

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT

Upgrade meeting requirements

- **Timeline:**

You can apply to sit your upgrade any time after 12 months and before 20 months into your programme. The application is not contingent on the timing of the Semi-Annual Reviews or your fieldwork (i.e. you may have conducted some fieldwork before sitting the upgrade). The timing of the upgrade should be a mutual decision between you and your supervisors.

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 at least one member of your supervisory team as well as one independent member from the Department. In the School of Business and Management, the upgrade panel will normally consist of your principal supervisor, your second supervisor/advisor, and the Programme Director/Deputy Programme Director as Independent Chair. If the Programme Director/Deputy Programme Director are members of your supervisory team, they will arrange for another member of staff to act as Independent Chair.

- **Organising the meeting:**

Upgrade meetings will ideally take place during the two SAR periods (November/December and May/June). The Doctoral School will let you know of the schedule for each SAR period in advance and it is your responsibility sign up for a 1-hour slot for your upgrade meeting (agreed with your supervisory team). The Doctoral School will confirm your upgrade meeting time and date shortly after. If taking place at another point in the year, your supervisor will liaise with you and the other members of the panel to agree on a suitable date.

- **Documentation required:**

The precise material to be submitted should be agreed in advance with your supervisor(s). In the School of Business and Management, most students will submit:

- a literature review chapter with a clear statement of the research problem being addressed in the PhD, research objectives and research questions (with hypotheses where relevant);
- a methodology chapter justifying the research method that will be adopted and at least a preliminary outline of proposed empirical work;
- a timetable for completion of the thesis;
- [supervisory log](#);

- [training log](#);
- a screenshot of the confirmation message to show you have completed PRES;
- parts 1-6 of the [PhD upgrade form](#) completed.

If you are following the alternative format for a PhD thesis you should submit:

- an introduction (as specified in the alternate format outline);
- a methodology chapter (as specified in the alternate format outline);
- at least one other paper or chapter from the thesis;
- a timetable for completion of the thesis;
- a [supervisory log](#);
- a [training log](#);
- a screenshot of the confirmation message to show you have completed PRES;
- parts 1-6 of the [PhD upgrade form](#) completed.

The upgrade document will likely be between 20,000 and 30,000 words in length (excluding timetable).

- **When to send the documentation:**

You should ensure your supervisory team has enough time to go through your work and documents required for upgrade and that you have sufficient time to address their feedback before you submit your final documents to the PhD Programme Director/Deputy Programme Director.

All the necessary documentation should be submitted by email to the members of your panel, copying in doctoralschool@royalholloway.ac.uk, at least 5 working days before the upgrade date. If this material is not received beforehand the upgrade could be cancelled and the upgrade deadline missed.

- **The upgrade meeting:**

Prior to the upgrade meeting, the supervisory team will produce a brief report on the documents you have submitted and send this to the Chair of the Panel, to give some initial information for the likely content of the meeting. You will not see this preliminary pre-upgrade document so that you have to respond to questions spontaneously.

The upgrade meeting is scheduled for a 1-hour period and is conducted in a face-to-face meeting which takes the form of a mini-viva and thus is good practice for the viva itself. You will be asked questions on your written materials and your plans for further development of your PhD by your supervisory team. The panel will be looking for evidence that you can talk fluently about your research and defend the design choices made.

The chair 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.