

**GUIDELINES FOR PREPARATION OF PROGRESS REPORT FOR
CONFIRMATION OF CANDIDATURE
(FOR PhD)**

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1. Purpose

These guidelines are intended to aid PhD candidates in preparing concise, well-organized progress report in a timely fashion for confirmation of candidature. It should be used in conjunction with the guidelines provided by the Monash Research Graduate School (MRGS), which can be found in Appendix D of the *Handbook for Doctoral and MPhil Degrees*. Appendix D is available on the website: <http://www.mrgs.monash.edu.au/research/doctoral/appendd.html>

The purpose of writing a progress report is to demonstrate to the candidature review panel that:

1. The research topic addresses a significant problem and is suitable for a doctoral thesis.
2. An organized method and plan is in place to solve the problem.
3. Sufficient progress has been made during the first year of candidature, such that the candidate is judged capable of completing a PhD

If you can outline these points clearly in a research proposal then you will be able to focus on a research topic and finish it on schedule. A secondary purpose of the proposal is to train you in the art of writing reports and proposals. Any future career, whether it be in industry or academe will require these skills in some form.

Below is a suggested outline for a report that will achieve the goals stated in the preceding paragraph. The length the report will vary depending on the scope of the research project.

2. Elements of a Progress Report

- i) Cover Page (Title of research report)
- ii) Table of Contents
- iii) Section 1 – Introduction
- iv) Section 2 - Review of Literature
- v) Section 3 - Method
- vi) Section 4 - Expected Outcomes
- vii) Section 5 - Work plan and schedule
- viii) Section 6 - Estimated Budget
- ix) References
- x) List of Publications

3. Rules to be followed

- a) Formatting: use appropriate margins, font types and sizes for titles, sub-titles, body texts, headers and footers. Consult with your supervisor if you are unable to decide.
- b) The report must be checked and approved by the Supervisor prior to submission to the Review Panel members.
- c) Submission of the report to the Review Panel members should be made one week prior to the scheduled meeting of the Review Panel for Confirmation of Candidature.

4. Description of different elements of the progress report

i) Cover Page

- Follow the style prescribed by SASE in Appendix I.

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ii) Table of Contents

- Should also include main table of contents, plus a list of figures and tables included in the document. Ask your supervisor for guidance if you have not seen this done before.

iii) Section 1 - Introduction

Background and Setting

- Provide the reader with the necessary background to put the problem in its proper context.
- Let the reader see the basis for the study.
- Justify and convince the reader that the study is needed.
- Be factual--statements, opinions and points of view should be supported by references. (Differentiate between those that are your own and those from the literature.)
- Provide a logical lead-in to a clear and concise statement of the problem.

Statement of the Problem

- Clearly describe the problem to be researched or research questions to be addressed or the hypotheses to be tested.

Objectives of the Study

- Be sure to understand the meaning of "Objectives".
- Best located after the statement of the problem.
- Be sure to list objectives in proper sequence. Follow that sequence throughout the remainder of the report.

Limitations of the Study

- Summarize any limitations associated with the procedures and any limitations of the study.
- Describe the procedural limitations in detail in the appropriate section; just summarize here

Definitions of Terms

- Define specialist terms in the context where they will be used
- Consider the inclusion of a list of definitions for terms and concepts that have significant meaning for the research project.
- Do not define generally understood terms.

iv) Section 2 - Review of Literature

- Include the literatures (research and theory) that are relevant to your research.
- Try to make clear connection between the literature and your specific research objectives.
- Indicate the key issues in the cited literature that are useful for your research.
- Try to organize different sections of this chapter in a coherent way in a logical sequence.
- The literature citation style recommended by SASE is the Harvard style. See <http://www.lib.monash.edu/tutorials/citing/styles-common.html>
- More information on writing the literature review is available at: <http://www.monash.edu.au/lis/hdr/write/5.7.html>
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v) Section 3 - Method

- Describe your proposed research design, and if appropriate, the setting of your research (eg the location and nature of field sites etc).
- Outline the procedure
Thesis research usually involves experimental or theoretical approaches or both. In any case, you should describe the methods that you intend to use and justify why these methods are the most suitable ones. It should be clear what procedures will be followed (these should be clearly described – sometimes a flowchart is the best

approach) and how the proposed methods will enable you to meet your research objectives. Some details are provided below:

Experimental approach: If your research takes an experimental approach, your methods section should describe the experiments, including methods and apparatus used and measurements that are to be carried out, including a description of any sampling scheme or design. Where the methods are derived from other researchers, their methods should be summarized and appropriately cited. Discuss the results and methodology and analyze data presented including any problems encountered during the experiment. If appropriate (i.e. for field research), the study area should be described –this is usually done first. Where the research involves interviews, a clearly defined and organized questionnaire should be provided.

Theoretical approach: This can involve applications of established methodologies, models, tools, etc. in a particular research site; or the development of a theoretical model. Explain the standard steps involved in such applications. For example, in case of an application of a hydrologic model for a particular problem in a particular site, the following steps/sections and the information required in each step should be incorporated in the procedure/methodology.

- Model characteristics
- Input data requirements
- Study area description
- Model setting (initial and boundary conditions)
- Calibration/Verification
- Applications
- Outputs

vi) Section 4 - Expected Outputs

- Briefly explain the expected outcomes of your research via the proposed methods in relation to your research objectives.
- You can also provide information on the overall outcomes of the proposed research.
- Preliminary results may also be reported here

vii) Section 5 - Workplan and Timeline

- Prepare your workplan in a tabular format with a tentative schedule of each of your proposed activities required to complete your research study.
- It should also include your proposed schedule for the preparation and submission of manuscripts for journals/conferences and any reports required (e.g. by funding bodies).

viii) Section 6 - Estimated Budget

- SASE allocates a limited amount of its budget per annum to support HDR students' research (mainly to purchase consumables, computational tools and other materials or equipment required). Please consult with your supervisor to find out the exact amount of fund allocated for you and prepare your detailed research budget accordingly for the entire period of research.

ix) References

- Use referencing software such as Endnote to make things easier for yourself. See <http://www.lib.monash.edu.au/endnote/about-endnote.html>
- The literature citation style recommended by SASE is the Harvard style. See <http://www.lib.monash.edu/tutorials/citing/styles-common.html>
- List all sources you have cited in your proposal (Endnote will do this automatically).
- Do not include any source in the reference that is not cited in your proposal (Endnote will ensure that this does not happen).

x) List of publications

- Include the list of publications produced during your first year of candidature (if applicable).

Appendix I): Cover Page

Full title of research report/ thesis

A Progress Report for Confirmation of Doctoral Candidature

Name of the candidate

Names of the Panel Members

*School of Applied Sciences and Engineering (SASE)
Monash University, Gippsland Campus*

Month, Year