

RESEARCH TIMELINE TEMPLATE (GANTT CHART)

Instructions: This template provides multiple timeline formats for different project durations. Choose the one that matches your project length and customize as needed.

OPTION 1: 12-MONTH RESEARCH TIMELINE (Master's Thesis)

Project Title: [Your Research Project Title]

Total Duration: 12 Months

Start Date: [Month, Year]

Completion Date: [Month, Year]

VISUAL GANTT CHART (12-Month)

Phase/Activity	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8
M9 M10 M11 M12								
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PHASE 1: PREPARATION								
Literature Review	■ ■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■ ■						
IRB Submission		■ ■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■ ■					
Instrument Development			■ ■ ■ ■					
PHASE 2: PILOT STUDY								
Pilot Recruitment			■ ■ ■ ■					
Pilot Data Collection				■ ■ ■ ■				
Pilot Analysis & Refinement				■ ■ ■ ■				
PHASE 3: RECRUITMENT								
Participant Recruitment				■ ■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■ ■			
Screening & Consent					■ ■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■ ■		
PHASE 4: DATA COLLECTION								
Baseline Assessment						■ ■ ■ ■		
Main Data Collection						■ ■ ■ ■	■ ■ ■ ■	
Follow-up Assessment								
PHASE 5: DATA ANALYSIS								
Data Cleaning & Preparation								
Statistical/Qualitative Analysis								
Results Interpretation								
PHASE 6: WRITING & DEFENSE								
Chapter Writing								
Advisor Review & Revisions								
Defense Preparation								
Final Defense								
							✓	

Legend: - ■ = Active work period - ✓ = Milestone/Completion

DETAILED 12-MONTH TIMELINE WITH MILESTONES

PHASE 1: PREPARATION AND IRB APPROVAL (Months 1-3)

Month	Week	Activities	Deliverable/Milestone
Month 1	Week 1-2	Complete comprehensive literature review	Annotated bibliography (30+ sources)
	Week 3-4	Finalize research instruments; select/adapt measures	Draft instruments ready
Month 2	Week 1-2	Prepare IRB application and all required documents	IRB application submitted
	Week 3-4	Develop recruitment materials (flyers, emails, social media)	Recruitment materials approved
Month 3	Week 1-2	IRB review period; respond to questions	IRB APPROVAL RECEIVED ✓
	Week 3-4	Finalize data collection protocols; train research assistants	Research team trained

Key Milestones: - ✓ **End of Month 2:** IRB Application Submitted - ✓ **End of Month 3:** IRB Approval Received

PHASE 2: PILOT TESTING (Months 3-4)

Month	Week	Activities	Deliverable/Milestone
Month 3	Week 3-4	Recruit pilot participants (n=20-30)	Pilot sample recruited
Month 4	Week 1-2	Conduct pilot data collection; test all procedures	Pilot data collected
	Week 3-4	Analyze pilot results; refine instruments and procedures	PILOT COMPLETE; Procedures refined ✓

Key Milestones: - ✓ **End of Month 4:** Pilot Study Complete, Methods Finalized

PHASE 3: PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT (Months 4-6)

Month	Week	Activities	Deliverable/Milestone
Month 4	Week 3-4	Launch recruitment campaign	Recruitment active
Month 5	Week 1-4	Continue recruitment; screen interested participants	50% of target sample
	Week 1-2	Final recruitment push; screen remaining participants	TARGET SAMPLE RECRUITED ✓
Month 6	Week 1-2	Obtain informed consent; schedule data collection sessions	All participants consented
	Week 3-4		

Key Milestones: - ✓ **End of Month 6:** Target Sample Size Achieved (N=[your target])

PHASE 4: DATA COLLECTION (Months 6-9)

Month	Week	Activities	Deliverable/Milestone
Month 6	Week 3-4	Baseline assessments for first cohort	Baseline data (Cohort 1)
Month 7	Week 1-4	Continue baseline; begin intervention/main study period	50% baseline complete
Month 8	Week 1-4	Ongoing data collection; monitor retention	75% data collected
Month 9	Week 1-2	Final data collection sessions; follow-up assessments	DATA COLLECTION COMPLETE ✓
	Week 3-4	Participant debriefing; distribute compensation	All participants debriefed

Key Milestones: - ✓ **End of Month 9:** All Data Collection Complete

PHASE 5: DATA ANALYSIS (Months 9-11)

Month	Week	Activities	Deliverable/Milestone
Month 9	Week 3-4	Data entry, cleaning, and quality checks	Clean dataset ready
Month 10	Week 1-2	Preliminary descriptive analyses	Descriptive statistics
	Week 3-4	Primary statistical/qualitative analyses	Main analyses complete
Month 11	Week 1-2	Additional analyses; create tables and figures	Results tables/figures
	Week 3-4	Interpret findings in context of literature	ANALYSIS COMPLETE ✓

Key Milestones: - ✓ **End of Month 11:** All Analyses Complete, Results Interpreted

PHASE 6: WRITING AND DEFENSE (Months 11-12)

Month	Week	Activities	Deliverable/Milestone
Month 11	Week 3-4	Write Results and Discussion chapters	Draft chapters
Month 12	Week 1	Write Introduction and Methods (revise from proposal)	Complete draft
	Week 2	Advisor review; incorporate feedback	Revised draft
	Week 3	Final edits, formatting, and proofreading	Final document
	Week 4	Defense preparation and presentation	DEFENSE PASSED ✓

Key Milestones: - ✓ **Month 12, Week 3:** Final Document Submitted - ✓ **Month 12, Week 4:** Successful Defense

**OPTION 2: 18-MONTH RESEARCH TIMELINE
(PhD Dissertation)**

Project Title: [Your Research Project Title]

Total Duration: 18 Months

Start Date: [Month, Year]

Completion Date: [Month, Year]

VISUAL GANTT CHART (18-Month)

Phase/Activity	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10	M11	M12	M13	M14	M15	M16	M17	M18
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PHASE 1: PREPARATION																		
Literature Review										■	■	■	■					
Theoretical Framework										■	■	■						
IRB Application											■	■	■					
Instrument Development												■	■	■				
PHASE 2: PILOT STUDY																		
Pilot Recruitment												■	■					
Pilot Data Collection													■	■				
Pilot Analysis													■	■				
PHASE 3: MAIN STUDY																		
Recruitment													■	■	■	■		
Baseline Data Collection														■	■	■		
Longitudinal Follow-up 1																■	■	
Longitudinal Follow-up 2																	■	■
Final Assessment																		■
PHASE 4: ANALYSIS																		
Data Cleaning																		■
Preliminary Analysis																		■
Primary Analysis																		
Advanced Modeling																		
PHASE 5: WRITING																		
Chapters 1-3 (Background)																		
Chapter 4 (Results)																		
Chapter 5 (Discussion)																		
Revisions & Defense Prep																		
Defense & Final Submission																		
					✓													

DETAILED 18-MONTH TIMELINE BREAKDOWN

PHASE 1: PREPARATION (Months 1-5) - Months 1-3: Comprehensive literature review (50+ sources) - Months 2-3: Develop theoretical framework - Months 3-4: Complete IRB application - Months 4-5: Design/adapt research instruments

Milestone: ✓ IRB Approval Received (End of Month 5)

PHASE 2: PILOT STUDY (Months 5-6) - Month 5: Recruit pilot participants (n=30-50) - Month 6: Conduct pilot; analyze and refine procedures

Milestone: ✓ Pilot Complete, Methods Validated (End of Month 6)

PHASE 3: MAIN STUDY DATA COLLECTION (Months 6-14) - Months 6-8: Participant recruitment (target N=300+) - Months 8-9: Baseline assessments - Month 10: 3-month follow-up (if longitudinal) - Month 12: 6-month follow-up (if longitudinal) - Month 14: Final assessment and data collection complete

Milestone: ✓ All Data Collected (End of Month 14)

PHASE 4: DATA ANALYSIS (Months 14-16) - Month 14: Data cleaning and preparation - Months 14-15: Preliminary and descriptive analyses - Months 15-16: Primary inferential analyses - Month 16: Advanced analyses and modeling

Milestone: ✓ All Analyses Complete (End of Month 16)

PHASE 5: WRITING AND DEFENSE (Months 15-18) - Months 15-16: Write Chapters 1-3 (Introduction, Lit Review, Methods) - Months 16-17: Write Chapter 4 (Results) - Month 17: Write Chapter 5 (Discussion, Conclusions) - Month 18: Committee review, revisions, defense preparation - Month 18: Defense and final submission

Milestone: ✓ Dissertation Defense Passed (End of Month 18)

**OPTION 3: 6-MONTH RESEARCH TIMELINE
(Course Project/Thesis)**

Project Title: [Your Research Project Title]

Total Duration: 6 Months

Start Date: [Month, Year]

Completion Date: [Month, Year]

VISUAL GANTT CHART (6-Month)

Phase/Activity	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6
PHASE 1: PLANNING & PREPARATION						
Literature Review	■■■■■■■	■■■■■■■				
Methodology Development	■■■	■■■■■■■				
IRB Submission (if needed)		■■■■■■■				
PHASE 2: DATA COLLECTION						
Recruitment		■■■	■■■■■■■			
Data Collection	■■■■■■■		■■■■■■■			
PHASE 3: ANALYSIS & WRITING						
Data Analysis	■■■■■■■	■■■■■■■				
Writing & Revisions	■■■	■■■■■■■	■■■■■■■			
Final Submission					✓	

DETAILED 6-MONTH TIMELINE

- Month 1: Foundation** - Weeks 1-2: Initial literature review (20 sources minimum) - Weeks 3-4: Develop research questions and methodology
- Milestone:** ✓ Research Plan Finalized
- Month 2: Preparation** - Weeks 1-2: Complete literature review; submit IRB (if required) - Weeks 3-4: Develop instruments; begin recruitment
- Milestone:** ✓ IRB Approval (if needed); Ready to Collect Data
- Month 3: Data Collection Phase 1** - Weeks 1-4: Active data collection (50% of target sample)
- Milestone:** ✓ 50% Data Collected
- Month 4: Data Collection Phase 2 & Initial Analysis** - Weeks 1-2: Complete data collection - Weeks 3-4: Data cleaning; preliminary analysis
- Milestone:** ✓ All Data Collected
- Month 5: Analysis & Writing** - Weeks 1-2: Complete all analyses - Weeks 3-4: Write Results and Discussion sections
- Milestone:** ✓ Analysis Complete; Draft Chapters Written
- Month 6: Final Writing & Submission** - Weeks 1-2: Complete all chapters; advisor review - Weeks 3-4: Revisions, formatting, final submission
- Milestone:** ✓ Final Paper Submitted

OPTION 4: 24-MONTH RESEARCH TIMELINE
(Comprehensive PhD)

Project Title: [Your Research Project Title]

Total Duration: 24 Months (2 Years)

Start Date: [Month, Year]

Completion Date: [Month, Year]

YEAR 1: FOUNDATION & DATA COLLECTION

Quarter 1 (Months 1-3): Preparation - Comprehensive literature review (75+ sources) - Theoretical framework development - Research design finalization - IRB application preparation and submission - **Milestone:** ✓ IRB Approval

Quarter 2 (Months 4-6): Pilot & Setup - Pilot study (n=50) - Instrument validation and refinement - Research assistant recruitment and training - Main study recruitment begins - **Milestone:** ✓ Pilot Complete, Recruitment Active

Quarter 3 (Months 7-9): Data Collection Wave 1 - Baseline data collection (full sample) - Ongoing recruitment if needed - Data quality monitoring - **Milestone:** ✓ Baseline Complete

Quarter 4 (Months 10-12): Data Collection Wave 2 - 3-month follow-up assessments - Intervention implementation (if applicable) - Preliminary data analysis begins - **Milestone:** ✓ Wave 2 Complete

YEAR 2: ANALYSIS, WRITING & DEFENSE

Quarter 5 (Months 13-15): Data Collection Wave 3 & Analysis - 6-month follow-up assessments - Data collection concludes - Comprehensive data cleaning - Primary statistical analyses - **Milestone:** ✓ All Data Collection Complete

Quarter 6 (Months 16-18): Analysis & Writing - Complete all analyses - Advanced modeling - Write Chapters 1-4 - **Milestone:** ✓ Analysis Complete; Chapters 1-4 Written

Quarter 7 (Months 19-21): Dissertation Writing - Write Chapter 5 (Discussion) - Complete all dissertation chapters - Comprehensive editing - Committee review - **Milestone:** ✓ Complete Draft to Committee

Quarter 8 (Months 22-24): Revisions & Defense - Incorporate committee feedback - Multiple revision rounds - Defense preparation - Dissertation defense - Final revisions and submission - **Milestone:** ✓ Dissertation Defense Passed, Final Submission

CONTINGENCY PLANNING GUIDE

Build in Buffer Time for Common Delays:

IRB Approval Delays

- **Typical Delay:** 2-8 weeks beyond expected
- **Contingency:** Add 1 month buffer after IRB submission
- **Backup Plan:** Prepare all other materials during waiting period

Recruitment Challenges

- **Typical Issue:** Slower enrollment than expected
- **Contingency:** Add 25% extra time to recruitment phase

- **Backup Plan:**
 - Expand recruitment strategies
 - Offer higher compensation
 - Broaden inclusion criteria (if scientifically appropriate)

Participant Attrition

- **Typical Rate:** 15-30% dropout in longitudinal studies
- **Contingency:** Over-recruit by 20-30%
- **Backup Plan:**
 - Implement retention strategies (regular check-ins)
 - Offer milestone incentives

Data Analysis Complications

- **Typical Issue:** Unexpected statistical challenges
- **Contingency:** Add 2-4 weeks extra for analysis phase
- **Backup Plan:** Consult with statistician early

Advisor/Committee Review Delays

- **Typical Delay:** 2-4 weeks longer than expected
- **Contingency:** Build in 1 month between draft submission and defense
- **Backup Plan:** Set clear deadlines with committee in advance

MILESTONE TRACKING TABLE

Use this table to track your progress:

Milestone	Target Date	Status	Actual Completion Date	Notes
IRB Approval	[Date]	☐ Not Started /		
		☐ In Progress /		
		☐ Complete		
Pilot Study Complete	[Date]	☐ Not Started /		
		☐ In Progress /		
		☐ Complete		
Target Sample Recruited	[Date]	☐ Not Started /		
		☐ In Progress /		
		☐ Complete		
Baseline Data Collected	[Date]	☐ Not Started /		
		☐ In Progress /		
		☐ Complete		
All Data Collection Complete	[Date]	☐ Not Started /		
		☐ In Progress /		
		☐ Complete		

Milestone	Target Date	Status	Actual Completion Date	Notes
Data Cleaning Complete	[Date]	Started / ☐ In Progress / ☐ Complete ☐ Not Started /		
All Analyses Complete	[Date]	☐ In Progress / ☐ Complete ☐ Not Started /		
Complete Draft Written	[Date]	☐ In Progress / ☐ Complete ☐ Not Started /		
Committee Review Complete	[Date]	☐ In Progress / ☐ Complete ☐ Not Started /		
Defense Date	[Date]	☐ In Progress / ☐ Complete ☐ Not Started /		
Final Submission	[Date]	☐ In Progress / ☐ Complete		

WEEKLY TASK BREAKDOWN TEMPLATE

For more granular planning, break each month into weekly tasks:

Month [X]: [Phase Name]

Week 1: - [] Task 1: [Specific action item] - [] Task 2: [Specific action item] - [] Task 3: [Specific action item] - **Time Estimate:** [Hours] - **Deliverable:** [What should be complete]

Week 2: - [] Task 1: [Specific action item] - [] Task 2: [Specific action item] - [] Task 3: [Specific action item] - **Time Estimate:** [Hours] - **Deliverable:** [What should be complete]

Week 3: - [] Task 1: [Specific action item] - [] Task 2: [Specific action item] - **Time Estimate:** [Hours] - **Deliverable:** [What should be complete]

Week 4: - [] Task 1: [Specific action item] - [] Task 2: [Specific action item] - **Time Estimate:** [Hours] - **Deliverable:** [What should be complete]

TIPS FOR REALISTIC TIMELINE PLANNING

1. Work Backwards from Deadline

Start with your defense/submission date and work backwards, allocating time for each phase.

2. Account for Academic Calendars

- Avoid scheduling major milestones during:
 - University breaks (winter, spring, summer)
 - Conference travel
 - Teaching responsibilities
 - Holidays

3. Be Conservative with Time Estimates

- First time doing research? Add 25-50% more time
- Complex analyses? Add extra buffer
- Multiple committee members? Plan for longer review periods

4. Parallel vs. Sequential Tasks

- **Can overlap:** Literature review + IRB preparation
- **Must be sequential:** IRB approval → Data collection
- **Can overlap:** Data collection + preliminary analysis
- **Must be sequential:** Analysis → Results writing

5. Consider Seasonality

- Summer: Lower academic participation (if recruiting students)
- Holidays: Lower response rates
- Academic year: Better for student/faculty participants

6. Protect Writing Time

- Block out dedicated writing periods
- Don't underestimate revision time (multiple rounds typical)
- Allow time for committee review and feedback incorporation

7. Build in Celebration Points

- Acknowledge milestone achievements
- Schedule breaks after intensive phases
- Reward progress to maintain motivation

CUSTOMIZATION CHECKLIST

Before using this timeline:

- ☐ Select appropriate template (6, 12, 18, or 24 months)
 - ☐ Adjust phases based on your specific research design
 - ☐ Verify timeline aligns with institutional requirements
 - ☐ Confirm defense/submission deadline
 - ☐ Account for IRB review time at your institution
 - ☐ Consider your other commitments (teaching, work, etc.)
 - ☐ Build in contingency time (add 10-20% buffer)
 - ☐ Review with advisor before finalizing
 - ☐ Set calendar reminders for major milestones
 - ☐ Share timeline with committee/advisor
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PROGRESS TRACKING TIPS

1. **Update Weekly:** Review and update timeline every week
2. **Flag Delays Early:** Adjust timeline if falling behind
3. **Document Changes:** Note why timeline adjustments made
4. **Communicate:** Keep advisor informed of progress and delays
5. **Celebrate Milestones:** Acknowledge completed phases

Remember: This timeline is a planning tool, not a rigid contract. Most research projects experience some delays—that's normal. The key is realistic planning with built-in flexibility.

END OF TIMELINE TEMPLATE