



SCHOOL OF LIFE SCIENCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Department of Earth Sciences

Upgrade meeting requirements

(This is normally combined with year 2 annual review)

Timeline:

You are required to have your first attempt at upgrade within 20 months after initial registration (40 months after initial registration for part time students).

If your first attempt at upgrade is unsuccessful, then you will be expected to have your final attempt by 24 months after initial registration (48 months after initial registration for part time students).

If you are unsuccessful the second time, then you will remain registered as an MPhil student.

Panel members:

A minimum of three members, with a minimum of one member of your supervisory team as well as one independent member from the Department. All departmental supervisors (and/or advisors) are expected to be present and external co-supervisors should be invited to attend if they wish but there is no expectation that they will be present.

Organising the meeting:

Twelve weeks before your upgrade deadline, the Doctoral School will send an email reminding both you and your supervisor to organise the upgrade meeting. Your supervisor will liaise with you and the other members of the panel to find a suitable time. If you know that your supervisor or advisor are often away (e.g. field work) please try to arrange your meeting well in advance, you do not need to wait for this reminder e-mail.

Purposes of the meeting

To provide the student with feedback on oral presentation and written work from all committee members; to enable a defence and discussion of this work including areas for improvement; to discuss future directions for the project, plans for publication, conferences, field and lab work, etc.; to review the training progress; to determine if work presented is suitable for upgrade from MPhil to PhD; to provide an opportunity for student to raise any issues.

When to send the documentation:

You should send all the requested documentation by email to your upgrade panel (copying in doctoralschool@royalholloway.ac.uk and Margaret Collinson, the Earth Sciences Postgraduate Research Student Lead) at least two weeks before the upgrade meeting.

Documentation required:

To demonstrate progress suitable for upgrade from MPhil to PhD, an Earth Sciences student must make a satisfactory oral presentation at the meeting and produce written work as follows:

- Oral presentation:
 - Duration – c. 20 minutes.
 - Content to include – current results (from own data) with interpretation and discussion, presented to international conferences standard; specific firm plans for all future work.
- Written work:
 - A piece (or pieces) of written work, at minimum suitable for inclusion as a thesis chapter (ideally suitable for publication), at least one of which must use, interpret, discuss in depth and draw conclusions from, your own data obtained during the MPhil to PhD work. This work should be presented in the format and to the standard expected for a thesis chapter or for the journal for which it is intended. Literature review alone is not adequate for upgrade;
 - Other items as requested by your supervisors;
 - [Training log](#);
 - [Supervisory meetings log](#);
 - Complete thesis plan with all major headings and subheadings. (Please check [instructions and notes on submission](#) for required introductory content). In this thesis plan, please include any draft or partial draft text that exists for all chapters – for example
 - (i) Updated drafts of those chapters that you submitted for your 1st year annual review *or*
 - (ii) other new results that are not part of your major piece of upgrade work.
 - Plan and timetable for future work.

The upgrade meeting:

The upgrade interview will consist of a 20 minute presentation and a defence/discussion of your presentation and written work, a discussion of areas with room for improvement, plans for the future, and an opportunity to raise any issues. You should provide a copy of the [Upgrade form](#) (with Parts 1-6 completed), which will be signed by all present at the end of the meeting. Your supervisor will complete the outcome section after the meeting.

The form should be sent to Margaret Collinson (the Earth Sciences Postgraduate Research Student Lead) who will forward it to the Doctoral School. The Doctoral School will process and confirm your outcome, ideally within 2 weeks of your meeting. At this point, you will receive the upgrade form and your upgrade letter, and will be invited to add comments to the form, should you wish to do so.