HDR Progress Management and Support Schedule 1 - Milestone Submission Requirements, Assessment Criteria and Outcomes

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Authority for this document is established by the HDR Progress Management and Support Procedure.

Milestone requirements	Confirmation of candidature	Second milestone review	Third milestone review
A research proposal (confirmation of candidature) or summary document (subsequent milestones)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Details on how the proposed project will be undertaken (methodology) and an initial review of literature and references	Yes		
Evidence of being enrolled in, having successfully completed, or been exempted from, the relevant research methods course	Yes		
Evidence of completion of all compulsory training as listed on the student's Canvas Dashboard	Yes		
Evidence of completion of optional training including Intellectual Property – An Introduction, Intellectual Property Commercialisation, Human Ethics, Animal Ethics, Institutional Biosafety.	Yes – if optional training is to be completed on the recommendation of the supervisory team		
A research data management plan	Yes	Yes	Yes
At confirmation of candidature, candidates must provide a statement of ethics and/or biosafety approval status in their research: - Evidence of required ethics and institutional biosafety approvals; OR - Explanation and timeline for approval (if not yet obtained) OR; - Approved exemption, where applicable; OR - Confirmation that no approval/exemption is required, with rationale At subsequent milestones, candidates must provide evidence that required ethics and/or biosafety approvals have been obtained and maintained in time to support planned research activities.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Evidence of consideration of the likely and actual impact, positive and negative, of the proposed research engagement of stakeholders, where appropriate	Yes	Yes	Yes
A publication plan including evidence of any pending or completed research outputs and timelines	Yes	Yes	Yes

Milestone requirements	Confirmation of candidature	Second milestone review	Third milestone review
An updated review of literature and references, and any changes to candidature since the last milestone review		Yes – include in summary document	Yes – include in summary document
Draft chapters of the thesis, or equivalent in draft or published papers, as deemed appropriate for the discipline OR A portfolio of work, as appropriate to the discipline, which includes a draft of the dissertation		Yes – at least two chapters OR Yes – draft dissertation required	Yes – at least two chapters OR Yes – draft dissertation required
Any other requirements the school deems necessary.	Yes	Yes	Yes

The following criteria must be assessed during each milestone review:

Confirmation of Candidature	1. A clear summary of the candidate's aims, methods, theoretical/conceptual framework, as well as the significance, and potential impact of the research. 2. Evidence that the candidate has begun to adequately reflect on their research framework, and its relationship to the existing body of knowledge. 3. Evidence that the candidate understands the proposed methodology and has the skills and knowledge needed to undertake the research. 4. Evidence that the candidate has addressed research integrity requirements, including consideration of the appropriate use of artificial intelligence (AI), and submission of a statement of ethics and/or biosafety approval status. This must specify required approvals or confirmation of exemption where applicable. 5. Evidence that the candidate has begun to consider the likely and actual impact, positive and negative, of the proposed research and has engaged with stakeholders, where appropriate. 6. An indication that the research is original and will produce new knowledge (PhD candidates) OR appropriate to the level of a Master by Research degree in accordance with the Australian Qualifications Framework, including in-candidature research outputs. 7. A clear and viable schema for completing the degree, including a research plan with a specific timeline for the research program from confirmation to completion.
Second milestone review	1. Presentation of research outcomes of sufficient quality and quantity to support a coherent and critical account of that work. 2. Evidence that the candidate has been developing the research and testing their methodology as they progressed. 3. Evidence that the candidate has addressed research integrity requirements, such as a data storage plan, and has maintained ethics and institutional biosafety approvals, if required; or approved exemption, where applicable. 4. Evidence that the candidate has a strong understanding of how their research is situated in the existing knowledge of their discipline and/or community of practice, and its relationship to work by the other researchers. 5. Evidence of the research outputs planned or submitted for the public domain. 6. A clear and viable schema for completing the degree, including a detailed timeline of the research program from the mid-point to completion.
Third milestone review	1. Evidence of a coherent account of the candidate's research and the submission of research outcomes which support their aims and answer their research question/s including potential or likely beneficial impacts arising from the research, such as for stakeholders and/or end-users. 2. Evidence that the candidate has successfully situated their research within the discipline and/or community of practice and has taken account of other research related to their topic. 3. Evidence that the candidate has addressed research integrity requirements, such as a data storage plan, and has maintained ethics and institutional biosafety approvals, if required; or approved exemption, where applicable. 4. Evidence that the research is original and has produced new knowledge (PhD candidates) OR appropriate to the level of a Master by Research degree in accordance with the Australian Qualifications Framework. 5. Evidence of research outputs planned or submitted for the public domain including communication of results with key stakeholders and end-users. 6. A clear path and detailed timeline showing how the thesis/project will be completed in the time between the third milestone review and the submission date.

The following table provides information on the outcomes of the milestone reviews:

Milestone achieved	No amendments required or minor amendment required to a candidate's milestone documentation, made to the satisfaction of the senior supervisor.
Major amendments required	This outcome leads to the nomination of the candidate for a period of action and support. The candidate must re-present their milestone within the timeframe of the CASP. This outcome can include major changes to the milestone presentation and/or documentation. Where a candidate successfully presents their milestone for a second time, the milestone outcome will be changed to achieved. Where a candidate presents their milestone for a second time and the milestone is not achieved, the outcome 'major amendments, not achieved' is selected.
Major amendments not achieved	This outcome is for candidates presenting their milestone for a second time where the amendments are not to the satisfaction of the milestone panel. The candidate will be referred to the college review for academic progress in accordance with the HDR Unsatisfactory Progress Process.
Transfer to PhD	Recommends the candidate to transfer to a PhD (Master by Research candidates) in accordance with the HDR Admissions and Enrolment Procedure. Where a candidate fails an attempt at a program transfer and the milestone is not achieved, SGR or the HDR DA may nominate the candidate for a period of action and support if the application for transfer has caused the candidate to be significantly delayed in their current program. The candidate needs to have requested to upgrade before attempting the milestone.
Achieved, transfer to Masters by Research	Recommends the candidate to transfer to a Master by Research program (PhD candidates) in accordance with the HDR Admissions and Enrolment Procedure. The candidate needs to have requested the downgrade before attempting the milestone.
Not achieved, transfer to Masters by Research	This outcome means the candidate has not achieved their PhD milestone and the panel feels the candidate does not meet the requirements of a PhD. They recommend that the candidate considers a transfer to a Master by Research program (PhD candidates) in accordance with the HDR Admissions and Enrolment Procedure. If the candidate does not want to downgrade, the outcome should be changed to 'Major Amendments Required' and the candidate nominated for a period of action and support.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	28th October 2025
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Approval Date	26th September 2022
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Policy Owner	Calum Drummond Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation
Policy Author	Simon Pervan Associate Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research Training and Development
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