

The below information is for HDR students enrolled under the **College of Medicine and Public Health** and their supervisors and outlines the College specific requirements and processes for the 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 the student's 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. This is an important part of Government reporting, especially for students whose fees are covered by the Research Training Program. 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.

**Major Milestones** refers to the Confirmation of Candidature, Mid Candidature Review and Final Thesis Review. **Interim Milestones** refers to the Interim Confirmation of Candidature, Interim Mid Candidature Review, Interim Final Thesis Review and Interim Post Final Thesis Review (required for Part Time students and/or those enrolled beyond the Final Thesis Review).

#### **Milestone Requirements**

There are three parts to every **Major Milestone**; a presentation, an interview with a Thesis Milestone Panel (outlined below) and the online milestone form in [Inspire](#). Students must complete the presentation and interview component **before** finalising the online form and all parts should be completed before the due date. Scheduled presentation times are 25 minutes with 5 minutes of question time for Confirmation of Candidature and Mid Candidature presentations, and 45 minutes with 15 minutes of question time for the Final Thesis review.

Interim milestone reviews require an evaluation of progress and an assessment of the student's written work.

**[Note: 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** - for example Literature Review and Research Proposal or Draft (Confirmation of Candidature or Interim Pre-CofC), Draft Chapters, Papers or copies of published work (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 (for Major Milestones)** – (further information in Oral Presentation section below) Presentation must be completed and written feedback needs to be uploaded into [Inspire](#) by the student. **Note:** Assessment and written feedback is only required for Confirmation and Mid Candidature, not the Final Thesis Review. **This must be uploaded into Inspire or the milestone cannot be approved.**
- **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 form through [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 into milestones. Students should not

sign off on their milestone until they have presented work to their assessors and have assessor's comments to upload to [Inspire](#).

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

**Milestone assessments** will require attendance of the Principal Supervisor, Associate Supervisor/s and at least one independent assessor. It is the **supervisory team's responsibility** to identify at least one assessor.

Assessors must be:

- (i) free from real or perceived bias, either for or against the candidate, or the supervisor or the project. They may be a member of staff or have adjunct status at Flinders University or another tertiary institution (e.g. Uni of SA or Uni of Adelaide, or SAHMRI or SARDI). They must be available to attend the student's presentation and meet with the student at the assessment panel meeting which will be held after the oral presentations at Confirmation of Candidature and Mid-Candidature points.
- (ii) knowledgeable in the discipline and will be research active, thus ensuring that their knowledge of the field or area of professional practice is current. i.e. they should meet the requirements for registration as a supervisor at Flinders (see [here](#))
- (iii) qualified equivalent to or higher than the degree for which the thesis is being examined, or possess equivalent professional experience as determined by the College HDR committee
- (iv) empathic with the theoretical framework used by the candidate.
- (v) familiar with the requirements of Flinders University, and the essential parts of the Course Rules governing the particular degree (see [here](#))
- (vi) able to provide written feedback to the Theme HDR Mentor and the Student to be uploaded into [Inspire](#) following the Confirmation of Candidature seminar and after reading the submitted Literature review/Research proposal. The current template should be used from the [REDHub](#) Home Page.

### **Oral Presentation (Major Milestones)**

Students should book through the [HDRSupport.CMPH@flinders.edu.au](mailto:HDRSupport.CMPH@flinders.edu.au) email account for their presentations, which are held **Fridays, 12:30-1:30pm weekly**. It is the **student's responsibility** to book and communicate the confirmed presentation time with their supervisory panel.

Supervisors and assessors must receive all documentation in advance (minimum of two weeks before the booked presentation) (including the research proposal and literature review for Confirmation of Candidature and thesis chapters and papers/published work for Mid Candidature Review).

Ideally interviews with the candidate and supervisors will be held directly after each seminar. **Students are responsible for liaising with their supervisor(s) and the Theme Mentor to arrange these times.**

For Confirmation of Candidature and Mid Candidature Review the review meeting lasts approximately 30 minutes and allows the assessor to ask questions of the candidate and clarify any areas of uncertainty. The Theme HDR Mentor will then meet with the student alone at the end of the 30-minute window to discuss any concerns or questions the student may have without supervisors present.

### **Milestone Outcomes**

The HDR Coordinator or Deputy 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 Assessor/s 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 Amy Reynolds**  
HDR Coordinator, College Medicine and Public Health