

SCHOOL OF LIFE SCIENCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Department of Biological Sciences

Upgrade meeting requirements

When starting on your PhD, you are first enrolled on an MPhil program. An upgrade meeting will be conducted to assess whether you have achieved requirements to be transferred from MPhil to PhD.

- **Timeline:**

You are expected to have your first attempt at upgrade within 20 months after initial registration (40 months after initial registration for part time students). This can coincide with your 9-month review.

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). This can coincide with your 21-month review.

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

- **Panel members:**

A minimum of three members, with at least one member of your supervisory team as well as one independent member from the Department. It is also advised that your pastoral advisor is present at the meeting.

- **Organising the meeting:**

12 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 issue a written invitation and will state the material that you are required to submit and the deadline by which it must be submitted.

- **Documentation required:**

- A report which summarises the progress that you have made during the period under review and the extent to which objectives have been met, and sets out a draft schedule of future work. Unless agreed otherwise in advance with your supervisor, this should have the normal scientific structure of Introduction and Aims, Materials and Methods, Results, and Discussion
 - If the meeting takes place during the 9-month review: the report will contain an updated literature review and at least one completed results chapter. Your report should show a strong grasp of literature relevant to your research project and good understanding of the theoretical background to your project and the chosen methodology. Key hypotheses should be clearly stated and be well argued. The reported results should be evaluated in the discussion section which should be followed by a detailed

plan of the work to be undertaken in the next 6 months and a more general plan of work for the period 6-12 months.

- If the meeting takes place during the 21-month review: the report is expected to contain an updated literature review, typically two completed results chapters, a detailed interpretation and an insightful discussion followed by a clear work plan outlining the remaining research work to be undertaken to complete the thesis in the third year of your registration (pro-rata for part-time students). By this time you will have developed good experimental and data analysis skills and that should be reflected in your report.

- [Supervisory log](#);
- [Training log](#).

- **When to send the documentation:**

You should send all the requested documentation by email to your upgrade panel (copying in doctoralschool@royalholloway.ac.uk) by the deadline indicated by your supervisor on his written invitation at least two weeks before the upgrade meeting.

- **The upgrade meeting:**

To this meeting, you should bring 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.

A member of the panel will forward the completed form to the Doctoral School and we 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.

More information to be found at [Upgrade process - Royal Holloway Doctoral School](#).