WHAT HAPPENS IF MILESTONES ARE DELAYED

by Simon Moss

# Extensions to confirmation of candidature

Occasionally, candidates may be unable to submit, or to present, their research proposal on time. That is, candidates may not be able to complete their confirmation of candidature before the due date. In some circumstances, if they complete [this form](https://www.cdu.edu.au/files/2020-07/HDR50%20-%20Milestone%20Extension%20Request%20Form.doc), candidates may be able to arrange an extension. In the following table

* the first column outlines the justifications the research office may accept
* the second column stipulates the maximum number of weeks the research office can extend the deadline in response to each justification
* if candidates include two or more justifications, the weeks allotted to each justification can be summed—but the maximum extension is 3 months
* other compelling or compassionate circumstances will be considered as well

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Justification | Maximum number of weeks |
| The candidate had shifted the topic or approach because the interests of this person had changed | 4 |
| The candidate had shifted the topic or approach because of unforeseen impediments to the original plan | 8 |
| The candidate could not dedicate enough time to the research proposal, because of events this person could not have prevented or foreseen, such as illness | * up to 4 weeks if unsubstantiated; * up to 12 weeks if substantiated |
| The candidate has already completed a rigorous approach, such as a systematic review, scoping review, rapid review, meta-interpretation, or meta-ethnography, to improve their research proposal | 8 |
| The research is not empirical—and, thus, is primarily an extension of the research proposal—common in philosophy, literature, and similar fields | 8 |
| One of the main supervisors had delayed progress. For example, the principal supervisor was on leave and could not correct a draft within a week or two. | 6 |

Candidates will receive reminders of due dates

* 1 month before the confirmation of candidature is due
* 1 month after the confirmation of candidature is due

If, even after extensions are granted, candidates do not complete the confirmation of candidature within three months of the due date, they will receive a show cause letter. In response to this show cause letter, candidates will need to argue why they should not be withdrawn from the course. The possible outcomes are that

* candidates may be granted a maximum of one month extension
* candidates may be invited to seek a leave of absence if, for example, they cannot dedicate enough time to their research because of illness or other impediments
* the candidature, stipend, or both may be terminated

# **Project plans to demonstrate progress**

Occasionally, you will need to develop a project plan—a plan of the goals you want to achieve, the activities you want to implement, and the skills you want to develop over the next three to six months. In some instances, you might choose to develop a project plan to motivate yourself and to communicate your goals and activities to your supervisors. In other instances, supervisors or deans might instruct you to develop a project plan because they feel you could progress more rapidly. This document is designed to help you construct these plans.

**Sample Plan**

Here is a sample plan. As this sample demonstrates, your plan should indicate

* The main goals you would like to achieve in the designated time—such as three months or six months
* The activities you plan to complete to achieve these goals—including the knowledge or skills you plan to acquire.
* The dates during which you plan to initiate and complete these activities.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Goal or activity | Start date | End date | Tick the plans you fulfill |
| **Goal 1: Write preliminary methodology and methods section for Study 1** | 2 Feb 2019 | 2 April 2019 |  |
| Consult supervisors and other academics or specialists on which sources to read | 2 Feb 2019 | 5 Feb 2019 |  |
| Read textbook information about methodology and methods | 6 Feb 2019 | 20 Feb 2019 |  |
| Consult supervisors after reading methodology and methods | 21 Feb 2019 | 22 Feb 2019 |  |
| Read papers that have utilized similar methodologies and methods | 23 Feb 2019 | 5 Mar 2019 |  |
| Transcribe notes on the key details to include | 6 Mar 2019 | 10 Mar 2019 |  |
| Order these details to construct a preliminary plan | 11 Mar 2019 | 12 Mar 2019 |  |
| Seek feedback on the preliminary plan | 13 Mar 2019 | 14 Mar 2019 |  |
| Update preliminary plan | 15 Mar 2019 | 16 Mar 2019 |  |
| Write first draft | 17 Mar 2019 | 20 Mar 2019 |  |
| Read articles on how to optimize writing | 21 Mar 2019 | 25 Mar 2019 |  |
| Apply these insights to refine the first draft | 26 Mar 2019 | 1 April 2019 |  |
| **Goal 2: Complete ethics application** | 2 April 2019 | 2 May 2019 |  |
| Consult supervisors to identify key ethical issues to consider, such as implicit coercion | 3 April 2019 | 4 April 2019 |  |
| Consult with relevant stakeholders about the project | 5 April 2019 | 15 April 2019 |  |
| Discuss with supervisors or other academics how to resolve these ethical issues | 16 April 2019 | 20 April 2019 |  |
| Begin a rough draft of the ethics application | 21 April 2019 | 25 April 2019 |  |
| Seek feedback from supervisors on the ethics application | 26 April 2019 | 27 April 2019 |  |
| Refine and submit the ethics application | 28 April 2019 | 30 April 2019 |  |
|  | Estimated number of work days: 90 | | |

**Common activities to include**

When you construct these project plans, one common challenge is to estimate the duration you might need to complete these activities. Most activities will demand longer than you predict—a bias called the planning fallacy.

The next table presents some activities that students often need to complete as well as rough estimates of the time they might need to complete these activities. This table could help construct a feasible project plan. That is, to contruct your plan, you could extract some of these activities.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Activity | Estimated duration |
| **Knowledge and skill development** |  |
| Reading the textbook or other basic material about a specific topic | 1 to 5 days |
| Conducting an extensive literature search | 1 to 3 days |
| Reading all the relevant abstracts on a specific topic | 1 to 5 days |
| Reading the key papers on a specific topic | 1 to 5 days |
| Conducting a systematic literature review | 10 to 20 days |
| Observing workshops on a topic—including online tutorials | 1 to 5 days |
| Practicing a technical skill | 1 to 5 days |
| Develop writing skills | 1 to 10 days |
| **Seeking feedback** |  |
| Sessions with supervisors—including preparation | 2 to 6 hours per month |
| Discussions with stakeholders—including preparation | 1 to 5 days |
| Sessions with other academics or specialists | 1 to 3 hours per month |
| **Designing your research** |  |
| Collating your ideas | 1 to 2 days |
| Developing the research questions | 1 to 2 days |
| Reading textbooks on potential methodologies and methods | 1 to 3 days |
| Reading papers about the potential methodologies and methods | 1 to 3 days |
| Deciding upon your research methodologies and methods | 1 to 2 days |
| **Submitting an ethics application** |  |
| Identifying ethical issues | 1 to 2 days |
| Addressing these ethical issues | 1 to 2 days |
| Completing a first draft of the ethics application | 1 to 2 days |
| Optimizing the ethics application | 1 to 2 days |
| **Developing the research proposal and oral defense** |  |
| Collate the key details to include—after reading previous research proposals | 1 to 5 days |
| Arrange these details to generate a detailed plan of the research proposal | 1 to 5 days |
| Write a rough draft of the research proposal | 5 to 10 days |
| Optimize the research proposal | 5 to 10 days |
| **Empirical studies** |  |
| Prepare materials to conduct study | 1 to 20 days |
| Utilize materials to collect or extract data | 1 to 100 days |
| Plan the data analysis | 1 to 5 days |
| Conduct the data analysis | 1 to 100 days |
| **Writing** |  |
| Plan overall structure of thesis | 1 to 5 days |
| Plan structure of a chapter or paper | 1 to 5 days |
| Plan the key paragraphs and sentences on a specific topic | 1 to 3 days |
| Write about this topic | 0.5 to 1 day per 1000 words |
| Optimizing writing on this topic | 0.5 to 1 day per 1000 words |