

# Confirmations in SMP

## Purpose

According to University policy (4.60.5), the general purpose of confirmations are threefold:

1. **advise** the candidate on the direction, scope, planning, and feasibility of the project; and about the acquisition or further development of appropriate research and professional skills
2. **review** the human, physical, financial resources needed to sustain the candidature
3. **assure** the university that continuation of the candidature is likely to lead to an assessable thesis during the funding period.

As for any milestone, the School needs to give the candidate written feedback that summarizes their strengths, achievements and development needs, offers suggestions towards successful completion, and identifies the tasks to be completed and by when for the next milestone. The School must also confirm that the advisory team has been reviewed and comprises at least two active and academically appropriate advisors.

## Attributes and Criteria

The School has a responsibility to students to ensure they are given the opportunity of developing the skills and attributes expected of a graduate of an internationally competitive PhD program in mathematics, statistics or physics. Confirmation is an appropriate time to evaluate whether the student is starting to develop these skills and attributes, and to make recommendations to the student and advisors to help ensure that the student is given the best opportunity of doing so.

Listed below are the graduate attributes (see policy 4.60.3) relevant at the point of confirmation, with associated criteria that will be used to gauge progress.

- **In-depth, advanced knowledge and understanding of one or more disciplinary areas**
  - As evidenced in the report and at the interview, the student is familiar with the “state-of-play” in the field and can identify gaps in the current knowledge of the field
- **Ability to apply theoretical frameworks and research methods in a field or discipline to develop new concepts, formulate research hypotheses or identify new problems and produce original outputs**
- **Well-developed technical capability that enables collection, synthesis and analysis of data**
- **Ability to communicate results of research in terms of impact and application of new knowledge**
  - The seminar and report demonstrate that the student can successfully explain the project aims and background and its underlying mathematics and/or physics also to an audience outside the immediate field of research
  - The report is written in good scientific English and is of an appropriate academic standard
- **Ability to make a substantive and independent contribution to knowledge in the discipline and/or formulate and solve problems**

- **Ability to apply original and creative ideas, and analytical and critical thinking skills to generate new knowledge, investigate problems and develop inventive solutions, which may be demonstrated by:**
  - The student is able to formulate viable research questions
  - The student can design and implement methodologies appropriate to the discipline or field of study
- **Capacity to communicate ideas effectively to a range of audiences inside and outside the field of study or discipline and to the wider community**
- **Ability to work collaboratively and effectively with others, within a range of teams and contexts, respecting individual roles and responsibilities**
- **Ability to lead, manage and execute projects within or across disciplines**
- **Ability to write coherently and convincingly**
- **Clear understanding and practice of the requirements of the responsible conduct and sharing of research**
  - The report references all sources and is free from plagiarism
- **Ability to analyse and describe data and information objectively**
- **Contribute to open discussion on topics that intersect with disciplinary expertise**