

The Structured Program



All students undertaking postgraduate studies at The University of Adelaide are required to undertake a structured program as part of their studies. The requirements for the School are set out below, and apply to full-time and part-time candidates.

1 Seminars

- The Department runs a seminar series given by postgraduates, members of staff, and visiting academics. Postgraduates are expected to attend all seminars. Any postgraduate who has not attended at least 80% (or 50% for part-time candidates) in any year will have this noted on their annual review of candidates which is carried out in October each year.
- The purpose of the seminars is to disseminate research results, provide feedback for researchers, foster a research ethic within the department, assist postgraduates in developing their presentation skills, and provide a stimulating atmosphere for intellectual discussions. It is vital therefore that all attend. The idea that some topics will not be of interest to some students is not one that stands much scrutiny.
- The seminar program is available from the [Research page](#) (see Quicklinks). Seminars are booked through the School Office. Contact [Ann Smith](#).
- Although the first seminar occurs at six months, it is strongly recommended that students book their seminar as soon as they can. There are a limited number of dates available (there are only 52 Mondays in a year) and these can be taken quite quickly. This is especially true for the one year seminar which is very important.

2 Candidate seminars, reports and submissions

All candidates will be required to give a seminar each year to academics and other postgraduates on their work. The seminar program is organised at the start of the year. During a full-time postgraduate's candidature the seminars presented would be:

- Introductory seminar at 6 months (15 - 20 minutes)
- Formal upgrade/confirmation seminar at 12 months (35 - 45 minutes)
- Review seminar at 24 months (30 minutes)
- Final seminar at 36 months (30 minutes)

2.1 After six months full time

The following documents or activities are required after six months full time postgraduate study.

Introductory seminar. The candidate's first seminar should be 15 to 20 minutes in length outlining the research problem. In addition, there should be a concise and lucid summary of the previous research in the area, and the candidate should identify areas where a contribution can be made.

Research proposal. You will be required to prepare a research proposal for Graduate Studies, and preparing this introductory seminar will assist you. The research proposal should be of about 5-10 pages and prepared in conjunction with your supervisors. Although it is required by Graduate Studies, the real benefit of preparing the proposal is that it gives you a chance to develop a clear plan for your research.

Documentation. Graduate Studies requires the submission of two documents to complete the core component of the structured program:

- Completion of the core component of the structured program
- Minimum departmental resources proforma

The School requires submission of several forms and attendance at required activities, including:

- the laboratory requirements for the duration of the proposed study
This must be carried out in consultation with the Laboratory Manager and signed off by the candidate, the supervisors and the Laboratory Manager.
- attendance at courses run for the postgraduates on preparing research proposals and gap statement presentations
These are compulsory, and run each semester. They are advertised via email.

Recent experience suggests that the candidates who are likely to benefit most from the courses are also the ones who are least likely to attend. Attendance is not optional.

2.2 After 12 months full time upgrade / confirmation seminar, report and interview

The most demanding seminar for all candidates comes after 12 months full-time research. This applies to all postgraduates whether they are upgrading from a Masters degree to a Doctorate, confirming their Doctoral candidature or confirming their Masters candidature. The extended seminar should include:

- background to the research topic
- review of literature
- research plan
- work to date.

The presentation. For Doctoral candidates the emphasis of the presentation should be on:

- the review of literature
- the research plan.

Masters candidates are expected to focus on:

- the review of literature
- research plan
- the work completed to date.

It should be noted that a *high standard of presentation* is required.

The duration of the seminar should be between *35 and 45 minutes*.

You must make clear what parts of the proposed work are the *most difficult*, and what you think the *contribution of the work* is to the body of knowledge. This is very important if you want to earn a doctorate.

Confirmation report. A formal upgrade/confirmation report must be prepared. It should be between 30-45 pages in length. The report should be of departmental report or journal paper quality and include:

Line spacing of 1.5

Times New Roman font of 11 points OR Arial Narrow font of 12 points

Outline of the problem (problem definition) [≈2-3 pages]

Literature review (background to research) [≈10-15 pages]

Aims of the research [≈1-2 page]

Detailed research proposal (including research plan, methods, and techniques) [≈8-10 pages]

Significance and expected outcomes from the research [≈2-3 pages]

Timetable [≈1-2 page]

Progress to date [≈5-8 pages]

- The confirmation report must be submitted at least two weeks before the candidate intends to present the seminar so that it can be assessed by an academic in the School.
- A single page summary of the research plan should also be prepared so that it can be circulated to members of the Postgraduate Committee who will be involved in assessing the upgrade or confirmation.
- An interview will be conducted by the Postgraduate Committee with the upgrade/confirmation candidate one week after the upgrade seminar.
The purpose of this interview is to allow the candidate to discuss informally his or her research, to allow further clarification of research issues, and provide feedback from the Postgraduate Committee on both the candidate's research topic and performance. During the interview the candidate will be encouraged to discuss any aspect of the research they wish, and to elaborate and clarify research issues and discuss alternate approaches that the postgraduate committee might suggest.

Documentation. Graduate Studies requires *all doctoral students to submit a major review of progress form at the end of one year full time work.*

2.3 After 24 months

Review seminar, report and interview

- Doctoral candidates must present a seminar after two years full-time study. The seminar is expected to concentrate on the work in progress and how the work and results to date fit with the research plan.
- You are also expected to submit material that you have written: either a chapter or parts of chapters for your thesis; or a copy of paper(s) submitted to a journal or presented at a conference.
 - The material submitted *should not repeat* the literature review that would have been completed in the previous year.
- You will have an interview with the Postgraduate Committee one week after the seminar to review your progress and clarify your work for the final year. If your progress is unsatisfactory, a plan of action will be developed to remedy the situation.

2.4 After 36 months

Final seminar

All candidates are expected to present a formal seminar near the end of their candidature. This is at 24 months for Master's candidates and 36 months for Doctoral candidates.

3 Part-time candidates

Part-time candidates will face the same milestones as full-time candidates but over a longer period of time. In years without a prescribed seminar, all part-time candidates are expected to give a 15-20 minute seminar describing progress and setting out goals for the next year.

This means that if you are studying part-time, you will have to present a more seminars. Preparing for more seminars will assist you to overcome some of the problems associated with not being in the School's research environment full-time.

4 Other issues

There is a regular morning tea that is held each Friday (usually in the Culver Room, N134). It is a chance for postgrads and academics to socialise in a relaxed atmosphere and biscuits are provided to assist in this important task. Often people will bring cake for special occasions, such as birthdays. Cake is often also provided to mark departures from the School and sometimes, arrivals. A reminder message is often sent for these. Attendance is generally better on days when there is cake.

