



Australian
National
University

Guidelines for Research Student Milestones

ANU College of Engineering and Computer Science

Contents

Background	1
Requirements for submission of milestones	1
Research Integrity Training	2
First Annual Plan	2
Thesis Proposal Review	2
Annual Plans and Reports	4
Oral Presentations	4
Notification of Intent to Submit	4

Background

All high degree research (HDR) students across the Australian National University (ANU) are required to submit regular reporting milestones. The submission of regular milestone reports helps to ensure that HDR students maintain satisfactory progress towards completing their thesis, and to allow their supervisory panel and relevant academic and administrative staff members to timely and effectively identify the issues that impede their progress such that these issues can be handled appropriately.

The purpose of this document is to describe the general requirements for submission of milestone reports at the ANU's College of Engineering and Computer Science (CECS), in addition to those specified in the [university's guidelines](#). These requirements are intended to provide with CECS HDR students with guidelines for completing their milestone reports in a clear, efficient and professional manner. The HDR Delegated Authority and/or Convener at Research Schools will judge if the requirements specified below are met when assessing a student's milestone reporting.

Requirements for submission of milestones

The calendar for completing HDR milestone reporting is provided in Table 1, while the requirements for each milestone are given in the following subsections. If an HDR student does not complete milestones as required, a suspension of scholarship payments may apply.

Table 1: HDR Milestone Calendar

Milestones	Due
Research Integrity Training	3 months after commencement
First Annual Plan	3 months after commencement
Thesis Proposal Review	PhD students: 12 months after commencement, with the first Annual Plan and Report MPhil students: 9 months after commencement, with the first Annual Plan and Report
Annual Plan and Report	PhD students: 12 months after commencement, then annually MPhil students: 9 months after commencement, then annually
Oral Presentation	3 months before thesis submission
Notification of Intent to Submit	2—3 months before thesis submission

To prepare and submit milestone reports, the student is expected to proactively interact with his/her supervisory panel, or at least the Chair and the Primary Supervisor, to discuss the appropriateness and feasibility of research activities (e.g., progress and plan) and the additional requirements for milestone reports. The final reports submitted to the system need to be agreed by the student and his/her supervisory panel.

Research Integrity Training

Research Integrity Training (RIT) is an HDR training course which must be successfully completed before HDR students can submit any subsequent milestone. This course contains a number of short modules designed to introduce HDR students to issues that are likely to be encountered in the research program. All CECS HDR students are required to undertake RIT as soon as possible and no later than 3 months after commencement. Also, all CECS HDR students are required to pass a Research Integrity Test as evidence of their understanding of relevant materials. If any HDR student fails the Research Integrity Test twice, he/she is required to discuss the contents covered by this course with his/her supervisory panel.

First Annual Plan

In the First Annual Plan, an HDR student is required to outline what research work will be undertaken in the following 12 months. Specifically, the First Annual Plan would consist of:

1. Background and motivation of research;
2. The main research objectives and questions;
3. A brief formative literature review relevant to research questions;
4. Research plans for the following 12 months;
5. References.

The student is recommended to prepare a First Annual Plan document including all the aforementioned items. The First Annual Plan document is expected to be at least one full page. If the student prefers to directly fill out an online form in the system, the same structure and contents are expected. The First Annual Plan would contain sufficient details to allow the student's supervisory panel and the HDR Delegated Authority and/or Convener to assess whether the proposed research work is appropriate and feasible for the HDR program.

Thesis Proposal Review

The Thesis Proposal Review (TPR) is a detailed thesis proposal that describes the student's proposed research for the HDR program. The TPR serves as an excellent opportunity for the student to gain comprehensive feedback from the supervisory panel on the research progress, as well as insightful advice on the appropriateness and feasibility of the research plans. Although different research areas may have distinct requirements, the TPR would at least consist of:

1. Research title: This is a working title that includes keywords of the proposed research and communicates simply what the research is.

2. **Research aim and objectives:** The research aim refers to the potential outcome(s) that the student is trying to achieve if the proposed research is successfully performed. The research objectives are the aim broken down, i.e., the logical steps to achieving the intended outcome.
3. **Analysis of relevant literature:** This provides context for the proposed research through a thorough and systematic literature review. Such review would show the supervisory panel that the student understands what is currently being discussed about the research area and questions and what has already been published. Also, it demonstrates that the student has a strong understanding of the key topics, important studies, and notable research outcomes in the research area and how these have contributed to the current landscape.
4. **Expected research contribution:** This requires a description of how the student's proposed research will benefit and contribute to the current body of knowledge in the area of interest. Since the research proposal is the student's own statement of originality, the expected research contribution would demonstrate both the student's current level of knowledge and how the pursuit of research questions will create a new understanding and generate new information.
5. **Proposed methodology (including proposed fieldwork, if applicable):** This provides an overview of the methodology and techniques that student will use to conduct the proposed research. The student may also highlight why the chosen methodology is the most appropriate way to carry out the proposed research, the potential limitations he/she anticipates facing, feasibility within time and other constraints, ethical considerations and how these will be addressed, and general resources. Please note that the TPR should be completed before undertaking any fieldwork, if applicable.
6. **Work plan:** This indicates the feasibility of completing research within the timeframe and supports the student in achieving research objectives over the program. It might be helpful to offer Year 1 (and possibly Year 2) in detail and the following years in broader terms. Ultimately the student has to show that the proposed research is likely to be both original and finished – and that the student understands the time involved.
7. **Bibliography:** As for any academic piece of writing, it is a must to provide a list of references that have been utilised in the TPR.

The student is required to prepare a TPR document including all the aforementioned items. The recommended length of the TPR document is 5 to 10 pages, while a longer document is also acceptable if it is required by the student's supervisory panel. All members of the student's supervisory panel are expected to attend the TPR review and/or presentation. The TPR would be a comprehensive document to allow the student's supervisory panel and the HDR Delegated Authority and/or Convener to assess whether the student has a deep and well-rounded understanding of the research of interest, as well as a clearly organised and well-thought-out plan for completion.

Annual Plans and Reports

All HDR students are required to submit Annual Plan and Report each year. This milestone reporting is broadly categorised into two streams: Annual Report and Annual Plan, which would consist of:

1. Research activities and achievements during the past 12 months;
2. Research plans for the following 12 months or before thesis submission (depending on which is earlier);
3. References, if applicable;
4. Evidence of research achievements, if applicable, e.g., scholar publications, oral/poster presentations, and supportive educational/training materials.

In addition to the aforementioned items, in this milestone reporting the student can flag any personal, academic, or technical issues which may impact the student's completion timeline in the system.

The student is recommended to prepare an Annual Plan and Report document including all the aforementioned items. The Annual Plan and Report document is expected to be at least one full page. If the student prefers to directly fill out an online form in the system, the same structure and contents are expected. The Annual Plan and Report would contain sufficient details to allow the student's supervisory panel and the HDR Delegated Authority and/or Convener to assess whether the achieved research progress is satisfactory, and the proposed research plan is appropriate and feasible for the HDR program.

Oral Presentation

The Oral Presentation is expected to cover the major objectives, content, results, and conclusions of the student's entire research work during the HDR program. The presentation format will allow one hour for presenting research, plus question time. Also, the presentation will be advertised within the University and the student's supervisory panel will attend to make an evaluation. In reporting this milestone, the student is required to submit:

1. Oral presentation slides;
2. A brief report (1-2 pages) including the date and venue of presentation, brief summary of contents of presentation, and brief summary of Question and Answer session.

Notification of Intent to Submit

The Notification of Intent to Submit milestone allows the student to:

- update the thesis title, abstract and intended date of submission
- upload a table of contents for the thesis
- apply for a change of thesis format
- suggest examiners who should or should not examine the thesis, and

- request that access to the thesis is restricted.

Before completing this milestone, the student must talk to his/her Primary Supervisor and discuss the planned thesis submission date, thesis title, abstract, thesis format, confidential material and Thesis Access Restriction.

For any questions, please contact the CECS HDR admin team (research.cecs@anu.edu.au).