

This information is for HDR students enrolled under the **College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences** and their supervisors and outlines the College specific requirements and processes for the HDR Milestones. This information should 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 students 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.

Milestone Requirements

There are two parts to every major milestone; a presentation and the online milestone form in [Inspire](#). Students must complete the presentation component before completing the online form and both parts should be completed **before** the due date.

Each full 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. 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** - Research Proposal or Draft (Confirmation of Candidature or Interim Pre-CofC), 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 through [Inspire](#). HDR students must complete and upload all requirements of the milestone **before signing off** on the milestone form in [Inspire](#). Students should not sign off on their milestone until they have presented work to their assessors, and have uploaded evidence of their presentation, along with assessor's comments in the case of Confirmation of Candidature Milestone.

It is your responsibility to create a digital Data Management Planner (DMP). For more information refer to the library resources for researchers – [Research Data](#).

Oral Presentation (Confirmation of Candidature)

For the Confirmation of Candidature milestone review, **the supervisors and student** will work with the HDR Academic Advisor to establish a presentation time and book an appropriate room for the presentation. The college requires an independent assessor to review the written work, attend the presentation and provide input into the written feedback to the student (and supervisors) to be uploaded to [Inspire](#). If the independent assessor is unable to attend the presentation, they will provide a written report.

The Confirmation of Candidature presentation should be attended by a Panel made up of all supervisors, an independent assessor (Flinders staff from the discipline or a cognate area of research, or external academic) and the HDR Coordinator/Panel Chair (HDR Academic Advisor). The Independent assessor panel member can be a member of academic staff at Flinders University or external to Flinders who is qualified to comment on the student's progress and research area, but who is not part of the student's supervisory team. (NB: It is advised to not select an external academic who may be considered as a future examiner). The student may invite other people to the presentation (audience).

Supervisors, independent assessor and HDR Coordinator (or Academic Advisor) will receive the research proposal and literature review in advance (minimum of two weeks before the booked presentation).

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

1. The student presents their research proposal.
2. Questions and feedback for the student (from panel first, and then open to the audience).
3. The panel will meet with the student and supervisors individually and privately.
4. The panel will discuss feedback with the student and supervisors.
5. Written comments and feedback from the panel (using the College 'Report on HDR Milestone 1 (Confirmation of Candidature)' template will be forwarded to the student and to the supervisory team as soon as possible.
6. The written feedback will be uploaded by the student under the 'independent assessor's comments' section of the milestone, along with the other mandatory materials.

Oral Presentation (other milestones)

For Mid Candidature Review and Final Thesis Review milestones the student must present independently on their thesis research. For these milestones any appropriate presentation can be documented (such as local, domestic or international conference, Three minute thesis competition (3MT) College HDR conference, Seminar Series or Research Workshop). Students should plan their presentation with their supervisors and must upload evidence of these presentations, such as dates and locations, acceptance letters etc. with on their [Inspire](#) Milestone form.

Milestone Assessment

Principal Supervisor: When the student has completed their Milestone in Inspire, their Principal Supervisor will receive an email request to review and comment on the Milestone. The supervisor will be able to approve the Milestone or return it to the student for amendment and make comments as appropriate. Supervisors may also consult with the HDR Academic Advisor and/or HDR Coordinator if they have any concerns.

HDR Academic Advisor/HDR Coordinator: Once the milestone form is completed in [Inspire](#) by the student and principal supervisor, the HDR Academic Advisor or 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 Academic Advisor or Coordinator will choose from one of the following recommendations based on the written feedback (for Confirmation of Candidature) and the information and documentation provided by the student and supervisor in the milestone form in [Inspire](#):

- **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).
- **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](#).

- **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](#).
- **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).
- **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 an email notification from Inspire with details of the HDR Coordinators recommendation and a link to view their completed milestone.

Document produced by the Office of Graduate Research on behalf of
Associate Professor Udoy Saikia
HDR Coordinator, College Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences