Early Stage Assessment (ESA) 10 months (full-timers) / 20 months (part-timers)

The College requires that a student's PhD research potential be assessed by an examination held by the end of the 12th month (24th months for part-time students) after the date of initial registration. However, the 12(FT)/24(PT) month deadline also includes 1 re-assessment opportunity which should be done within 2 months if first ESA was failed. Therefore, suggested 1st assessment deadlines are at 10(FT) & 20(PT) months. You can find final ESA date on My.Imperial.ac.uk.

You will find regulatory ESA guidance on the College governance webpage below:

https://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/academic-policy/research-programmes/

Purpose of the Report

This report aims to provide new research students with an early and significant milestone by which they can measure their progress in the PhD and towards which their efforts can be focused.

The report also gives the supervisor the opportunity to obtain a clear picture of the student's abilities – in terms of intellectual level, analytical and practical skills, and technical writing – and the student's aptitude for research.

Based on the assessment of the report, a student's suitability to continue on the programme will be determined and, if needed, action will be taken to address any skills that need improvement or refocusing.

Last, but not least, the report provides a mechanism to document the first period of research and provide practice for technical report writing in a way which helps to prepare students for writing their thesis later in the programme.

Format of the Report

The report must **not exceed 20 pages** in length and may be prepared in any reasonable format that is acceptable to the supervisor. Many students find LaTeX or LyX to be well suited to their task of technical writing and these tools are especially helpful for managing references and mathematics.

Content of the Report

The report should be helpful to the student in crystallising their thoughts and targeting their efforts in one or more direction of high potential value for a PhD thesis. The content of the report will vary according to the topic and the nature of the research to factor in, for example, a balance between theoretical and practical content appropriate to the student's particular research project. All reports will be assessed against the following criteria:

The Early Stage Assessment report should

- set out the main research aims
- include a literature survey
- demonstrate an understanding of the research topic(s)
- demonstrate broad awareness of activity in the research field by setting the research in context
- demonstrate technical aptitude appropriate to the PhD programme by presenting technical concepts and preliminary research work
- include a research plan in the form of a list of expected original contributions, research tasks, milestones and a realistic schedule

Expected Level of Detail and Depth

The level of technical detail and depth is expected to be at or exceeding the level of a masters (MSc) dissertation. The report needs to be concise with an appropriate balance of breadth, which is often achieved in the parts of the report associated with

review of the literature, and depth, which is often achieved in the parts of the report associated with the student's own research activity.

Expected Level of Originality

There is no requirement for original contribution in the Early Stage Assessment report. However, students should highlight and justify the topic area(s) in which they expect to contribute original scientific and engineering research outcomes, and these should be listed explicitly in the research plan.

A Note on Plagiarism

All written work must adhere to proper scientific practice and, in particular, the College's rules on plagiarism that are published separately. Reports submitted are routinely checked for plagiarism.

Submission Procedure

The submission is done by email as per instructed in the ESA form (found on the EEE PhD Milestones Guidelines page).

Please note that the milestone can only be marked as completed once you have passed the assessment.

To give your supervisor enough time to arrange an assessment date within the recommended timeline, aim at submitting it no later than the end of the 9th month for full-timers (19th month for part-timers).

> From time to time, special circumstances arise which justify an extension to the deadlines for the programme. Students are encouraged to inform the PG Manager at the earliest possible moment if their work has been affected by any such circumstances.

> **If you started your postgraduate research degree on or after 24 September 2019, you must submit a copy of your ESA report to Turnitin for an originality check before your ESA Assessment.**
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> **Please login to the Blackboard page to submit your ESA report via the link below:**
>
> ESA Assignment Submission - Dept. of Electrical and Electronic Engineering

Assessment Procedure

The student will be examined orally on the contents of their report.

The assessment panel will include two assessors – at least one independent member of academic staff in addition to/other than the supervisor(s); the supervisor can be the second assessor. The assessors will be chosen appropriately to judge the technical aspects of the research as well as the student's research methodology impartially.

The student may also be required to pass appropriate written examinations as specified at the start of their programme by their supervisor (e.g.: a module from a taught course offered to master's students).

Students must have completed at least two Graduate School professional development courses and the plagiarism awareness course to pass the Early Stage Assessment.

The outcome of the assessment will be one of:

a) Confirmation of the student's continuing registration for PhD
b) Transfer of the student's registration to MPhil
c) The student is required to withdraw from the College and will not be permitted to continue their registration on the programme

In cases b) or c), the student may, at the discretion of the assessment panel, resit the examination once provided that any such resit is completed by 2 months (full-timers) after the first assessment (4 months for part-timers).