

## **MILESTONES IN A TYPICAL RESEARCH DEGREE**

### **Reporting and Monitoring**

#### **Programme Length**

The PhD programme is 3 years in length based on our expectations of what an average student can be expected to achieve and on the period of time provided for by funding bodies.

An MSc by Research programme (formerly known as MPhil) is 12-15 months long.

#### **Work Plan**

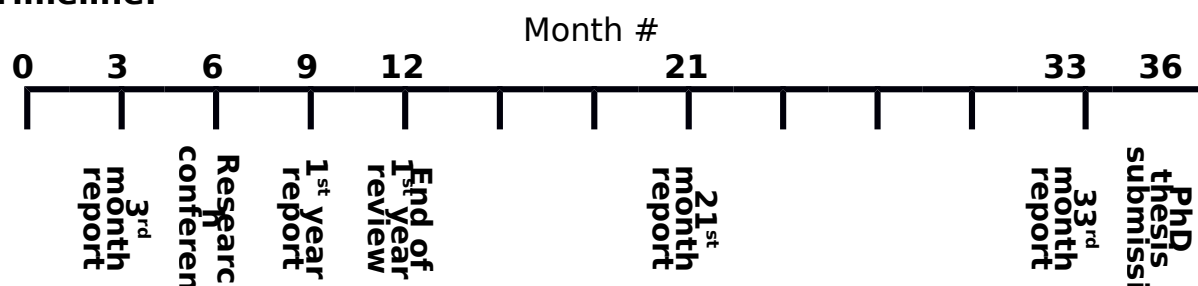
The initial work plan will be provided by the supervisor but by the end of the first year you should be able to plan your own work.

If the programme of work has parts that depend on external inputs such as field trials or data from industrial sources then fall-back work plans should be arranged to allow completion within the above time scales.

#### **PhD Programme**

- Short 3<sup>rd</sup> month progress report
- A 15 minute long EECE research conference presentation in 6<sup>th</sup> month (approx.)
- Comprehensive 1<sup>st</sup> year progress review; Substantial; report submitted at 9<sup>th</sup> month
- Short 21<sup>st</sup> month progress report
- Short 33<sup>rd</sup> month report
- PhD thesis submission at 36<sup>th</sup> month
- Further reports at 36 month and beyond if the PhD overruns

#### **Timeline:**



#### **Three Month Report**

- It must demonstrate that the student has started working on their PhD meaningfully. It must therefore at least address the following questions:
  - What is the PhD topic about?

- What is the state-of-the-art in the literature and how is the PhD likely to advance this?
- What are the research methods to be adopted?
- What is the plan of work until the 9th month stage?
- The report should be no more than 5 pages long (A4, at least 11pt font), including figures, plus appendices covering:
  - Diagrammatic workplan
- Ethics review
- Risk assessment - forms can be found at [http://www.eee.bham.ac.uk/techsupp/risk\\_declaration.doc](http://www.eee.bham.ac.uk/techsupp/risk_declaration.doc)
- Development needs analysis - information about completion can be found at <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/studentservices/graduateschool/skills/dna.aspx>
- A short web page - a copy to be included with your report and launched on your research group website. Instructions for producing a web can be found at the following address:- <http://postgrad.eee.bham.ac.uk/info/>
- Presentation slides for 3 month progress review meeting

### **Internal research conference presentation**

- An EECE PhD research conference will be held over a two-day period in weeks 9-10 of the Spring term in each year. All 1<sup>st</sup> year PhD students will present a 15 minute talk that:
  - o Introduces the PhD
  - o Presents the work done to date
  - o Summarises the plan of work
- The supervisor(s), independent assessor and a panel consisting of at least one academic from each of the EECE School research groups will field questions in order to satisfy themselves that progress is satisfactory in all respects. The panel will provide critical constructive feedback to the students, which shall serve as early warning on issues that would result in progression problems at the 1<sup>st</sup> year review and will raise any concerns with the EECE School Postgraduate Progress Panel
- The supervisor(s) of students whose start date does not fall during the preceding Autumn term should organise a stand-alone seminar towards the end of their 6<sup>th</sup> month of study and invite the independent assessor(s) and at least one independent members of their respective research group to attend. Any concerns should be similarly raised with the EECE School Postgraduate Progress Panel.

### **Nine Month Report for 1<sup>st</sup> year review**

- It must define a clear direction for the PhD research (e.g. research question, aims and objectives, methodology, work carried out, future workplan, publication plan, etc.) and demonstrate tangible progress towards producing original contributions

- The style and format to be used is that of an IEEE Transactions paper<sup>1</sup> (up to a maximum of 8 double column pages), plus an updated version of the appendices in the 3rd month report
- Presentation slides for 12 month progress review meeting
- Updated Risk assessment: [http://www.eee.bham.ac.uk/techsupp/risk\\_declaration.doc](http://www.eee.bham.ac.uk/techsupp/risk_declaration.doc)
- Updated Web Page: <http://postgrad.eee.bham.ac.uk/info/>
- Revised Development Needs document: <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/studentservices/graduateschool/skills/dna.aspx>

### **Twenty One Month Report**

- The length of this report should be no more than 5 pages (A4, at least 11pt font), including figures, plus appendices
- The report should include:
  - o A clear statement of the originality of the research
  - o An update on progress since the 9th month report
  - o A revised workplan
  - o A review of publications submitted and future plans to publish
  - o Updated appendices from 9th month report
  - o A new appendix on future career plans
- Presentation slides for progress review meeting

### **Thirty Three Month Report**

- The length of the report should be no more than 3 pages (A4, at least 11pt font), plus appendix and must include:
  - o A clear statement of final original contributions
  - o A detailed workplan up to and including submission date
  - o Final publication plans
  - o Thesis plan, including a list of chapters and sections
  - o Viva preparation plans
- Intention to submit form as an appendix

### **Reports from 36 month onwards**

- A single side of A4 (at least 11 pt font) must be submitted every six months starting at the end of the 36th month to:
  - o Summarise technical progress since the previous report
  - o Provide an update on the thesis submission plan
  - o Provide an update on planned or actual publications

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[http://www.ieee.org/publications\\_standards/publications/authors/author\\_templates.html](http://www.ieee.org/publications_standards/publications/authors/author_templates.html)

After the submission of each report, the following review process will be undertaken.

**A. 3<sup>rd</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 33<sup>rd</sup> month reports:**

- The report will be assessed by the supervisor(s) and independent assessor within 2 weeks of the date of submission, unless otherwise agreed with the Head of Postgraduate Research Studies
- A meeting will be held between the PhD student, supervisor(s) and independent assessor within 4 weeks of the date of submission, unless otherwise agreed with the Head of Postgraduate Research Studies
- If the rate of progress is deemed to be satisfactory and the quality of the work is up to the expected standard, then the PhD student proceeds to the next milestone
- If not, the PhD student is referred to the EECE School Postgraduate Progress Panel to agree on a remedial action plan before deciding whether to recommend that either the student proceeds or withdraws. The panel shall include the primary supervisor and independent assessor as well as at least three other independent academic staff as members

**B. 9<sup>th</sup> month report:**

- The report will be assessed by the supervisor(s) and independent assessor within 4 weeks of the date of submission, unless otherwise agreed with the Head of Postgraduate Research Studies.
- A meeting will be held between the PhD student, supervisor(s) and independent assessor as soon as possible thereafter, unless otherwise agreed with the Head of Postgraduate Research Studies.
- If the rate of progress is deemed to be satisfactory and the quality of the work is up to the expected standard, then the PhD student proceeds to the next milestone; this decision will be reached before the end of the first year of full-time registration
- If not, the student is referred to the EECE School Postgraduate Progress Panel no later than 6 weeks after the date of submission (see separate guidelines for the preparation expected for the panel hearing); the panel will arrive at one of three recommendations:
  - o Withdraw
  - o Transfer to MSc by research and produce a revised workplan to submission
  - o The student will perform an additional set of agreed tasks, report back to the panel, which will review this submission and reach a decision to recommend that the PhD student, proceeds to PhD, transfers to MSc by research, or withdraws; this decision will be reached before the end of the first year of full-time registration

**C. Reports at the 36<sup>th</sup> month and beyond:**

- The reports will be assessed by the supervisor(s), independent assessor and the EECE School Postgraduate Progress Panel, assessor within 4

weeks of the date of submission, unless otherwise agreed with the Head of Postgraduate Research Studies

- Feedback will be given to the PhD student on whether progress is satisfactory or not
- If progress is deemed to be unsatisfactory, the EECE School Postgraduate Progress Panel will convene a meeting with the PhD student, their supervisor(s) and their independent assessor to arrive at one of three recommendations:
  - o Withdraw
  - o Proceed to completion

### **Progress Report Timetable**

The reports must be submitted on time to the Postgraduate Office. Comments on them by your supervisor and at least one other staff member will be discussed with you by your supervisor. These reports are taken seriously and are mandatory. The reports should be in a style comprehensible to a well-informed engineer, which is not a specialist in the topic of your work. Poor English (with reasonable allowances made if it is not your first language), lack of clarity, verbosity and imprecision are a nuisance and regarded as serious failings. Regard the reports as valuable practice in clear technical writing for non-experts: they are, and they are also good occasions for collecting your thoughts and reflecting on how your work is going and what comes next.

**Failure to submit on time will be regarded as evidence of poor progress**