Note that these procedures apply to Research-only Masters candidates.

- Students who commenced their MPhil without an Honours degree (or an international equivalent) are not eligible for an upgrade.
- MCP students who wish to obtain a PhD should have applied to the combined MCP&PhD program before their commencement of their degree. Alternatively, they can apply to a PhD upon completion of their MCP.

1. **Applications for upgrade of candidature from MSc/MPhil to PhD** should be completed through Sydney Student (My Studies → Vary candidature). In addition, the following document should be submitted to the Postgraduate Coordinator (Admissions), and should include:

   a. A 3000 - 5000 word report* of the research project, comprising:
      - a brief literature review and rationale for the project
      - a description of progress to date (including methods, data collected and any results to date)
      - a plan for proposed future research
      - a clear indication of how the proposed research extends beyond the Masters level and therefore merits an upgrade

      * Note that the First Year Research report may be used as a substitute for this report (see Point 6 below).

   b. A statement of number of semesters of credit sought from the Masters candidature (normally full credit is given for all completed semesters)

2. **To be approved for upgrade to PhD, the candidate must meet the following criteria:**

   - The unqualified support of the research supervisor for the upgrade has been granted in writing (see below).
   - Substantial progress has been made with the research project
   - The research shows PhD quality
   - The proposed research is feasible
   - The proposed extension of the MSc research is sufficiently substantial for a PhD
   - The project can be completed within the normal period
   - The application shows sufficient conceptual grasp of the topic

3. **Upgrade committee.** The application is assessed by a committee consisting of the Chair (usually the Postgraduate Coordinator for Admissions) and three readers: the supervisor, the associate supervisor, and a third reader nominated by the supervisor.

   *Note: the committee may set specific milestones and a timeline for their completion as conditions for an upgrade. Failing to meet either will result in an unsuccessful application.

4. **Preliminary meeting.** It is recommended that at the time of submission of the first year research plan (First semester of candidature: 3 months after commencement), an MSc/MPhil student who plans to apply to upgrade will discuss the criteria the supervisors expect to apply when considering the student’s upgrade application. The student should specify these expectations in a short letter, signed by the supervisors and the student, and lodge it with the Postgraduate Coordinator for admissions. This process will aid the Upgrade committee in its deliberation.
5. Earliest and latest dates for application. The application should be submitted by the end of the 4th research period of candidature (or 8th in the case of part-time students), and no earlier than the end of the 2nd research period (4th period for part-time). Variations to this timing requirement will only be considered in extraordinary circumstances.

6. First Year Research Report. If the application is ready for submission at the same time as the First Year Research Report, the application can be used as a substitute for this report and the meeting arranged by the student to receive feedback regarding the progress report can double as the upgrade meeting. In that case, the Postgraduate Coordinator for Admissions (or their representative) should chair the meeting.

7. Supervisor's letter. The research supervisor should send a separate letter to the Postgraduate Coordinator (Admissions), commenting on the feasibility and quality of the proposed research as a PhD project, and on the student's ability to complete in time, and nominating a third reader.

8. Distributing report and arranging the meeting. When the Postgraduate Coordinator for Admissions has approved the nominated committee, the student:

   a. sends the report (from 1) to each committee member
   b. arranges a meeting with the committee to discuss the application

9. The Upgrade Meeting: At the meeting, the application is initially discussed in the absence of the candidate, so that the readers can raise any questions/concerns. The candidate then joins the meeting and is asked to address any questions/concerns, and suggested milestones are discussed. Finally, in the absence of the candidate, the committee addresses the relevant criteria and decides on its recommendations.

10. Upgrade report. The chairperson completes the upgrade report form, in which one of three recommendations can be made:

   a. Upgrade approved
   b. Upgrade approved conditional on completion of specific milestones as recommended by the committee and to the satisfaction of the Postgraduate Coordinator for admissions.
   c. Upgrade not approved, student to proceed to complete MSc/MPhil candidature.

   • In making their recommendation, the committee should be guided, but is not bound by, the letter arising from the preliminary meeting with the student. If the criteria appear to deviate significantly from the earlier letter, the reasons for this should be given in the upgrade report.

11. Recommendation to Faculty. When the final recommendation decided upon, the Postgraduate Coordinator for Admissions provides the recommendation on Sydney Student and forwards it to the Science Faculty. The Science Faculty makes the final decision about the approval of the upgrade.

12. Note that a student who upgrades cannot be awarded the MSc/MPhil degree as well as the PhD degree. A student who has been awarded the MSc/MPhil degree cannot use the same work as part of their PhD research. An unsuccessful upgrade application does not prevent a student from applying the complete a PhD upon completion of the MSc/MPhil.

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