

HDR Milestones Procedures

Section 1 - Purpose and scope

- (1) These Procedures support the application of the HDR Milestone Policy.
- (2) These Procedures apply to HDR Candidates, HDR Supervisors and all UNE Representatives involved with the application of the [HDR Milestones Policy](#).
- (3) Within these Procedures:
- a. Part A provides general milestone information;
 - b. Part B provides information on oral presentation requirements;
 - c. Part C covers extensions to milestone due dates;
 - d. Part D details Milestone Review Panel;
 - e. Part E covers Milestone outcomes; and
 - f. Part F covers Annual Reviews; and
 - g. Part G covers Milestones outcome appeals processes.

Section 2 - Procedures

Part A - General Milestone Information

- (4) The Graduate Research School (GRS) will normally notify candidates of their upcoming milestone thirty (30) days prior via email communication. The GRS will work with the supervisory team to schedule the Milestone Review Panel meeting and will advise all panel members via email of the scheduled date.
- (5) Fifteen (15) working days prior to the meeting, the candidate must submit to the GRS the required documents as stipulated in Table 1 – Milestone Documentation Requirements. Milestone forms and documentation requirements are outlined on the GRS milestone [website](#).

Table 1 – Milestone Documentation Requirements

Written Requirements	Confirmation of Candidature	Mid-Point Review	Thesis Review
A research proposal (confirmation of candidature) including a budget and completion timeline	Yes	No	No
Progress report outlining what has been achieved since prior milestone and a timetable for completing the remaining research and writing,	No	Yes	Yes
Evidence of completion of compulsory Inductions and Training listed in the Research Development Training Guide .	Yes	No	No

Written Requirements	Confirmation of Candidature	Mid-Point Review	Thesis Review
Extract from the thesis. No set word count: seek advice of Principal Supervisor for discipline norms.	Yes – PhD ONLY. Thesis chapter or writing sample – drawn from introductory section of the thesis (e.g. developed literature review or methodology) Creative Practice PhD ONLY – includes a sample of creative work and piece of scholarly writing.	Yes – draft chapter required.	Yes – a draft of at least 75% of the thesis including preliminary pages (abstract, declarations, keywords, table of contents) plus the works cited.
Evidence of review: A: Review of written work by a UNE discipline representative who is not a member of the supervisory team. This will be organised by the GRS. OR B: A referee's report on a journal article based on a thesis chapter, editorial feedback on a book chapter or a sample of creative writing from the thesis, or an email containing feedback on a draft thesis chapter from an academic mentor or member of a disciplinary research network.	Yes: A	Yes: A or B	Yes: A (Thesis preliminary pages and abstract) and B is also encouraged but not mandatory.
Any other requirements the Head of School and/or Head of Discipline deems necessary.	Yes	Yes	Yes

(6) All written/ draft chapters must be submitted to the University's plagiarism checking software prior to submission. The GRS will organise access to the software for both candidates and supervisors. Both the written work and the plagiarism report will be submitted to the panel for review.

(7) The relevant documents will be sent to the discipline representative for review by the GRS.

(8) The discipline representative will normally review the milestone documents within ten (10) business days, and submit a [Discipline Representative Milestone Report](#) to the GRS.

(9) In accordance with the [HDR Milestones Policy](#), a milestone must comprise of an oral presentative at an open forum. The oral presentation requirements may vary from milestone to milestone, and are outlined in the following sections.

Part B - Oral Presentation Requirements

Confirmation of candidature presentation

(10) Candidates must deliver a presentation, followed by a question and answer session, where the audience may ask questions.

(11) The presentation should:

- provide a clear, concise, and logical account of the research project, progress to date, and future research objectives;
- be well-timed, engaging, clearly expressed for a non-specialist peer audience, and delivered with effective communication skills.

(12) Following the presentation, the candidate should be responsive and articulate when responding to questions. The

candidate must:

- a. demonstrate sound research presentation and communication skills;
- b. have the ability to respond to questions from academics outside the advisory team; and
- c. engage in a considered discussion about their research project that:
 - i. explains the topic, rationale, and position in the field;
 - ii. outlines key concepts and theoretical issues, research methods and literature;
 - iii. demonstrates knowledge of relevant project planning including research budget and resourcing; and
 - iv. provides an overview of planned chapters, thesis structure, or innovation portfolio.

Mid-point and Thesis Review Milestone Presentation

(13) Candidates may fulfill their oral presentation requirements by presenting at a conference or seminar, with the details noted during the Milestone Review Panel meeting. The presentation must:

- a. be delivered to an audience beyond the supervisory team, such as a School seminar, Three Minute Thesis, or Research Pathways Postgraduate Conference;
- b. be discussed during the milestone meeting, including a summary of any feedback received from the presentation;
- c. demonstrate the candidate's development in effectively communicating their research to a broader audience beyond their specialist topic field.

(14) The candidate must submit evidence of the presentation (e.g. conference program) and must report on feedback received, and how it informed the development of their project.

(15) If the candidate has not presented between the prior milestone and the current milestone meeting, the candidate must deliver a presentation followed by a question and answer session where the audience may ask questions (see Clause 10).

Part C - Extension to Milestone due date

(16) Candidates may request an extension to the milestone due date by completing a [Milestone Extension Form](#) and submitting it to the GRS (graduate-school@une.edu.au). A maximum extension of sixty (60) business days may be granted. Only one extension may be granted for each milestone.

(17) A request for extension must include the reason for the extension request, and appropriate supporting documentation. Extension reasons may include, but are not limited to, research related delays, or medical reasons. Requests for extension must be endorsed by the Principal Supervisor.

(18) The GRS will seek Head of School (or nominee) approval, and advise the candidate and supervisors of the outcome of the request for extension. Where an extension is approved, the GRS will advise the candidate and supervisor/s of the new milestone due date, and update the relevant systems to reflect the new due date.

(19) Extensions to milestones will not alter future milestone due dates.

Part D - Milestone Review Panel

(20) The following members constitute a Milestone Review Panel (the Panel):

- a. Head of School, HDR Coordinator, or delegate – Chair
- b. Principal Supervisor

- c. Co-supervisors
- d. At least one suitably qualified Discipline Representative of the candidate's disciplinary area, nominated by the Principal Supervisor, or HDR Coordinator. The discipline representative may be internal or external to UNE.
- e. the Panel may co-opt additional expertise, as determined by the Panel.
- f. a GRS representative may be in attendance.

(21) For all milestones, the Panel must review and provide feedback including:

- a. consideration of the discipline representative's report on the candidate's written work;
- b. providing constructive feedback on the candidates written and oral presentation skills (if applicable);
- c. assessing the candidate's ability to respond to questions and feedback;
- d. evaluating the candidate's progress in their field of research;
- e. confirming the candidate is on track to meeting the requirements for their milestone, including:
 - i. Mid-point review – progression of the research project and thesis is mid-way to completion.
 - ii. Thesis review – research and thesis development are on track for submission by the due date.
- f. reviewing the composition, roles and effectiveness of the supervisory team, including the frequency and quality of contact between the candidate and supervisors;
- g. confirming the supervisory team's availability to provide feedback and support at each milestone;
- h. assessing the adequacy of resources and budget for the timely completion of the project;
- i. ensuring the presented timelines are achievable and set clear goals for the next milestone, including identifying any training or professional development needs of the candidate or supervisory team members;
- j. nominating a Chair of Examiners to confirm and finalise thesis examiners (Thesis Review Milestone only).

Discipline Representative Role

(22) The Discipline Representative (DR) must be an academic with knowledge of the discipline/ topic, but not a member of the supervisory team. The DR can be from UNE or external. The HDR Coordinator will appoint the DR. In deciding who to appoint as DR, the HDR Coordinator should consult with the Principal Supervisor.

(23) Where a UNE academic or a DR is not available to provide an independent appraisal of the candidate's progress, the Milestone Panel Chair may assume the role of DR and provide a review report.

(24) A reviewer may also be external to UNE. External reviewers are not normally remunerated or eligible to serve as Chair of the Panel.

(25) Where possible, the same DR will be used for each of the candidate's milestones.

(26) The DR will:

- a. prepare a written report for the consideration of the Panel, addressing:
 - i. quality of the candidate's written submission
 - ii. the significance of the research problem
 - iii. the candidate's engagement with the literature
 - iv. the appropriateness of the research methodology
 - v. ethical clearance, resources, and plans to complete the research.
- b. attend the milestone meeting and oral presentation (if the presentation is required as part of the milestone meeting).

Supervisory Team

(27) Prior to the due date for milestone documentation, the supervisory team must verify:

- a. they have read and provided feedback on the candidate's draft thesis components, where applicable, and documents;
- b. the project is progressing and on track for completion;
- c. the quality of the candidate's writing, research, and analysis meets the standard expected at the stage of candidature, or specify what areas need to be improved.

(28) Prior to Thesis Review milestone, the supervisory team must meet with the candidate and provide feedback on the draft thesis, including preliminary pages and abstract.

(29) The supervisory team may also verify lab work, fieldwork and all data acquisition is at or nearing completion in a suitable timeframe.

Panel Meeting

(30) Candidates may request to have an observer attend the Panel meeting and this may include, but is not limited to, an Indigenous Cultural Advisor.

(31) The Panel Chair will introduce Panel members. The meeting will commence with the candidate's oral presentation (where the candidate is presenting during the meeting).

- a. At the conclusion of the presentation, the Panel Chair will invite questions from the audience.
- b. Once this section of the meeting is concluded, the audience will be asked to leave the meeting.

(32) To allow for confidential discussions, the Panel Chair will facilitate separate discussions with the candidate, and then with the supervisory team. Other Panel members will also be asked to leave the meeting. This will allow the candidate, and the supervisory team, to have confidential discussions with the Panel Chair and GRS team member, and to raise any concerns.

(33) All Panel members will be invited to return to the meeting. The DR and any co-opted expert members will provide their feedback. During this discussion the Panel Chair decides on the milestone outcome.

(34) The candidate is invited to re-enter the meeting. The Panel Chair will verbally advise the candidate of the milestone outcome.

(35) The Chair will complete the Milestone Report form, and immediately submit to GRS.

(36) GRS will note the outcome in relevant University systems and circulate an electronic copy to the candidate, supervisors and Chair within ten (10) business days.

Part E - Milestone Outcomes

(37) The following outcomes are available to the Panel when assessing a candidate's milestone progress:

Outcome	
Passed	Candidate has met all requirements and demonstrated satisfactory academic performance and may continue with candidature
Conditions	Candidate has not yet achieved the milestone. The milestone will only be considered achieved once the candidate fulfills the specified conditions, within the stipulated timeframe.

Outcome	
Redo Milestone	Candidate has not yet achieved the milestone and will need to undertake the milestone again. HDR Milestones Policy Clause 46.c.
Candidature terminated	see below –

Conditions

(38) When a candidate receives a Conditions outcome the following will occur:

- a. The Panel will provide written feedback to the candidate outlining the decision, and the actions the candidate must undertake to achieve a 'Passed' for the milestone.
- b. The candidate will have up to thirty (30) business days (full-time equivalent) to complete the conditions.
- c. Completed conditions must be endorsed by the Principal Supervisor and submitted to the Panel Chair.
- d. The Chair consults Panel members to confirm the candidate has met the requirements of the conditions.
 - i. Candidates are not required to attend a second panel meeting.
- e. The Panel chair informs the GRS of completed conditions within ten (10) business days of confirmation of completion.
- f. If conditions are not completed, or the candidate does not engage with the process, the Panel Chair may recommend a "Milestone Not Achieved" outcome to the GRS ([HDR Milestones Policy](#) Clause 46.d.).

Redo Milestone

(39) When a candidate receives a redo outcome, the Panel chair must provide written instructions regarding actions to be undertaken by the candidate, including:

- a. detailed reasons why the research program is considered unsatisfactory for the milestone;
- b. actions required to meet the milestone requirements and a timeframe for completion, taking into account the candidate's enrolment load (i.e. full time/ part time).

(40) The candidate may have up to sixty (60) business days (Full-time equivalent) to complete the required actions.

(41) The candidate must supply the required information and/ or evidence of completion within the stipulated timeframe to the Panel Chair and Principal Supervisor.

(42) The Chair will reconvene the Milestone Panel to assess if the candidate has met requirements of the milestone.

(43) Where the Milestone Panel determine the candidate has failed to meet the milestone requirements and recommends that the candidate's enrolment be terminated, a written report along with any supporting documentation, must be forwarded to the GRS within ten (10) working days.

Milestone not achieved - Candidature terminated

(44) This outcome cannot be recommended prior to a candidate having an opportunity for redo of the milestone.

(45) The Panel Chair will notify the GRS in writing within ten (10) business days of the recommendation to terminate candidature.

(46) GRS will advise the outcome, in writing, to the candidate, supervisory team, and UNE International (where the candidate is an international student/ Student Visa Holder).

(47) The candidate may submit an appeal in accordance with these Procedures (Clause 53 - to 56) and the [HDR Milestones Policy](#).

(48) Where a candidate does not submit an appeal, the GRS will terminate candidature in University systems, and notify the candidate, supervisor, HDR Coordinator, and UNE International (where the candidate is an international student/ Student Visa Holder).

Part F - Annual Reviews

(49) Candidates who do not have a milestone during a twelve (12) month period must complete an Annual Review. The annual review is not FTE equivalent (12 month review applies to full time and part time candidates). Candidates who have submitted their thesis for examination are not required to complete an Annual Review.

(50) Annual Reviews are to monitor and evaluate the progress of candidates, intended research and future direction, and to promote timely completion.

(51) Prior to completing an Annual review, candidates and Principal Supervisors are encouraged to review progress achieved and consider a progression plan for the next twelve (12) month period.

(52) Annual review does not require a candidate to complete an oral presentation or submit written work for peer review.

Part G - Milestone Outcome Appeals

(53) Candidates must submit an appeal within ten (10) working days of receiving the formal notification of termination of candidature from GRS.

(54) Formal Notification of termination of candidature will include:

- a. completed Milestones Report Form
- b. summary of the reasons for the decision to terminate candidature
- c. further avenues of appeal
- d. information of services providing advice and support.

(55) Candidature will not be terminated until all avenues of appeal have been exhausted.

(56) Where an appeal is unsuccessful, GRS will terminate candidature and notify the candidate, supervisor, HDR Coordinator, and for Student Visa Holder, UNE International

Section 3 - Authority and Compliance

Authority

(57) The Dean Graduate Research School makes these Procedures in accordance with the HDR Milestones Policy.

Compliance

(58) UNE Representatives must observe this policy in relation to HDR milestones management. Matters of non-compliance may be a breach of the Code of Conduct and may be addressed under the disciplinary provisions of the relevant Enterprise Agreement.

(59) These Procedures operate as and from the Effective Date. Previous policies and procedures are replaced and have no further operation from the Effective Date.

(60) Notwithstanding the other provisions of this policy, the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer may approve

an exception to this policy where the VC&CEO determines the application of this policy would otherwise lead to an unfair, unreasonable or absurd outcome. Approvals by the VC&CEO under this clause must:

- a. be documented in writing
- b. must state the reason for the exception; and
- c. be recorded in the University’s Records Management System (RMS).

Section 4 - Quality Assurance

(61)

QA Measure	QA Body and Reporting

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	8th January 2025
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Unit Head	Chris Armstrong Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research
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Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Records Management System (RMS)" - The University of New England installation of TRIM (Content Manager), or equivalent replacement system, under the control of the Records Management Office.