

Milestones for Ph.D. Student Progress

In many cases, these milestones are optimal rather than required, and everyone understands that progress can vary due to individual circumstances. They fit the career profile of some specialty areas better than others, so adaptation is presumed. They are rough, and the numbers in particular are somewhat arbitrary. But the milestones are also related to important requirements—if you miss some, you should be prepared to do something to compensate.

I have tried to list 4 types of milestones, related to: programmatic requirements, 'intellectual' competence, disciplinary presence, and departmental service. Obviously, these are limited: I have neglected teaching, performative and technological skill building, and other service spheres, partly because they vary too much.

By the end of Semester I, students should have:

- Chosen specialty area(s) or devoted attention to its choice.
- Met, talked at some length with all HDSHC professors in their specialty area about their research.
- Joined professional association(s), made plans to attend a regional or national convention or similar event.
- Made [initial, tentative] choice of a specialization area, potentially for dissertation work, and begun work to master its literature, if possible in a course paper.

By the end of Year I, students should have:

- Made initial choice of an advisor (and begun forging connection with her/him).
- Achieved knowledgeability about a specific topical area, manifest in a review paper or equivalent product.
- Become involved in a research project that a professor is pursuing (perhaps as a sort of research apprentice), or gain research/performance mentorship in some other way.
- Chosen initially a methodological approach and taken first steps toward competence in it (through formal coursework or practical involvement.)
- Written, revised, and sent out at least one paper for presentation or publication—and attended or made arrangements to attend one convention or similar event.
- Become acquainted with several professors in one's specialty area, face-to-face or by email, and discussed their work with them.
- Taken part in School-sponsored activities, at least by attendance of most of them. By the end of Year 2, students should also or cumulatively have:

- An advisor and committee, a general dissertation topic, and a completed program of study.
- Expertise about their general topic area, manifest in a major review paper and a major substantive paper presented or out for publication.
- Knowledgeability about (at least) two other topic areas, based on coursework and writing.
- Methodological sophistication based on coursework and practice.
- At least one scholarly work flowing from collaborative research with an ASU professor.
- In other words, at least 3 articles submitted for presentation or publication.
- Optionally, research involvement with a professor outside the Hugh Downs School.
- Involvement in the scholarly network surrounding their focal topic area.
- Professional involvement in a division of a regional or national communication association.
- Taken active part in School-sponsored activities, at least by attendance and if possible by helping to support, organize, or present them.

By the end of Year 3, students should also or cumulatively have:

- Completed comprehensive exams, completed prospectus, dissertation work thoroughly planned and research site negotiated.
- Expertise, and publicly demonstrated competence, in their general topic area.
- Active involvement in the scholarly network surrounding their focal topic area.
- At least 5 articles submitted for presentation or publication, with at least 2 well on the road to publication.
- Professional involvement in and service to a regional or national communication association, by running for student office, serving as a program chair, or helping with association work in some other capacity.
- Taken a pro-active role in School-sponsored activities, by helping to support, organize, or present them.

By the end of Year 4, students should also or cumulatively have:

- Completed dissertation work.
- At least 6 articles submitted for presentation or publication, with at least 2 well on the road to publication, and with at least 2 in a recognizable line of research.
- Expertise, and publicly demonstrated competence, in multiple general topic areas and in their chosen method