Assessment of Professional Skill Development

Milestone reviews are opportunities for students and supervisors to take stock of progress, to plan the next stages and to identify and resolve any problems, with guidance and oversight from the members of the student's Milestone Review Panel (MRP).

Amongst PhD projects, there is substantial variation in the nature of projects, the students' preparation, the supervisors' experience and the panel members' relevant experience and knowledge. Nevertheless, the **BDI Graduate School expects all PhD students to develop skills in five core areas of professional development across their candidature**

This document is intended to:
- guide students and supervisors in identifying key skill areas to develop, improve and hone
- assist panels in assessing the professional development skills of candidates

Core areas of Professional Skill Development for BDI Graduate School PhD Students

1. ***Knowledge of subject area***
2. ***Technical expertise***
3. ***Critical thinking***
4. ***Communication skills***
5. ***Professionalism***

The following rubric provides a guide to how requirements and expectations may be defined and assessed over the range of student achievement and levels of performance. At each successive milestone review, students should aim to have advanced their development in Professional Skills.

Prior to the 6-, 12- and 24-month MRP meetings students and supervisors are to meet, discuss the key areas of Professional Skill Development and complete the rubric below. This is an important opportunity to provide constructive feedback and to assist supervisors in providing guidance to students on ways to improve their skills in the core professional skill areas. The completed form is to be signed and be submitted by the candidate with the other MRP documents.

Student name: _____ Student signature: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor name: _____ Supervisor signature: _____ Date: _____

	Basic / Developing	*Functional*	*Proficient*	*Exceptional*
Knowledge of Subject Area	☐ Rudimentary knowledge	☐ Basic knowledge	☐ Good understanding of subject area	☐ Highly knowledgeable; excellent command of subject area
	☐ Requires assistance to find appropriate information	☐ Can seek out and locate required information with minimal support	☐ Can independently seek out and locate required information	☐ Able to independently locate and synthesise required information
	☐ Uses immediately available information with little discrimination	☐ Does not always discriminate effectively between sources of information or content	☐ Discriminates appropriately between sources of information	☐ Effectively discriminates between sources of information, content and context
Technical Expertise	☐ Is uncomfortable in using technologies; needs support	☐ Gaining confidence in experimental methodologies but requires support	☐ Confident, independent user of a variety of methodologies and platforms	☐ A sophisticated and independent adopter of methods and technologies to solve experimental problems
	☐ Rule based – follows instructions without a thorough understanding	☐ Has a basic understanding of methodology and its application but needs to be told what methods to use	☐ Understands underlying principles and uses this understanding to move between platforms and modalities	☐ Can adapt methods to meet research goals through a superior understanding of the underlying principles
	☐ Has difficulty analysing data appropriately	☐ Needs support to analyse and interpret data	☐ Able to analyse and interpret data but lacks an understanding of its limitations	☐ Skilled in data analysis and validation with an excellent appreciation of its limitations
Critical Thinking	☐ Has difficulty explaining and articulating concepts	☐ Able to explain concepts but may have difficulty defending their arguments	☐ Can clearly explain complex ideas and identify some of their strengths and weaknesses	☐ Can make complex arguments and confidently articulate their strengths and weaknesses

	☐ Mostly 'black and white' thinking, derived largely from authority (texts, teachers, etc.)	☐ Can recognise competing explanations and often identify their relative merits	☐ Can develop alternative explanations and identify their relative merits and limitations	☐ Uses principles to formulate alternative explanations with sophisticated analysis of their merits and limitations
	☐ Limited capacity to identify the factors within a complex problem	☐ Can identify some of the factors within a complex problem with some evidence of synthesising ideas into a larger argument	☐ Can break complex problems down into components and synthesise a number of concepts or factors into a larger idea	☐ Can confidently analyse complex problems and synthesise concepts into a sophisticated framework
Communication Skills	☐ Does not demonstrate an understanding of what is expected in presentation of results, in either written or oral formats	☐ Adheres to most basic expectations regarding the formatting and presentation of written/oral work	☐ Adheres to all expectations and conventions with all expected attributes present	☐ All expectations and conventions with all expected attributes present but have been creatively interpreted to suit personal style and the specific execution of the task
	☐ Is unable to organise ideas well or clearly present results	☐ Presentation of results is confusing and/or somewhat disorganised or illogical	☐ Presentations are organised and articulate	☐ Presentations are well structured and engaging
	☐ Often misinterprets or fails to respond to questions	☐ Generally, understands the main points of questions	☐ Demonstrates good understanding of questions but may occasionally miss subtle connotations	☐ Demonstrates excellent interpretation of and responses to questions
Professionalism	☐ Poor organisational skills	☐ Is developing organisational skills	☐ Is well-organised and developing project management competency; sets appropriate priorities; establishes personal learning goals	☐ Is well organised and can manage a project competently; establishes personal learning goals and monitors their own learning

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☐ Does not seek guidance through sensible questioning; is not safe	☐ Notices basic contextual cues and asks questions; practices safely	☐ Balances independence with seeking guidance and feedback	☐ Notices important cues in the workplace environment; works independently
☐ Does not relate to colleagues appropriately or contribute positively to the workplace	☐ Relates well to colleagues but demonstrates limited initiative; limited contribution to the working environment	☐ Relates professionally to colleagues; will help if asked; makes effective contributions to the workplace	☐ Takes initiative; makes a major contribution to the organisation; volunteers to teach/train others

Additional Comments: