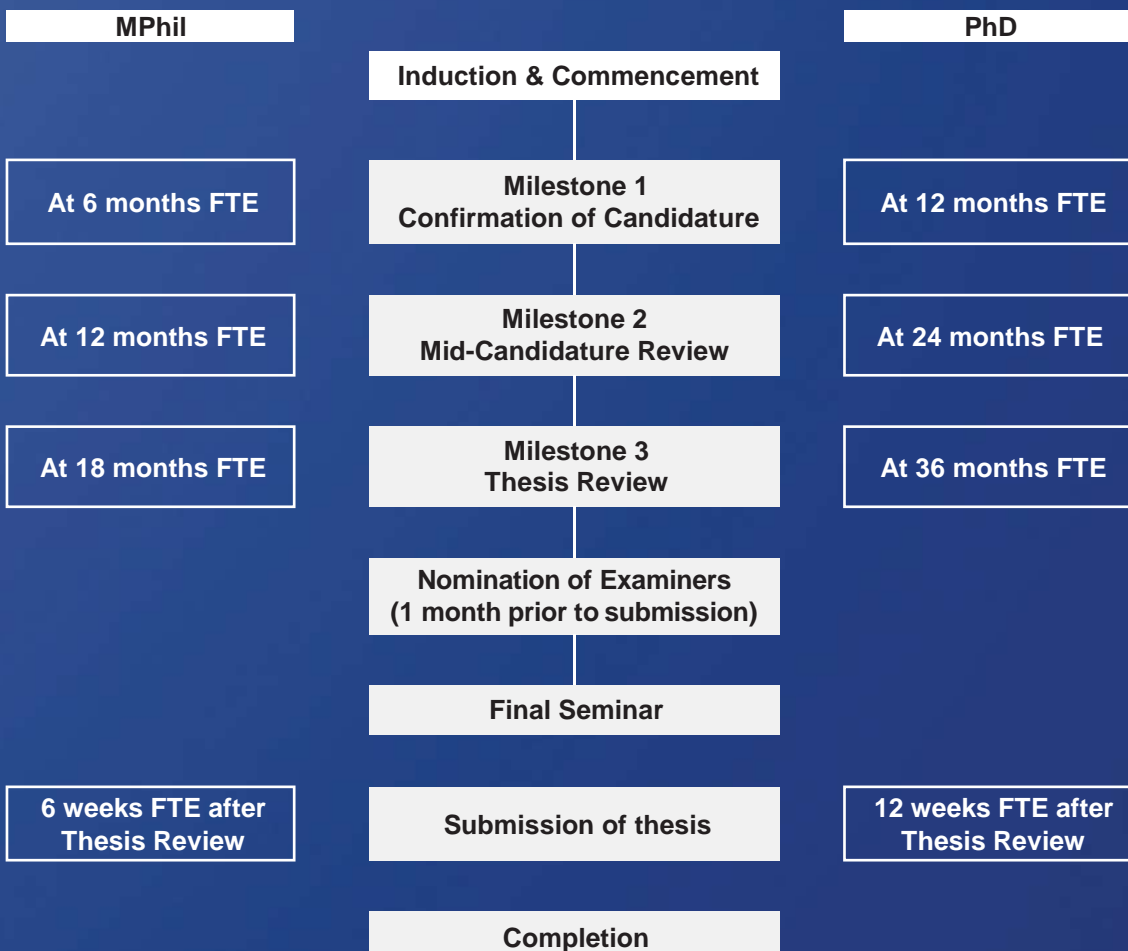
- Milestone 1: Confirmation of Candidature
- Milestone 2: Mid-Candidature Review
- Milestone 3: Thesis Review

At each milestone, you will receive formative advice about the direction, scope, planning of your research, and the feasibility of your research plan. The School uses the Milestones to review the resources that are needed to sustain your candidature (e.g. the composition of your advisory team, the technical support you need for your work, and the physical and financial resources you need to achieve the proposed outcomes of your thesis). The University is assured by the School's review that a continuation of your candidature is likely to lead to an examinable thesis in 3-3.5 years full-time for a PhD, and 1-2 years full-time for an MPhil. These are the usual periods for which you, the School, and the University are funded.

The timing of milestones in the life-cycle of a Higher Degree by Research candidate is shown on the following page.



## TIMELINE



Note: FTE is full time enrolment

## 3.0 PEOPLE INVOLVED

### ***Review Committee***

The Review Committee is comprised of:

- The Chair of Review Committee;
- The Advisory Team;
- At least one member of staff who is not a member of the Advisory Team and who has expertise in the general area of the thesis project;
- Optional members include other academics who are interested in your chosen topic, or a representative student member.

### ***Chair of Review Committee***

The Chair of your Review Committee will take on the responsibility for all three milestones and will also act as the Chair of Examiners for the thesis examination.

The Chair is the Head of School's representative on the Committee and is responsible for assuring proper standards of scholarship are met. The Postgraduate Coordinator will nominate a chair from a research cluster outside of your Principal Advisor's research cluster.

### ***Advisory Team***

The Advisory Team is comprised of a Principal Advisor, and one or more Associate Advisors. The Advisory Team should discuss with you the distribution of advisory duties among the team so that you have a clear understanding of who to consult about particular aspects of your research and candidature. The members should also discuss with you how differences of opinion about the direction of the research or the content of the thesis will be resolved.

### ***Principal Advisor***

The Principal Advisor guides and facilitates your research and provides the principal intellectual engagement with your research topic and its development. This Advisor monitors the quality of your work and assures the University (and, through it, the wider academic community) that the quality of the work is appropriate to the degree for which you are enrolled. They also ensure that you meet all academic requirements of the program and that all relevant parties are kept informed of your academic progress.

### ***Associate Advisor***

Associate Advisors provide relevant expertise to enhance your research work, or a particular part or aspect of it and they may provide you with professional, community, international, or interdisciplinary links. Normally, an Associate Advisor (or advisors) is appointed at commencement, however the appointment must be confirmed no later than Milestone 1: Confirmation of Candidature.

### ***Postgraduate Coordinator (PGC)***

The Postgraduate Coordinator is an experienced senior member of the School's academic staff who acts as the Head of School's delegate in making academic, administrative and (in some instances) resource decisions across the range of disciplines in the School. The Postgraduate Coordinator is a point of academic guidance and advice for prospective and current candidates.

## 4.0 THE MILESTONES

### MILESTONE 1: CONFIRMATION OF CANDIDATURE

Confirmation is a critical milestone for all HDR candidates. At this milestone:

- you receive formative advice about the direction, scope, planning, and feasibility of the project; and about the acquisition or further development of appropriate research and professional skills;
- the School reviews the human, physical and financial resources needed to sustain your candidature, in compliance with relevant university, disciplinary, and external regulatory protocols; and
- the University is assured by the School’s review that continuation of your candidature is likely to lead to a thesis that will be of a quality for assessment in 3-3.5 years full-time for a PhD, and 1-2 years full-time for a MPhil.

Confirmation of Candidature is based on -

- Confirmation Report;
- iThenticate Similarity Report; and
- Thesis Development Plan.

A timeline showing the steps involved in the Confirmation of Candidature is shown below and considerations for the completion of this milestone are outlined on the following page.

Timeline	
3 months prior to Milestone due date	<p><i>Reminder</i> School emails you, your Principal Advisor and your Chair of Review Committee to remind you to commence preparations. Your Principal Advisor nominates the Review Committee members.</p>
2 weeks prior to Milestone due date	<p><i>Candidate Submission</i> Submit your Confirmation Report to iThenticate, accessed by logging in with your UQ student username and password via: <a href="https://app.ithenticate.com/en_us/login/uq">https://app.ithenticate.com/en_us/login/uq</a></p> <p>Circulate your <b>Confirmation Report, iThenticate Similarity Report</b> and <b>Thesis Development Plan</b> to the Review Committee.</p>
Milestone due date	<p><i>Oral Presentation and Defense</i> You will make an oral presentation to the Review Committee on your progress so far. You will then be expected to verbally defend your proposed research project to the satisfaction of the Review Committee.</p> <p><i>Interview with Candidate</i> The interview will last from 1-1.5 hours.</p>
Within 1 week of Milestone due date	<p><i>Paperwork</i> Completion of milestone forms and submission of Milestone Attainment Request in the HDR Candidature Management System.</p>



## Considerations for Completion of Milestone 1

<i>Project</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there an appropriate scope for an HDR degree?</li> <li>• Does the candidate convey an understanding of the objectives of the project?</li> <li>• Will the conceptual framework, design and methodology of the project address the research questions?</li> </ul>
<i>Resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is appropriate funding, infrastructure and supervision in place?</li> <li>• Is the candidate progressing satisfactorily?</li> <li>• Does the Advisory Team have the appropriate expertise and background to advise the candidate?</li> </ul>
<i>Candidature</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the candidate show evidence of appropriate research skills and potential?</li> </ul>
<i>Progress</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has a suitable quantity of quality research been completed?</li> <li>• Is the standard of written and oral communication satisfactory?</li> <li>• Has the candidate completed any courses or should coursework be undertaken?</li> </ul>

## COMPONENTS

### The Confirmation Report

You are required to prepare a Confirmation Report which will be assessed by the Review Committee. The writing quality and report presentation is expected to be similar to a final thesis or publication. Guidelines for preparation of the Confirmation Report are given in Appendix 2.

All documents you submit for your milestones are considered to be assessment items, as is your thesis. To ensure the School educates HDR students around issues of academic integrity, students must submit the Confirmation Report to iThenticate (see below for details). A copy of the iThenticate Similarity Report is provided to the Review Committee with the Confirmation Report and Thesis Development Plan. Any suspected cases of plagiarism will be dealt with in accordance to UQ PPL 3.60.04.

The Confirmation Report is assessed as part of Milestone 1. The Chair of the Review Committee consults with other members of the Review Committee to provide an overall assessment that the report is:

- Acceptable – with or without minor amendment; or
- Not acceptable and requires major amendments or a re-write.

### iThenticate Similarity Report

UQ is committed to the principle of academic integrity, and considers it essential that all Higher Degree by Research candidates strive to uphold academic integrity in their theses. A key component of academic integrity is avoiding plagiarism, which is defined at the University as “the act of misrepresenting as one’s own original work the ideas, interpretations, words or creative works of another” (UQ PPL 3.60.04 Student Integrity and Misconduct, section 2.1). In addition to the advice and information provided in the University’s PPL policy, the UQ Library has a resources page on avoiding, stopping and detecting plagiarism (<https://web.library.uq.edu.au/research-tools-techniques/referencing-style-guides/avoiding-plagiarism>)

The University uses [iThenticate](#) (accessed using your student credentials) to assess academic integrity. You must submit your Confirmation Report to iThenticate at least two weeks prior to your milestone committee meeting. iThenticate will generate a Similarity Report for your submission that must be provided to your committee members for review. If your committee members have any concerns regarding academic misconduct, this will be referred to the School's Academic Integrity Officer for consideration. If this occurs, your milestone committee meeting will not take place until the investigation by the Academic Integrity Officer is complete.

You can upload your report to iThenticate multiple times before your milestone is due and use the Similarity Report (that will refresh with each submission) as a tool to assess any potential academic integrity issues prior to your milestone. Your Similarity Report should be shared with your milestone committee as an exported PDF along with your Thesis Development Plan two weeks prior to your Confirmation meeting.

For more information please refer to the [iThenticate FAQs](#) and access the UQ [iThenticate user guide](#).

## Thesis Development Plan

The Thesis Development Plan is submitted with the Confirmation Report. It provides an overall summary of the work plan that can be used as a starting point for the Mid-Candidature Review. Many of the fields of the Thesis Development Plan can be drawn directly from the Confirmation Report. This work plan is agreed to and signed off by the Review Committee Chair at Milestone 1.

You should consider your Thesis Development Plan to be a living document that you will modify throughout the duration of your candidature. It provides a concise summary of your research from commencement through to submission. You are required to supply a copy to the PGO and this will be kept on file with all milestone documents for future reference.

Guidelines for preparation of the Thesis Development Plan are given in Appendix 3.

## Oral Presentation

All candidates are required to present their work to the Review Committee in an oral presentation of approximately 30-40 minutes duration. In this presentation you need to convey the objectives and study methodology for your research clearly and concisely and show how it relates to existing knowledge. The content of the presentation should be of a quality suitable for a discipline-specific group. The presentation should include:

- a brief introduction to the research question and the projects aims;
- the contribution to the research field;
- an explanation of the methodological approach;
- a review of the research findings to date and what they mean; and
- a description of how the project will be completed.

After the presentation, you will be expected to field questions from the Review Committee and the general audience. In some instances where the presentation is given in a research seminar the audience may critique the presentation through an evaluation form.

## Interview with the candidate

The interview will last between 1-1.5 hours and is normally held immediately after the oral presentation. At this interview you should demonstrate that you understand the relevant background literature and that you have identified the expected contributions of the thesis. You should also be able to adequately defend the thesis plan and approach, and that you have the capacity to prepare and present a final thesis of the quality necessary for the degree.

## Feedback

Verbal feedback is provided at the interview and written feedback is provided on the Milestone Evaluation form. If this milestone is extended, the objectives to be achieved within the next 6 weeks to 3 months will be provided to you in writing.



## Outcomes

The possible outcomes of the confirmation of candidature are:

- i. attainment of milestone and endorsement of Thesis Development Plan;
- ii. extension of milestone up to three months. The Review Committee will provide an exacting statement of what is expected in order to pass this milestone;
- iii. recommend transfer to MPhil program (for PhD candidates);
- iv. recommend transfer to PhD program (for MPhil candidates);
- v. recommend termination of candidature.

### ***Requesting an extension of milestone***

We understand that there are a variety of factors that can delay the progress of your research. To help keep you on track while you manage any issues that arise with your project, you have the opportunity to extend your milestone deadlines.

Under normal circumstances, PhD candidates may apply for up to three extensions of three months each during candidature. MPhil candidates can apply for up to 4.5 months of extension, to be used at the discretion of the student and Advisory Team.

Please be aware that extensions will only be granted if you have experienced research-related delays. Examples include:

- unexpected experimental results
- the emergence of new literature or
- delays in gaining ethical approval for a project

Extensions cannot be used for illness, work or personal issues that prevent you from progressing with your research. Under these circumstances, you should apply for interruption to your candidature.

To request an extension of milestone, candidates must submit an Extension of Milestone request in the Candidature Management System and must upload a Thesis Development Plan reflecting the new timeline and updated deadlines.

## MILESTONE 2: MID-CANDIDATURE REVIEW

The Mid-Candidature Review represents a mid-point between the Confirmation of Candidature and Thesis Review milestones. This milestone is designed to reassure you, your advisory team and the School that the project is on track for completion within candidature duration and your research and other professional skills are developing appropriately. This milestone is conducted as a meeting between you and the Review Committee which examines your progress.

The Mid-Candidature Review is based on -

- Thesis Development Plan, which is updated to reflect your progress as well as any changes in the scope of the project and/or milestones for completion; and
- A Portfolio of Achievement as a body of evidence to show your progress towards completion of your thesis.

A timeline showing the steps involved in the Mid-Candidature Review and considerations for the completion of this milestone are outlined below.

Timeline	
3 months prior to Milestone due date	<i>Reminder</i> School emails you and your Principal Advisor to remind you to commence preparations.
2 weeks prior to Milestone due date	<i>Candidate Submission</i> Submit your Thesis Development Plan and Portfolio of Achievement to the Review Committee.
Milestone due date	<i>Review Meeting</i>
Within 1 week of Milestone due date	<i>Paperwork</i> Completion of milestone forms and submission of .

### Considerations for Completion of Milestone 2

<i>Project</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the project proceeding on plan and still of suitable scope for an HDR degree?</li> </ul>
<i>Resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are funding, infrastructure and supervision still in place and adequate?</li> <li>• Does the Advisory Team have the appropriate academic expertise and background to advise the candidate?</li> </ul>
<i>Candidature</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the candidate show evidence of developing skills and knowledge, and ownership of project?</li> </ul>
<i>Progress</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the candidate advancing and on track for the completion of a high-quality project?</li> <li>• Is the standard of written and oral communication satisfactory?</li> </ul>

## COMPONENTS

### Thesis Development Plan

The starting point for the Mid-Candidature Review will be your Thesis Development Plan as agreed by the Review Committee at the first milestone. You should update your plan by reporting on tasks that have been completed as well as giving the reasons for the non-achievement of any tasks. It is not uncommon for a research plan to undergo changes in scope, aims and objectives, methodologies, and expected outcomes. Your Thesis Development Plan should be forward looking, but you must also indicate where the objectives and/or milestones have changed to help your Review Committee understand what you have achieved.

### Portfolio of Achievement

The Portfolio of Achievement is the collection of tangible outcomes from your research that you should build as you progress. Each thesis is unique and there are no exact rules about the number of papers you should have published or presentations you should have given by Mid-Candidature Review. A high value is placed on the quality of the outputs rather than quantity. The following examples illustrate the outcomes expected for three types of thesis:

- **Theoretical or simulation based thesis & Laboratory based experimental thesis:** Between one and three peer reviewed journal papers published or accepted for publication; at least one peer reviewed conference paper; a presentation at a national or international meeting; participation in school seminars.
- **Industry sponsored thesis.** A substantive report to the sponsoring organisation. At least one patent or a peer reviewed journal paper published or accepted for publication; at least one peer reviewed conference paper; a presentation at national or international conference or industry forum.

Guidelines for preparation of the Portfolio of Achievement are given in Appendix 3.

### Interview

The interview will last approximately one hour and you are expected to defend your Thesis Development Plan and progress towards completion. The Review Committee will ascertain if you will be able to prepare and present a final thesis of the quality necessary for the degree.

### Feedback

Verbal feedback is provided at the interview and written feedback is provided on the Milestone Evaluation form. If this milestone is extended, the objectives to be achieved within the next 6 weeks to 3 months will be provided to you.

### Outcomes

The possible outcomes of the confirmation of candidature are:

- i. attainment of milestone and endorsement of Thesis Development Plan; or
- ii. extension of milestone up to three months. The Review Committee will provide an exacting statement of what is expected from you in order to pass this milestone; or
- iii. recommend termination of candidature.

### **MILESTONE 3: THESIS REVIEW**

The Thesis Review enables the Review Committee to determine collectively that your thesis will be ready for examination by the expected date or determine a new submission date.

The Review provides a forum for discussing the disciplinary knowledge required among the thesis examiners to review the breadth of work contained within your thesis and enables you and your advisors to express any reservations or concerns about having a particular individual act as an examiner. It is also an opportunity to identify any major concerns and differences of opinion among you and your advisory team that requires attention and provides assurance of the scope, originality and qualities of the thesis.

The Thesis Review is based on -

- Thesis Development Plan, which is updated to reflect your progress as well as any changes in the scope of the project and/or milestones for completion; and
- A Portfolio of Achievement as a body of evidence to show your progress towards completion of your thesis.

A timeline showing the steps involved in the Thesis Review is shown below and considerations for the completion of this milestone are outlined below.

<b>Timeline</b>	
2 months prior to Milestone due date	<i>Reminder</i> School emails you and your Principal Advisor to remind you to commence preparations.
2 weeks prior to Milestone due date	<i>Candidate Submission</i> Submit your Thesis Development Plan and Portfolio of Achievement to the Review Committee.
Milestone due date	<i>Review Meeting</i> Complete review and identify thesis submission date. Discuss further with the PGO if the recommended submission date is beyond the standard length for the PhD (12 weeks) or MPhil (6 weeks) program.
Within 1 week of Milestone due date	<i>Paperwork</i> Completion and submission of milestone forms.

#### **Considerations for Completion of Milestone 3**

<i>Project</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the project and plan of the thesis clear?</li> <li>• Has a realistic and timely date been agreed, and is it justified?</li> </ul>
<i>Resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are funding, infrastructure and supervision still in place and adequate?</li> <li>• Does the Advisory Team have the appropriate academic expertise and background to advise the candidate?</li> </ul>
<i>Candidature</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the candidate show evidence of being committed to and capable of timely thesis submission and completion?</li> </ul>
<i>Progress</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the scope, quantity and quality of completed original research satisfactory?</li> <li>• Has consideration been given to the choice of Thesis Examiners?</li> <li>• Is the standard of written and oral communication satisfactory?</li> </ul>

## COMPONENTS

### Thesis Development Plan

As with the Mid-Candidature Review, you are required to present an updated Thesis Development Plan reporting on tasks that have been completed as well as giving the reasons for the non-achievement of any tasks. You should review the mapping of milestones to the graduate attributes, and you should affirm that you have the resources needed to complete the project. At this milestone, your Thesis Development Plan must also include the date of your Final Seminar.

### Portfolio of Achievement

The Portfolio of Achievement submitted at your Mid-Candidature Review should be updated and submitted to the Review Committee at this milestone.

### Final Seminar

All graduating Higher Degree by Research students present a 15 minute seminar to School staff and peers as part of the HDR Final Seminar Program. This program allows members of the School to stay up-to-date on research being conducted by students and provides an opportunity for students to reflect on their research project and receive valuable feedback at the end of their studies.

At the Thesis Review milestone, you must select a seminar date by contacting the HDR Liaison Officer and include this on your Thesis Development Plan.

Any exemption from presenting as part of the Final Seminar Program must be sought from the Postgraduate Coordinator.

### Interview

The interview will last approximately one hour and you are expected to defend your Thesis Development Plan and progress towards completion. The Review Committee will ascertain if you will be able to prepare and present a final thesis of the quality necessary for the degree.

### Feedback

Verbal feedback is provided at the interview and written feedback is provided on the Milestone Evaluation form. If this milestone is extended, the objectives to be achieved within the next 6 weeks to 3 months will be provided to you.

### Outcomes

The possible outcomes of the confirmation of candidature are:

- i. attainment of Thesis Review and endorsement of Thesis Development Plan; or
- ii. extension of milestone up to three months. The Review Committee will provide an exacting statement of what is expected from you in order to pass this milestone; or
- iii. recommend termination of candidature.



## THESIS SUBMISSION

The submission of your thesis is a busy and rewarding time in your program.

The Thesis Submission is based on -

- Thesis Development Plan, which is updated to reflect your progression throughout the program;
- iThenticate Similarity Report; and
- Final Seminar.

The School must approve your thesis submission before you can submit to the Graduate School for examination. Further details on the Graduate School thesis preparation and submission process can be found online (<http://www.uq.edu.au/grad-school/submitting-your-thesis>).

Once the thesis is officially recorded as submitted, your enrolment status is changed to “thesis under examination”. You will continue to have access to Library, email, and mySI-net therefore you are still required to maintain your student record on mySI-net. It is also important to regularly access your student email account to ensure you are receiving all official University communications.

A timeline showing the steps involved in the Thesis Submission is below.

Timeline	
1 months prior to Submission	<p><i>Nomination of Examiners</i> You and your Principal Advisor must nominate at least three potential examiners by completing the appropriate form and providing a copy of your thesis abstract.</p>
1 week prior to Submission	<p><i>Candidate Submission</i> Submit your thesis to iThenticate, accessed by logging in with your UQ student username and password via: <a href="https://app.ithenticate.com/en_us/login/uq">https://app.ithenticate.com/en_us/login/uq</a>. Share your iThenticate Similarity Report with your Principal Advisor and the Postgraduate Coordinator via iThenticate.</p> <p>Complete the <i>Thesis Submission Request</i> via <a href="https://my.uq.edu.au">my.UQ</a>.</p>
Submission deadline	<p><i>Candidate Submission to Graduate School</i> Submit your thesis to the Graduate School for examination via UQ eSpace.</p>

## COMPONENTS

### Thesis Submission

Your thesis is considered submitted when your thesis has been successfully uploaded to eSpace and the Graduate School has determined that the University’s requirements have been met.

The *Thesis Submission* request via [my.UQ](https://my.uq.edu.au) must be endorsed by your Principal Advisor and Postgraduate Coordinator prior to your thesis submission. When submitting this request, you declare that the thesis is composed of your original work and that the assertions made in the Declaration by Author and subsequent sections of your thesis preliminary pages are truthful and complete.



### **iThenticate Originality Report**

As with the Confirmation milestone, The University uses [iThenticate](#) (accessed using your student credentials) to assess academic integrity. You must submit your thesis to iThenticate as the first step of your Thesis Submission. iThenticate will generate a Similarity Report for your submission that must be shared with your Principal Advisor and the Postgraduate Coordinator.

You can upload your report to iThenticate multiple times before your thesis submission due and use the Similarity Report (that will refresh with each submission) as a tool to assess any potential academic integrity issues prior to your milestone.

For more information please refer to the [iThenticate FAQs](#) and access the UQ [iThenticate user guide](#).

### **Final Seminar**

By submission, students should have presented as part of the School's HDR Final Seminar Program. This is an important part of the thesis submission process that enables the Postgraduate Coordinator to verify that, to the best of their knowledge, the candidate's thesis is comprised of their own work.

If the seminar has not taken place by thesis submission, it must be scheduled to occur in the coming weeks.

Any exemption from presenting as part of the HDR Final Seminar Program must be sought from the Postgraduate Coordinator.

### **Oral Thesis Examination**

<TO BE COMPLETED>

### ***Nomination of Examiners***

Prior to your thesis submission, your advisory team is asked to nominate a minimum of three thesis examiners, all of whom need to be external to UQ. A justification on the relevance and expertise of each examiner is required.

Once the form has been received by the Graduate School a preliminary conflict of interest (COI) check is conducted and if no COI is apparent the nominee will be formally invited by the Graduate School to examine the thesis. If the nominee is not able to assist with the examination or does not respond to the formal invitation, the Graduate School will move to the next nominee on the form.

The Graduate School ensures that all thesis examiners act with integrity. All Conflicts of Interest (COI) are avoided so that a thesis may be assessed independently and free from any perception of bias or preferential treatment. UQ uses the COI Guidelines that have been adopted by Universities Australia Deans and Directors of Graduate Schools: <https://graduate-school.uq.edu.au/sites/graduate-school.uq.edu.au/files/ckfinder/files/Current-students/coi.pdf>

It is important to note the following:

- a conflict of interest may be with the institution, the advisor or the candidate.
- the existence of a conflict of interest does not automatically preclude a nominee being approved by the Dean of the UQ Graduate School as a thesis examiner. When considering a nominee, the Dean looks at the nature and severity of any conflict(s) of interest.
- the aim of the COI guidelines is to protect the candidate, examiner and UQ against potential negative perceptions during the thesis examination process. It is not a presumption that an individual will behave inappropriately.

If a potential conflict of interest is not declared and is discovered during or after the examination, the Graduate School may annul one or both examiners reports and a replacement examiner/s will be appointed

## **APPENDIX 1. UQ Higher Degree by Research Graduate Attributes**

### **Knowledge and skills in the field of study**

1. In-depth, significant knowledge at the forefront of the field.
2. Advanced understanding of key perspectives related to the field.

### **Effective communication**

1. Capacity to communicate ideas effectively to a range of audiences inside and outside the field of study or discipline and to the wider community.
2. Capacity to communicate knowledge for the education of others, which may include teaching and supervision.
3. Ability to work collaboratively and effectively with others, within a range of teams and contexts, respecting individual roles and responsibilities.

### **Critical judgment and research skills**

1. Ability to engage effectively in the discipline's philosophy of enquiry and discourses.
2. Ability to conduct independent and original research and scholarship, which may be demonstrated by:
  - understanding and developing concepts
  - formulating viable research questions
  - accessing and managing information at an advanced level
  - designing and implementing methodologies appropriate to the discipline or field of study
  - analyzing and synthesizing information or data from a variety of sources
  - critically analyzing one's own research
  - setting research goals, planning, and ordering activities to complete a complex project within available resources.

### **Independence, creativity and learning**

1. Ability to make a substantive and independent contribution to knowledge in the discipline or field of study in an original and scholarly way.
2. Ability to apply existing skills and knowledge to identify and formulate new problems.
3. Ability to develop inventive solutions, demonstrating flexibility and resourcefulness.
4. Ability to lead projects within or across disciplines.

### **Ethical and social understanding**

1. A clear understanding and demonstration of ethical, legal, social and civic responsibility as a researcher and member of the discipline.
2. Capacity to understand and respect interdisciplinary and diverse cultural perspectives, and the roles and expertise of others.
3. Appreciation of local, national and global issues and the social and philosophical contexts relating to research and practice in the discipline.
4. Commitment to professional development and the discipline or profession, and a willingness to listen and respond to constructive feedback.

## APPENDIX 2. Confirmation Report Guidelines

### Format

- 12 pt font – Times New Roman
- Single spaced
- Expected – 35-50 pages (not including bibliography, copies of publications or appendices)
- Electronic version only to be submitted

### Sections

#### *Title of thesis*

#### *Abstract (must be no longer than 1 page)*

- What is the problem or gap in the research that the work addresses?
- Explain the importance of addressing the issue.
- What methodology is being used to address the problem?
- What has been found so far and what is the significance of these findings?

#### *Introduction and critical literature review (This should be between 10 and 15 pages)*

- Introduce your subject and provide a rationale for your research project.
- Describe the context of your research, e.g. industry support, team structure and collaborators.
- Outline the broad research question(s) or hypothesis you are addressing.
- Critically review the relevant research and theory to establish:
  - a. Why the particular approach has been chosen.
  - b. How this work will contribute to knowledge in the field, i.e. novelty.
  - c. Demonstrate engagement with the broader relevant literature to show how it is instructive to the scope of the thesis.

#### *Objectives (this should be less than 1 page)*

- A short statement stating the achievable objectives of the thesis - this is the most important element in the Confirmation Report. If the objectives are not clearly written and achievable, the thesis usually ends badly.

#### *Methodology (this should be between 2-3 pages)*

- An outline of the methodological approach including a theoretical justification of the approach.
- Describe any analytical techniques and research designs, if appropriate.
- An assessment of the accuracy and reliability of your results.
- A description of the analytical work, analysis and interpretation of the results.
- An assessment of the challenges and risks that might hamper the successful completion of the project.

#### *Achievements to date (this should be between 10-15 pages)*

- Describe the results achieved to date. You are expected to have made significant progress. If your work has been published in a journal or conference proceedings this section should explain the significance of the work and how it fits into the bigger picture of the thesis. Include papers as appendices.
- Discussion of the findings and their significance. Critically reflect on what you have achieved to this point.

#### *Expected outcomes of future studies (this should be between 5-10 pages)*

- Describe what you plan to do as next steps, why you propose to do it, and how this fits into the thesis.

#### *Bibliography*

#### *Copies of publications produced during candidature*

- Include research articles/reviews and conference presentations/posters (both completed and in draft form)

#### *Other Appendices as required*

- Do not include any material that is pertinent to a reader's comprehension of the Confirmation Report in this section. This section should contain additional material, such as tables of results, annotated bibliography, research budget, ethics applications, and intellectual property agreements.

*Note: All documents you submit for your milestones are considered to be assessment items, as is your thesis. Any suspected cases of plagiarism will be dealt with in accordance to UQ PPL 30.6.04.*

## APPENDIX 3. Completing your Thesis Development Plan & Portfolio of Achievement

You should consider your Thesis Development Plan and Portfolio of Achievement to be living documents that you will modify throughout the duration of your candidature, and which provide a concise summary of your research.

### Thesis Development Plan

Students are provided with a template Thesis Development Plan prior to Confirmation of Candidature. This document is updated and used consistently in each milestone up to Thesis Submission. The Thesis Development Plan includes the following sections:

1. *Candidate Details*
2. *Project Details*
3. *Abstract*
4. *Objectives*
  - Students must list the overall research objectives of your project and update this section as the thesis objectives are refined throughout the program.
5. *Milestones & tasks*
  - Milestones & tasks – list all research-related tasks (including milestones) that must be completed in order to achieve your project outcomes. You must also list an expected completion date for each task.
  - Developmental Activities – list any extra curricula involvement that contributes to your life as a student at UQ (example: tutoring, attending seminars, committees)
  - HDR Final Seminars attended – list all Final Seminars you have attended.
6. *Map your Milestones to the Graduate Attributes*
  - UQ has established the overall qualities, skills, knowledge and abilities that should be achieved by candidates when completing HDR programs. Students must map their activities from Section 5 to show the mechanisms through which the Graduate Attributes are being achieved.
7. *Annual Fire Safety*
8. *Resources*
9. *Submission of Thesis*
10. *HDR Final Seminar Program*
11. *Submission Checklist*

### Portfolio of Achievement

The easiest way to create a Portfolio of Achievement is to use an A4 ring binder with tab dividers and an index at the front (e.g. each tab divider should have a heading and over the duration of your program you can insert documents that relate to each heading). This ring binder can then be presented to your Review Committee at your milestone interview.

Tab divider example headings:

- Journal Publications (Published, Submitted, Draft)
- Conference Presentations (include details on conference name, location, peer review)
- Summary of Presentations/Attendance at Research Meetings and Seminars
- Developmental Activities
- Confirmation Report
- Thesis outline

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