

School of Communication and Arts

Milestone 3: Thesis Review

Thesis review takes place within 12 months full-time equivalent (FTE) for PhD students or 6 months FTE for MPhil students after the official mid-candidature milestone due date. The thesis review milestone should be completed no later than 3 months FTE before the expected submission of the thesis for PhD examination, or 6 weeks FTE before the expected submission of the thesis for MPhil examination.

The purpose of the thesis review milestone is to determine that:

- The weighting and composition of the advisory team is appropriate and the supervision relationship is satisfactory;
- The candidate receives feedback about the readiness of the thesis for examination and any concerns with the thesis can be addressed prior to submission;
- The scope, originality, and quality of the thesis are of an appropriate standard;
- There is a forum for discussing the mix of disciplinary knowledge required among the thesis examiners to review the work contained within the thesis;
- The candidate and the advisors have an opportunity to express any reservations or concerns about having any particular individual act as an examiner;
- Potential conflicts of interest and the nomination of a chair of examiners can be discussed; and
- Plans are in place if the candidate has requested or is required to undertake an oral thesis examination in addition to a written examination.

The candidate must:

- Submit an updated Academic CV and HDR Portfolio;
- Submit [thesis preliminary pages](#);
- Submit a sample page of the works cited in the thesis (bibliography);
- Deliver an oral presentation of their research (completion seminar);
- Attend a meeting with the milestone committee.

The advisory team must:

- Meet with the candidate in advance to discuss potential examiners and to provide feedback on a draft of the thesis preliminary pages and thesis abstract;
- Submit a brief written progress report verifying that they have read and provided feedback on a full draft or at least 80% of the thesis, specifying the titles and length of thesis chapters that have been completed, and stating what remains to be done;
- Verify that the quality of writing, research, and analysis is of the standard expected for this stage of HDR candidature or specify what needs to be improved.

Attainment of Milestone 3 is based on a recommendation made by the milestone committee, which is chaired by the HDR Director or Deputy HDR Director and includes the candidate's principal and associate advisors. The chair of the committee acts as an expert reader from outside the advisory team to provide feedback on the thesis review documents.

The advisory team's report, the Thesis Preliminary Pages, the sample of the Works Cited, the student's Academic CV and HDR Portfolio, and evidence of meeting the oral presentation requirements is to be submitted to the meeting chair for circulation to the milestone committee two weeks prior to the thesis review meeting.

Written Requirements

To demonstrate that they are on track to complete their thesis, all candidates must submit an updated Academic CV and HDR Portfolio containing a progress report and a timetable for completion. Candidates must also submit correctly formatted thesis preliminary pages including a well-developed draft of the thesis abstract and table of contents, plus a sample page of the works cited. The committee considers the candidate's written submission in relation to goals set, obstacles encountered, and disciplinary standards.

Oral Presentation

Between mid-candidature review and thesis review, the candidate must make an oral presentation of their research to a wider audience than the advisory team. For example, this might include presenting at a school seminar, the Work in Progress postgraduate conference or another conference or symposium, delivering a lecture or talk related to their research, or reading work at a writers' festival or other meeting of scholarly or professional associates. Alternatively, and this is strongly recommended, it can be a completion seminar to the school with the candidature committee present. Normally this takes place at the school seminar series when two or three postgraduates present in the same session. Candidates approaching thesis review and wishing to do a completion seminar should contact the HDR Director.

The process for the completion seminar is:

- A presentation of up to 20 minutes by the candidate that outlines the argument, conclusions, and significance of the research project, followed by approximately 10 minutes where members of the school ask questions and make suggestions.
- The seminar should begin with a brief contextual overview of the thesis; however, the main purpose of the seminar is to present the contribution to the field and the implications of the research as drafted in the thesis conclusion. Creative Writing candidates may include a short précis of their creative project but the completion seminar should focus on the critical essay. Art History by Thesis and Exhibition Catalogue candidates may include a brief account of the exhibition but the completion seminar should not focus on the exhibition or catalogue.

The candidate must demonstrate clarity of ideas and knowledge of the field and they must show that they have the ability to engage the audience in a considered discussion of their research project.

Thesis Review Meeting

The expected duration of the thesis review meeting with the milestone committee is one hour. The candidate is interviewed separately and together with advisory team. During the meeting the advisors exit and the candidate has the opportunity to discuss the supervisory relationship, review their student support plan (if applicable), or raise other concerns that may affect thesis submission. Subsequently the candidate exits while the committee discusses the supervisory relationship and the student's progress in confidence.

The committee must:

- Assess the candidate's progress in their field of research, verifying that the thesis is correctly formatted and nearly ready for submission;
- Nominate a chair of examiners;
- Develop a list of suitable examiners, and check for conflicts of interest and whether the student or their advisors wish to veto potential examiners;
- Determine whether the thesis is to be assessed under a confidentiality agreement or whether delayed or restricted access to the thesis following award of degree is required;
- Ascertain that the advisory team is supportive, effective, and available to provide feedback on the full draft when the candidate aims to complete their thesis;
- Ensure that the timetable is realistic and set goals for thesis submission;
- Review plans if the candidate has elected to undertake an oral examination;
- In the case of the PhD in Art History by Thesis and Exhibition Catalogue, check proper plans are in place for the exhibition and for examiners to see the exhibition.

Assessment Process

The committee can make the following decisions:

- Recommend attainment of Milestone 3 to the Graduate School; OR
- Recommend that the Graduate School extends the milestone due date by three months (full time equivalent) and ask the candidate to do further work by a set date. If the candidate has not attained Milestone 3, the committee must provide written instructions regarding remedial actions to be undertaken by the candidate. After the additional work is received, the committee reconvenes and interviews the candidate again. If satisfied with the quality and quantity of work, the committee can recommend attainment of Milestone 3; OR
- Recommend that the Graduate School conduct a review of candidature because candidate has not attained the milestone after more than one attempt.

The chair of the milestone committee produces a written report that outlines the committee's decision and sets out any conditions the candidate must meet.

The chair sends this report to the HLO hdr.commart@enquire.uq.edu.au who will relay it to the candidate with instructions on how to complete the milestone attainment request.