

This information is for HDR students enrolled in the **College of Science and Engineering** 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 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 three parts to every major milestone; a presentation, an interview with a **Thesis Milestone Panel**, and the online milestone form in [Inspire](#) which requires the submission of written work. Students must complete the preparation of written work, a presentation & interview component before finalising the online form and all parts should be completed before the milestone due date.

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 the milestone students will require the following mandatory materials:

- **Written Work** - for example Literature Review & Research Proposal (for Confirmation of Candidature(COC) or draft Literature Review & Research Proposal for Interim Pre-COC), Draft Chapters or Papers or copies of published work (Mid Candidature and Interim Reviews) or Draft Full Thesis and/or copies of published work (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 via the <https://flo.flinders.edu.au/course/view.php?id=49767>)
- **Evidence of Oral Presentation with Assessors Reports** – (further information in Oral Presentation section below) Presentation must be completed and written feedback from assessors needs to be uploaded into [Inspire](#) by the Student.
- Copy of relevant **Ethics Approval**
- **Completion Plan** – a plan must be uploaded into [Inspire](#). The OGR has templates available the [completion plan document](#) at the end of this document 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](#), 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](#).

### **Assessors**

In the first 6 months of candidature, each student in the College of Science and Engineering will be assigned a **Thesis Milestone Panel**. This panel will consist of the Principal Supervisor and Associate Supervisors and two independent assessors. It is the responsibility of the **Principal Supervisor** to work with the HDR Academic Advisor in their discipline area or the College HDR Coordinator to nominate these two assessors who would ideally stay with the student until the completion of their PhD thesis. One of the assessors may be the HDR Academic Advisor or College HDR Coordinator but this is not a requirement. When selecting assessors please consider the following:

- (i) Assessors must be 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 presentations and meet with the student at the assessment panel meetings which will be held after the oral presentations at Confirmation of Candidature, Mid-Candidature and Final thesis milestone points
- (ii) Assessors will be knowledgeable in the discipline and will be research active, thus ensuring that their knowledge of the field or area of professional practice is current. Namely, they should meet the requirements for registration as a supervisor at Flinders  
(<https://www.flinders.edu.au/content/dam/documents/staff/policies/academic-students/hdr-supervisor-procedures.pdf>)
- (iii) Assessors must hold a qualification 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) Assessors will have empathy with the theoretical framework used by the candidate;
- (v) Assessors will be made familiar with the requirements of Flinders University, and the essential parts of the Course Rules governing the particular degree  
(<https://www.flinders.edu.au/content/dam/documents/staff/policies/academic-students/higher-degrees-research-policy.pdf>)

It is expected that all research active academic staff in the College will be an assessor on at least two student HDR Milestone panels. These commitments would last for 3 to 4 years. No staff member should need to be an assessor for more than 6 students at any one time, and two Confirmation of Candidature panels per year.

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

For each milestone review, the **Principal Supervisor** will arrange a milestone review session with the members of the **Thesis Milestone Panel** (as outlined above). Note that the panel for each review must consist of a minimum of 3 academics. This milestone review session should be arranged well before the due date of the Milestone in [Inspire](#).

- Panel members will receive all documentation at least two weeks before the scheduled review session (including the literature review/research proposal for Confirmation of Candidature and thesis chapters for later milestones) from the principal supervisor or student via email.
- Students must include the Turnitin Report in documentation provided to the panel in accordance with the Academic Integrity Policy.
- The student and/or principal supervisor will arrange for the student to give an oral **presentation (20 to 30 minutes)**. This can be a one off talk, part of a regular seminar session within a research centre or at the College Annual HDR conference if appropriate. The presentation will be open to other students and staff in the College.
- Directly following the presentation there will be a question time with the panel and other attendees of the presentation. The student should be prepared to answer questions in front of the College academic community, followed by a private interview with the **Thesis Milestone Panel**.
- **For Confirmation of Candidature only** - It is strongly encouraged to have the College HDR Coordinator or a College HDR Academic Advisor at both the oral presentation, question time and the interview. If present they will Chair the meeting. The last stage of the oral presentation is the interview. In some extraordinary cases after the presentation and question time, it may be clear that the student is ready to be confirmed and no interview is necessary. In most cases it is expected that the student will meet with the HDR Milestone panel for 15- 30 minutes. The assessment panel should be conducted such that the assessors are provided with an opportunity

to meet with the student and the supervisor/s individually and together. This interview can take place directly following the presentation or it may be necessary for it to occur 1 to 2 weeks later e.g. if the talk is at the CSE HDR conference. This interview is an opportunity for the student and supervisor to air any unresolved issues and it is a mentoring opportunity for both student and supervisor.

The **Thesis Milestone Panel** 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 panel will choose from one of the following recommendations:

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.

Once the presentation, question time and interview have been concluded the student will be provided with written feedback on the assessors form. The student will need to upload their assessor's comments to [Inspire](#). The student then needs to complete and sign off the Milestone form in [Inspire](#), the Supervisor will review and sign off and finally the College HDR Coordinator (or HDR Academic Advisor) will confirm the recommendation through [Inspire](#).

The student will get a notification from Inspire with details of the HDR Coordinators recommendation and a link to view their completed milestone.

