

CNHS HDR Milestone Guidelines

This information is for Supervisors and HDR students in the **College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CNHS)** and outlines the College-specific requirements and processes for 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 students' individual HDR timelines. This process is to ensure that HDR students have an opportunity to highlight and track their HDR achievements and 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.

HDR Milestone Requirements

There are three parts to every milestone; 1) written work, 2) a presentation, and 3) the online milestone form in [Inspire, the online HDR progression system](#). Students can initiate their milestone in [Inspire](#), including the uploading of written work, prior to their presentation, but the online form cannot be submitted until after the presentation has been completed.

Each milestone review requires an evaluation of progress, an assessment of the student's written work, and an assessment of the student's oral communication via a seminar or similar [**Note: Interim Milestones do not require an oral presentation**].

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

- Copy of relevant **Ethics Approval** (as appropriate)
- **Written Work** - for example, research proposal or draft (Confirmation of Candidature or Interim Pre-CoC), Draft Chapters (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 at <https://canvas.flinders.edu.au/enroll/FM8AWN>)
- **Evidence of oral presentation with written feedback** – (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 forms in [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 in [Inspire](#). Students sign off and submit the online form in [Inspire](#) **after** they have presented their work and have received and uploaded the assessor's report in [Inspire](#).

HDR Milestone process

Selection of an independent assessor

An independent assessor is required for Confirmation of Candidature Milestone and the Final Thesis Review. Ordinarily this will be the same assessor, to build continuity, however a different assessor can be invited depending on availability. The independent assessor must be available to attend on the date of the student's scheduled oral presentation and attend a subsequent review meeting with the student and supervisory team. The assessor must hold a qualification equivalent to or higher than the degree being undertaken by the HDR student.

An independent assessor typically is a member of academic staff at Flinders University, but can be external to Flinders, and is qualified to comment on the student's progress and research area but not part of the student's supervisory team (NB: there is no honorarium payment available for external assessors and it is advised to not select an academic who may be considered as a future examiner).

Submission of written work

The student and supervisory team will share the written work (including research proposal for Confirmation of Candidature and thesis chapters or full thesis for later milestones), as well as a HDR completion timeline, with the independent assessor at least two weeks prior to the presentation date.

Oral presentation

For each major milestone review (i.e., not interim milestones), CNHS HDR students must present their work. For Confirmation of Candidature and Final Thesis Review, these presentations occur within a CNHS HDR Milestone Seminar, in presence of the HDR Coordinator and an independent assessor. For the Mid-Candidature Review, any formal presentation (e.g. conference presentation) can be used to meet this requirement.

- At least **two months prior** to the [Inspire](#) milestone date, students and principal supervisor will receive an invitation from the HDR Coordinator (cnhs.hdrstudents@flinders.edu.au) to present at the upcoming CNHS HDR Milestone Conference. CNHS HDR Milestone Conferences are held every two months.
- The date of the scheduled HDR Milestone presentation may not exactly align with the [Inspire](#) milestone date. Although the [Inspire](#) system may send out automated reminders, this slight misalignment is of no consequence.
- Presentations will be delivered in conference format, with 20-min slots allocated to Confirmation of Candidature and Mid Candidature Final Thesis Review presentations, and 30-min time slots to Final Thesis Review presentations. Typically, CNHS HDR Milestone Conferences will run from 10am-4pm.
- Where possible presentations within the same research focus areas will be scheduled within the same session.
- Invitations to CNHS HDR Milestone Conferences will be extended to Honours and PhD students, CNHS academic staff and industry partners.

Review meeting

Following Confirmation of Candidature and Final Thesis Review milestones, a scheduled **HDR Milestone review meeting will be attended by the assessor, student, and supervisory team**. This review meeting will occur within one week of the presentation (ideally immediately following the oral presentation). The meeting will be of at least 30 minutes duration.

During the review meeting, using the *HDR Milestone Assessment Report* template as a guide:

1. The assessor will bring up points for discussions, asking questions and providing feedback.
2. The student will have the opportunity to ask questions and solicit feedback.
3. The supervisory team will have the opportunity to raise points for discussion.
4. Action points will be agreed upon, and documented, by the assessor, student and supervisors.

Written comments and feedback from the independent assessor will be forwarded to the student and to the supervisory team as soon as possible and, together with the completed *HDR Milestone Assessment Report*, and uploaded by the student in [Inspire](#) (under the 'independent assessor's comments' section of the milestone).

Outcome

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 assessors 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
Associate Professor Ivanka Prichard
HDR Coordinator, College of Nursing and Health Sciences
Cnhs.hdrstudents@flinders.edu.au