Models for planning a thesis

The following are suggestions for how you might set goals to complete your thesis within a reasonable timeframe. They are simply potential guidelines and the details will change for each student, especially depending on the research methodology used. For example, with a text analysis, instruments are not an issue so the data analysis would start earlier and last longer; alternatively, some students might want to work on their major article in, say, year 3 before their minor articles.

Time	Goals for Plan A thesis	Goals for Plan B thesis
Year 1 Sem 1	Proposal Outline of lit review Overview of methodology	2 courses
Year 1 Sem 2	Detailed outline* of lit review Detailed ideas of methodology Instruments	2 courses Exploring ideas for thesis
Year 2 Sem 1	Detailed outline of methodology Data collection and analysis	Proposal Detailed outline* of lit review Overview of methodology
Year 2 Sem 2	Data collection and analysis Minor article 1	Detailed outline of methodology Instruments
Year 3 Sem 1	Detailed outline of results	Minor article 1 Data collection and analysis
Year 3 Sem 2	Minor article 2 Full lit review and methodology	Minor article 2 Detailed outline of results
Year 4 Sem 1	Major article (clear draft) Clear ideas for discussion	Clear ideas for discussion Full lit review and methodology Major article (clear draft)
Year 4 Sem 2	Major article submitted Full results and discussion	Major article submitted Full results and discussion

* A detailed outline would list the key points made in each paragraph, and could also include full versions of 3 or 4 key paragraphs.