

GRADUATE RESEARCH PROGRESS MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE

SCOPE

This procedure applies to all Monash University graduate research courses.

For the purpose of this procedure:

- references to 'the University' include activities of Monash University Australia, Monash University Malaysia, Monash University Indonesia, Monash Suzhou and the Monash Suzhou Research Institute, unless indicated otherwise; and
- references to 'graduate research students' and 'students' have the same meaning unless specified otherwise.

This procedure does not cover:

- Cancellation of enrolment due to a student not meeting their obligations under Part 5 of the Monash University [\(Vice-Chancellor\) Regulations](#).
- Penalties as the result of investigation of student misconduct offences under Part 7 of the Monash University [\(Council\) Regulations](#).

For students at Monash University Indonesia, this procedure has been translated into the Indonesian language (Bahasa) and can be accessed on the University's [Policy Bank](#).

PROCEDURE STATEMENT

The University supports graduate research students to progress towards completion, through both formal and informal measures. Milestones are a fundamental component of progress management, designed as an opportunity for students to receive structured feedback on their research program to strengthen their overall project, improving their contribution to the discipline.

This procedure outlines the University's arrangements for managing a student's progress throughout their course.

1. Milestone Framework

- 1.1 The Milestone Framework plays an important role in a student's research training. It is designed to:
 - support and facilitate a student's progress towards their thesis submission;
 - provide an opportunity for students to receive structured feedback on progress across their candidature; and
 - provide an opportunity for students to raise any issues that are affecting progress.
- 1.2 The Milestone Framework comprises three formal milestones: Confirmation, Progress Review, and Final Review.
 - 1.2.1 For doctoral courses, each of the three milestones must be completed.
 - 1.2.2 For research master's courses, Confirmation and Progress Review must be completed. There is no Final Review.
- 1.3 It is strongly recommended that the milestone review events be conducted as close as possible to the milestone due date to ensure timely support and appropriate guidance is provided to the student.
- 1.4 Milestones must be undertaken by the due date recorded in the student management system and in accordance with this procedure. Timely and satisfactory completion of each milestone is a condition of continuing enrolment.
- 1.5 Students enrolled in joint award courses may be subject to additional milestone requirements as required by the specific course.
- 1.6 A Milestone Review Panel (MRP) will be convened to review students' progress, in accordance with section 3 of this procedure.
- 1.7 Faculties may introduce additional informal milestones. Informal milestones are not course requirements and cannot give rise to the termination process under this procedure. These are overseen by the relevant Faculty Graduate Research Committee and published on the University website.

Milestone requirements

- 1.8 For each milestone, students are required to present written work, undertake an oral presentation at a forum open to the public, typically at a departmental seminar or equivalent as determined by the faculty, and undertake an interview with the MRP.

- 1.8.1 Each faculty must ensure that its students are aware of the requirements of each milestone (e.g. timing, format, expectations of scope and quality, and amount of work to be presented).
- 1.9 Detailed requirements for written work and oral presentations are faculty-specific and published on the University website, along with any additional faculty-specific milestone requirements.
- 1.10 Supervisors are expected to and must be given the opportunity to provide input and contribute to a MRP decision but do not have a voting right in the milestone outcome. Where appropriate, supervisors should contribute to discussions on the student's progress and the future phases of the research project in the presence of the student.
- 1.11 In certain circumstances, the student may be able to meet the requirements of the oral component of the milestone through a presentation at an alternative forum such as a conference (including faculty-led conferences) or colloquia. Such alternatives must be approved in advance by the Panel Chair and at least one member of the MRP must attend the student's presentation.

Milestone due dates

- 1.12 The due date of a milestone is determined by a student's commencement date and the course they are enrolled in. Timeframes are expressed for Equivalent Full-time (EFT) enrolment and are proportionately adjusted for part-time enrolment.
- 1.12.1 For doctoral students, initial milestone due dates are scheduled at 12 months, 24 months and 36 months from their commencement date.
- 1.12.2 For research master's students, initial milestone due dates are scheduled at 8 months and 16 months from their commencement date.
- 1.12.3 Initial scheduled milestone due dates will be adjusted by any subsequently-approved enrolment variations, such as a period of leave of absence and full-time/part-time conversion.
- 1.13 Students will be reminded of each milestone due date twice via email, three months and one month prior to the due date.
- 1.14 Where there are circumstances beyond the student's control, students may discuss flexibility in the timing of their milestone review event with their supervisors and Academic Unit graduate research office.
- 1.14.1 Milestone review events must be held within two months EFT of the relevant milestone due date.
- 1.14.2 Such arrangements will not affect the due date of future milestones or the thesis submission date.
- 1.14.3 In considering requests from students, supervisors and the relevant Academic Unit graduate research office should assess the overall situation and determine whether there are other more suitable measures to assist the student, for example, where there are compassionate circumstances, recommending a period of leave of absence may be more appropriate.
- 1.14.4 Jurisdictional differences impacting course structure, length and administration should be taken into account when considering requests from students enrolled in joint award courses with international partners.
- 1.14.5 The relevant Academic Unit graduate research office must note any scheduling change in the student management system.
- 1.15 Failure to undertake a milestone within two months EFT following its due date may result in the University proceeding to terminate a student's enrolment in accordance with clause 6.1 of this procedure.

2. Managing progress outside the Milestone Framework

Supervisor intervention

- 2.1 Pursuant to the [Graduate Research Student Supervision Procedure](#), it is expected that supervisors intervene to support students who are at risk of not making satisfactory progress in their research. Intervention requires supervisors to identify, contact and provide assistance to students who are considered at risk.
- 2.2 Interventions may occur outside the scope of the Milestone Framework process and are undertaken on a case by case basis.
- 2.3 Interventions may include, but are not limited to:
- encouraging the student to seek support from University services, including counselling;
 - directing students to Monash English language support services;
 - advice regarding taking a period of leave;
 - discussing amendments to the research project if and where there are issues concerning the viability of the research project;
 - recommending a conversion from full-time to part-time enrolment (where permitted and subject to visa conditions);
 - advice regarding withdrawal from the course and applying for re-admission at some later point; and/or
 - advice regarding considering applying to transfer to a research masters course where considered appropriate.
- 2.4 Upon advice from the main supervisor that intervention has proven unsuccessful and a student's progress may be unsatisfactory, the

Head of Academic Unit (or nominee) must convene and chair an Academic Progress Review Panel (APRP) to review the student's progress.

Notice of Unsatisfactory Progress: Convening Academic Progress Review Panel

- 2.5 The student must be issued with a Notice of Unsatisfactory Progress notifying them that an APRP is to be convened to review their progress. The Notice of Unsatisfactory Progress must include:
 - 2.5.1 detailed reasons why the student's progress in the research course is considered unsatisfactory;
 - 2.5.2 the date, time and location of the initial meeting of the APRP;
 - 2.5.3 the composition of the panel members;
 - 2.5.4 advice that at this and any future meeting of the APRP, the student may be accompanied and assisted by a support person as long as they are not legally qualified;
 - 2.5.5 support services available to the student; and
 - 2.5.6 what to expect at the APRP meeting.

3. Panel Composition - Milestone Review & Academic Progress Review Panels

- 3.1 The following requirements in this section apply to the convening of both MRP and APRP.
- 3.2 The Head of Academic Unit (or nominee) is to convene and chair a panel to review a student's progress against the requirements of a milestone, or to review a student's progress following advice from the main supervisor that the student may be at risk of unsatisfactory progress and their intervention under section 2 has proven unsuccessful. All panel members must be appropriately qualified, be independent from the student's research and not have a conflict of interest with the student or supervisory team.
 - 3.2.1 Where nominated, the Panel Chair must be an academic staff member with an appropriate level of experience and from the student's enrolling faculty.
- 3.3 In addition to the Panel Chair, each panel must comprise at least two panel members, where:
 - 3.3.1 at least one member is a University academic staff member; and
 - 3.3.2 at least one member is conversant with the student's general area of research.
- 3.4 Panel composition may be augmented and must consider appropriate technical expertise and the University's diversity and inclusion principles in determining panel composition. Additional provisions include:
 - 3.4.1 No panel member, including the Panel Chair, should be (or have been) directly involved with the student's specific project, for example, as a current or former supervisor; and
 - 3.4.2 No panel member can be a currently enrolled graduate research student.

4. Panel Review and Outcomes

Milestone Review Panel (MRP)

- 4.1 In undertaking its review, the MRP is required to consider all evidence provided, including oral, written and supporting documentation provided by the student and supervisors.
- 4.2 After each milestone review event, the MRP must make a decision on whether the student has met the requirements of the milestone and seek to formally notify the student within five working days of the event.
- 4.3 Where the MRP is unable to make its decision on the day of the milestone review event, it must ensure that it communicates to the student both verbally and in writing the estimated date when a decision is likely.

MRP Outcome: Satisfactory Progress

- 4.4 Where the MRP determines that the student has met the milestone requirements (the student's progress is determined to be satisfactory) the student management system is to be updated by the academic unit or faculty.
- 4.5 If the MRP determines that the student has met the milestone requirements but must make minor amendments before the subsequent milestone, written feedback must be provided to the student clearly outlining the required amendments and required date of submission.
- 4.6 The MRP may recommend that a research master's student apply for transfer to the Monash doctoral program where the student demonstrates exceptional progress and their project has sufficient depth and breadth to meet the requirements of a doctorate. Refer to section 3 of the [Graduate Research Admissions Procedure](#) for further information.

- 4.7 Students who transfer into the doctoral program at their research master's Confirmation may be required to meet the doctoral program Confirmation milestone by 12 months EFT from the date they commenced their research master's degree.

MRP Outcome: Notice of Unsatisfactory Progress

- 4.8 Where the MRP determines that the student has not yet met the milestone requirements and significant work is required to demonstrate satisfactory progress, the Panel Chair must formally advise the student of its decision via issuance of a Notice of Unsatisfactory Progress.
- 4.9 The Notice of Unsatisfactory Progress must outline the MRP outcome and include:
- 4.9.1 detailed reasons for why the student's progress is considered unsatisfactory;
 - 4.9.2 the tasks required to meet the milestone requirements and demonstrate satisfactory progress;
 - 4.9.3 the required timeframe for completing such tasks, taking into account the student's mode of enrolment (i.e. full-time or part-time);
 - 4.9.4 the date and time for a reconvened MRP;
 - 4.9.5 the student's entitlement to be accompanied and assisted, but not represented, by a support person as long as they are not legally qualified;
 - 4.9.6 the support services available to the student; and
 - 4.9.7 any applicable University regulations, policies and procedures.

Academic Progress Review Panel (APRP)

- 4.10 In undertaking its review, the APRP is required to consider all evidence provided, including oral, written and supporting documentation provided by the student and supervisors.
- 4.11 Following the APRP meeting, the APRP must provide to the student written notice setting out the following information within five working days of the meeting:
- the tasks required to be completed in order to meet progress requirements;
 - the agreed timeframe in which the student must complete the tasks; and
 - the date, time and place that the APRP will reconvene for a second meeting to review and discuss the student's progress.

5. Reconvened Panel Review and Outcomes

- 5.1 The MRP or APRP must reconvene to review whether the student has satisfactorily completed the specified tasks set out in the MRP Notice of Unsatisfactory Progress or the APRP written notice following the convening of the APRP.
- 5.2 Students are strongly encouraged to attend a Reconvened Panel meeting.
- 5.3 Where a MRP is reconvened, the Chair may augment the panel membership with the addition of an experienced senior academic (such as the Graduate Research Coordinator (or equivalent)) from the student's Academic Unit.
- 5.4 Reconvened Panel outcomes are as follows:
- 5.4.1 **Satisfactory Progress** - the student has satisfactorily completed the tasks previously specified by the MRP (in the Notice of Unsatisfactory Progress) or APRP (in the written notice following the first meeting) and since demonstrated satisfactory progress. If the Reconvened Panel determines that the student has met the requirements but must make minor amendments before the subsequent milestone, written feedback must be provided to the student clearly outlining the required amendments.
 - 5.4.2 **Unsatisfactory Progress and Recommend Termination of Enrolment** - the student fails to satisfactorily complete the tasks previously specified by the MRP (in the Notice of Unsatisfactory Progress) or APRP (in the written notice following the first meeting) and their enrolment should be terminated for unsatisfactory progress.
- 5.5 Where a Reconvened Panel makes a determination of satisfactory progress, the student will receive a written notification following the Reconvened Panel meeting.
- 5.6 Where a Reconvened Panel makes a determination of unsatisfactory progress and recommends termination of enrolment, the Panel Chair must forward the following documentation to the delegate of the Graduate Research Committee (GRC):
- 5.6.1 For MRP, the Milestone Report Form and the Milestone Report Form (Reconvened Panel), along with any other relevant supporting documentation;
 - 5.6.2 For APRP, the Academic Progress Review Panel Report Form, setting out a review of the student's progress against the progress requirements and reasons for the outcome, along with any other relevant supporting documentation.

6. Termination for Unsatisfactory Progress

- 6.1 Upon receipt of documentations under clause 5.6 or in the event where a student failed to undertake a milestone within two months EFT following its due date, the delegate of the GRC should ensure a Notice of Intention to Terminate Enrolment is issued to the student and provide the student with an opportunity to provide a written response and any supporting documentation prior to a decision being made.
 - 6.1.1 The Notice of Intention to Terminate Enrolment must at a minimum outline the decision, the date by which any written response (and any supporting documentation) must be submitted, and the support services available to the student.
 - 6.1.2 Any written response from a student must be provided within the specified date by completing the Written Statement Form, and additional supporting documents may be submitted along with the form.
- 6.2 Upon receipt of a Notice of Intention to Terminate Enrolment and before receiving a Notice of Decision, students cannot undertake any further research activity.
 - 6.2.1 Students must continue to check their Monash email account regularly for any correspondence from the University and maintain contact with their supervisor where appropriate.
- 6.3 At the conclusion of the written response period specified in the Notice of Intention to Termination Enrolment, the delegate of GRC must undertake an independent investigation, which at a minimum should:
 - 6.3.1 review and consider all Milestone Reports relevant to the student's enrolment;
 - 6.3.2 identify whether there were any progress concerns raised and whether appropriate intervention strategies have been implemented;
 - 6.3.3 review and consider any written response including supporting documentation provided by the student; and
 - 6.3.4 consult with Faculty Associate Dean Graduate Research/Graduate Research Coordinator (or equivalent) and supervisors where applicable.
- 6.4 The investigation must be conducted confidentially and should be concluded within 10 working days. If there are circumstances that prevent the investigation concluding within the required timeframe, the student should be advised of the delay and an estimated date of conclusion.
- 6.5 When the investigation concludes, the delegate of GRC must make a decision by selecting one of the following available outcomes:
 - 6.5.1 **Conditional Enrolment:** the student is permitted to continue their enrolment subject to meeting specific conditions set by the delegate of GRC in a Notice of Decision.
 - 6.5.2 **Recommending a transfer to Research Masters:** the student is recommended to apply for transfer into a research master's course, subject to the student satisfactorily meeting admission requirements for the relevant research master's course and there being sufficient University resources, including supervision and facilities to support such transfer.
 - 6.5.3 **Termination of Enrolment for Unsatisfactory Progress (or Inability to Progress):** the student's enrolment is to be terminated.
- 6.6 In making a termination decision, the delegate of GRC must be satisfied that:
 - 6.6.1 all relevant mitigating factors have been appropriately considered;
 - 6.6.2 the student has been afforded appropriate support, resources, access to facilities and guidance necessary for them to successfully undertake the research project;
 - 6.6.3 progress is unable to be made through appropriate modification of the project; and
 - 6.6.4 termination of enrolment is the most appropriate course of action.
- 6.7 Once a decision is made under clause 6.5, the student will receive a Notice of Decision. At a minimum the Notice of Decision must include:
 - 6.7.1 the decision and reasons for the decision;
 - 6.7.2 information on relevant support services available to the student; and
 - 6.7.3 any applicable conditions, including the associated timeframe to meet such conditions, and the consequence for failure to meet the conditions within specified timeframe.
- 6.8 For a decision to terminate enrolment under clause 6.5, the Notice of Decision to Terminate Enrolment must also include:
 - 6.8.1 the student's right to appeal the decision to terminate enrolment, the available grounds for an appeal, and information about how to make an appeal, including the timeframe for lodging an appeal;

- 6.8.2 information on relevant support services available to the student, including the advocacy support available from Monash Graduate Association; and
- 6.8.3 the enrolment status of the student following issuance of the Notice of the Decision to Terminate Enrolment.
- 6.9 In the event where the delegate of GRC is or has been involved in the student's supervision and/or there is a conflict of interest, the role should be undertaken by an alternate academic representative of the GRC.

7. Status of the student following Notice of Decision to Terminate Enrolment

- 7.1 Access to University facilities such as email and computers will be maintained to assist with the student's preparation for the appeal. Students are expected to continue to check their Monash email account regularly for any correspondence from the University and maintain contact with their supervisor where appropriate. Students cannot undertake any further research activity, or apply to withdraw from their course of study.
- 7.2 The student's enrolment will be maintained until either:
 - 7.2.1 The specified timeframe for lodging an appeal has expired and no appeal has been received, in which case the student's enrolment in the course will be terminated from the date on which the appeal period expires; or
 - 7.2.2 If an appeal is lodged, until the appeal has been determined. If the appeal is dismissed, the student's enrolment will be terminated from the date on which the appeal is dismissed.
- 7.3 Students will be advised of the termination and its effective date in writing to their Monash email account.

8. Appeals against a decision to terminate or cancel enrolment

- 8.1 Students have 20 working days from the deemed delivery date of the Notice of Decision to Terminate Enrolment or Notice of Decision to Cancel Enrolment to lodge an appeal against the decision to terminate or cancel their enrolment.
- 8.2 An appeal must be submitted in the prescribed format and to the dedicated email address as specified in the Notice of Decision to Terminate Enrolment or Notice of Decision to Cancel Enrolment. A student's right of appeal is limited to one or both of the following grounds:
 - 8.2.1 *New Evidence* – that was not reasonably available to the student at the time of the decision to terminate or cancel enrolment and which has the potential to alter the outcome of the student's case. Documentation (medical certificates, statutory declarations) or advice about when the documentation will be available must be provided by the student and attached to the Lodgement of Appeal form. All documentation must be in the English language or be a certified translation.
 - 8.2.2 *Procedural Irregularity* – a breach of the rules of procedural fairness (natural justice) or deviation from the requirements of Part 6 of the Monash University (Academic Board) Regulations or related procedures, with the potential to alter the outcome of the student's case.
- 8.3 The University's process for assessing an appeal against a decision to terminate enrolment is set out in Reg 55 to 60 of the [Monash University \(Academic Board\) Regulations](#).

9. Effects of termination

- 9.1 A student whose enrolment has been terminated under this procedure is ineligible for future admission to a Monash University graduate research course.
- 9.2 A student cannot apply to withdraw once they have been issued with a Notice of Decision to Terminate Enrolment.

DEFINITIONS

Academic Unit	As defined by the Monash University (Academic Board) Regulations, includes a sub-faculty, school, department, centre, institute or other unit into which a faculty is divided; or a school, department, centre or institute established as a separate entity from a faculty. Typically, is the organisational unit in which the student is enrolled.
Deemed delivery date	The date a notice is treated as having been delivered to the student after applying the delivery times set out in Regulation 60 of the Monash University (Academic Board) Regulations. This anticipates a student updating changes to their postal address recorded on the student information system, and regularly checking their Monash student email and postal mail. Any failure by the student to check their email and postal mail does not alter the deemed delivery date.
Student	A person who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) is admitted to a course of study at the University; b) is enrolled at the University in a non-award study or one or more units of study on an assessed or

	<p>non-assessed basis and without admission to a course of study;</p> <p>c) is pursuing a course of study or unit of study at the University through an exchange or study program or other arrangement between the University and another educational institution;</p> <p>d) is engaged in a student mobility program involving the University, whether or not the program is credited towards a course of study or unit of study;</p> <p>e) has completed a course of study but on or to whom the relevant degree or award has not been conferred or awarded;</p> <p>f) has deferred, or has intermitted, or has been suspended from, a course of study;</p> <p>g) is enrolled in a course of study or one or more units of study offered by the University through another educational institution; or</p> <p>h) has consented in writing to be bound as a student by the University statute and University regulations.</p> <p>The following terms are used to identify groups of students that are subject to different requirements (as defined below):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • domestic student; • international student; and • international student subject to Education and Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) requirements.
Unsatisfactory progress	When a student does not successfully achieve a milestone or is determined to have not satisfactorily progressed in their study program outside the Milestone Framework, and which may result in termination of enrolment.

GOVERNANCE

Parent policy	Graduate Research Candidature Management Policy
Supporting procedures	Graduate Research Internship Procedure Graduate Research Thesis Examination Procedure
Supporting schedules	N/A
Associated procedures	Graduate Research Admissions Procedure Graduate Research Student Supervision Procedure
Related legislation	Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (Cth) (ESOS) Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (Cth) Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Cth) Ombudsman Act 1973 (Vic) Ombudsman Act 1976 (Cth) National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (Cth) (National Code) Public Records Act 1973 (Vic)
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