

Faculty of Education and Health Sciences Postgraduate Research Student Progression Review process

An annual progression review meeting is conducted with all postgraduate research students. The aim of the annual review of all sPhD, PhD, MD and MRes students is to facilitate the support of research students, formalise monitoring and management of student progress, provide space to reflect on how PhD/MD/MRes supervision is going, promote research excellence and generally promote graduate research. This process helps to ensure successful completion of the research degree within the prescribed period.

Therefore, the annual progression review is to assess whether the student has:

- (i) Knowledge and skills appropriate to the stage of his/her research programme;
- (ii) Completed work of a sufficient quality to justify continuation on the programme and that the research methods are appropriate and practical;
- (iii) A realistic plan in place for progression and eventual completion of the research within the expected timeframe.

The assessment will be based on the completed documentation, the presentation and the responses to questions resulting from the presentation. Whilst the progression review is not an end of PhD viva, the student should expect to defend their work and methodological choices when questioned in order that the panel can make their assessment (see also Appendix 2). The panel will also have access to previous years' progression review reports and recommendations.

Timeline

All students registered on EHS sPhD, PhD, MD or MRes programmes will be reviewed by the relevant Departmental review panel between September-November every year. Students should be informed about the progression process in early August/September by the Departmental contact point and provided with tentative timeline for the review panel to take place. Wherever possible, EHS staff will endeavour to arrange several 'progression weeks' in which progressions take place in order that the timing of progression is synchronised across the Faculty; some departments may block book a week others may want to spread the process out. Students should discuss their progress with their supervisory team and work towards completing the necessary documentation that should be submitted to their departmental contact point two weeks prior to the annual progression review meeting.

Annual Progression Review Panel membership

The panel will have the following membership (as per the Handbook of Academic Regulations, Section 5.6.7.2),

- Chairperson: Head of Dept or nominee
- Independent panel members:
 - Member of the Department who satisfies the criteria of appointment of supervisor¹ (Nominated by HoD)
 - Experienced Academic from outside the Department who satisfies the criteria of appointment of supervisor (Nominated by HoD)

¹ 5.5.3 For PhD degrees, the primary supervisor shall be one or more of the following: (i) a professor; (ii) the holder of a PhD degree; (iii) an academic staff member who has already supervised a doctoral degree to completion.

- Supervisor is a panel member and while they should not lead questions, they will be part of the decision-making process.

Role of Panel Members

- **Chairperson:** The Chair will manage the annual progression review panel, ensuring that the student is treated fairly, will ensure that the process is consistent with Academic Regulations, and will communicate the outcome of the review to the student. The Chairperson will **not** engage in the assessment of the student's progress. The Chairperson will ensure that all the required documentation is completed, including feedback to the student, is all passed on to the Head of Department where relevant, and will communicate the outcome to relevant parties.
- **Independent panel members:** The role of the independent panel members is to ensure that the candidate has demonstrated satisfactory progress in relation to the stage of their PhD programme.
- **Supervisor:** The supervisor should not take the lead in questions but may contribute should it be necessary to do so.

Review Documentation to be submitted by student in advance of the panel meeting:

Students registered for a period of less than 4 months will submit a 1-page document (See Appendix 1) during the progression period only.

All other students (>4 months registration period) must submit:

- The Post Graduate Research Student Achievements Form (Appendix 2)²
- Optional - written progression report to include action plan and bibliography (1000 words)³

Format of the panel review meeting

All students registered for a period of more than 4 months will be required to give a 10-minute presentation and answer questions raised by the panel. Following the discussion session, the student will withdraw to allow the panel time for discussion. The panel discussion will include input from the supervisors; students will have an opportunity to speak without their supervisor being present. Following this, the student will be informed of the panel's recommendation verbally by the Chair.

It would normally be expected that all students will attend their progression panel meeting. However, provision will be made for remote panels where necessary. In the case of remote panels, the format will be similar to that described above.

In preparing the postgraduate research student achievements' form and the content of the presentation, students should describe their performance on taught modules (where relevant) and research components of the programme and should consider the student guidance notes given in Appendix 2.

² Students completing the Structured Programmes should provide evidence for their completion of core and elective modules using the official UL transcript and include plans for completion of the modules in their time plan as appropriate in the PhD Achievements form. Students following the traditional PhD, MD or MRes route should detail training and related activities undertaken in the PhD Achievements form.

³ Student and supervisor should discuss whether a written report should be submitted.

Outcomes

As per the Handbook of Academic Regulations (Section 5.6.7.5), the recommendations made to the Academic Council Grading Committee following the panel review will be as follows:

5.6.7.5 The Research Review Panel will assess the candidate's performance to date and determine the appropriate recommendation. The Panel's recommendation shall be one of the following:

a. The student's research progress is of a sufficiently high standard to warrant continuation on the masters or PhD register as applicable. (G)

or

b. The student's progress is not satisfactory and the student is required to undertake the Research Confirmation Process. (NG)

These recommendations will be made at the review panel meeting. Students will be informed of the recommendation immediately and written reports will be provided by the panel Chair to students and their supervisors within 2-weeks of the panel meeting. Reports should provide students with clear feedback on both the strengths and weaknesses of their research programme. Where a Head of Department is not a panel Chair, the Chair must also provide reports and decisions to the Head within 2-weeks of the meeting. Heads of Department must enter grades to the online system by the University of Limerick's grading deadline in January. Heads of Department must ensure that the records of annual progression reviews are stored and made available for subsequent panels.

Completion of the Progression Forms

Progression forms (PGR9) and progression panel reports (see template in Appendix 3) will be completed at the end of each annual progression review meeting and signed by the panel members. All forms will be sent together to SAA with copies kept in student files in the Department (and by the sPhD administrator, where pertinent).

Appendix 1: Faculty of Education & Health Sciences PhD Students Progress Report for those registered for a period of <4months.

Please answer the questions below. Type your answers in the boxes and make sure that the total length of the report does not exceed 1 page. Reports that are longer will be returned for abbreviation.

Name

Title of PhD:

Answer the questions below. Be precise but concise!

Background Give a brief background to your project (100 words)

Aims What are the general aims of your dissertation work? Which questions are you trying to answer?

Skills (Which modules/skills did you acquire (e.g., laboratory, methodological) since beginning post-graduate study that are essential to dissertation work?)

Progress What is your progress to date?

Ethics Did you obtain approval from the ethics committee for your studies to date and do you have a copy of the approval letter?

Goals What is your future planning over the next 12 months of graduate study? List goals and objectives

Have you completed your Research Integrity training **No** **Yes**

Signature of HoD.....

Signature of Supervisor

Would you like progression (Yes or no).....

To be completed by the HoD

As per the Handbook of Academic Regulations (Section 5.6.7.5), the recommendations made to the Academic Council Grading Committee following the panel review will be as follows:

G

NG

You will be notified formally of the outcome by the Graduate School in due course.

Appendix 2. Post Graduate Research Student Achievements Form (to be completed by the student only) Example

Title
Modelling Damage in Carbon Fibre Composites

Abstract (max. 250 words)
In this project, we aim to develop a state-of-the-art three-dimensional multi-scale composites damage model that can predict failure events that occur over a range of length and time scales. A detailed damaging micromechanics model will be developed and a novel approach to scale-up to the continuum is proposed. Model input data such as individual fibre stiffness and fibre pitch/diameter distribution will be generated using nano-indentation experiments and microscopy, respectively. The model will be integrated within the framework of the ABAQUS finite element code (currently used by at least two major aircraft manufacturers), thus providing a useful design tool to industry and academia.

Short Progress Statement (200 words max.)
Include your progress to date, and state how your research is progressing. Are there any significant roadblocks? Any relationship problems? Mention any significant progress not measured in the forms below. This is your chance to have a say in the progress of your PhD!
Please add an additional statement (200 words max.) if your progress has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic

Year (please tick)					
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year (n)
		x			
MRes/MD/PhD?			Structured / Traditional?		

Major Outputs, e.g. journal Papers, book chapters, major projects, designs etc. (planned, submitted or published (state which))

- Example: TJ Vaughan, McCarthy, CT, A micromechanical study on the effect of intra-ply properties on transverse shear fracture in fibre reinforced composites, Composites Part A: Applied Science and Manufacturing, Vol. 42, No. 9, pp. 1217-1228 (contribution to paper: directed the study, wrote sections of the paper etc.) (published)
- Example: A. Another, Designed a copper façade for UL’s main entrance (in place)

Conference Papers (planned, submitted or published (state which))

- Example; Mortell, D., McCarthy, C.T. and Tanner, D. (2012) 'An Investigation into the Relationship between Intralaminar Crack Growth and Delamination, leading to Compromised Structural and Mechanical Performance', in Marino Q., Proceedings of the 15th European Conference on Composite Materials (ECCM15), Venice, Italy, 24-28 June. (published)

Presentations(internal and/or external)

- **Title:** Predicting Failure in Multi-bolt Composite Joints using Finite Element Analysis and Bearing-bypass Diagrams (external)
Author(s): Blogs, Joe
Venue / Date: 6th International Conference on Damage Assessment of Structures (DAMAS), Polish Academy of Sciences, Gdansk, Poland. / 4th-6th July 2005
Role: Standard Conference Presentation

Technical Reports (planned, submitted, approved, state which)

- **Report:** Synthesis report on validation tests for manufacturing effects (submitted)
Author(s): XXX,YYY

Commissioning Agency: European Commission - MAAXIMUS-WP6.5-ULIM-CTD-CTD6.5.4_Test_Results_V2.0, 2011, MAAXIMUS - FP7 Work grant number 213371

Skills (300 words max.)

- **Proficient in ABAQUS finite element code**
- **Advanced Excel course taken**
- **Etc.**

Modules (State grade: Pass, Fail, Letter Grade or N/A);

Completion of this section is compulsory for Structured PhD Students

- **ME6032, Advanced Aircraft Structures (grade: N/A)**
- **ME60011, FUNDAMENTALS OF CONTINUUM MECHANICS, (grade: pass)**

Special Achievements

- **Represented the MABE Dept. at Sir Bernard Crosland Symposium**
- **Solved a complex problem for Cook Medical**
- **Etc.**

Ethics Approval	Yes/No
Does your research require Ethics Approval?	
Has Ethics Approval been granted?	

Have you completed your Research Integrity training No Yes

Appendix 2 Student guidance notes

In assessing progression, panel members will address the following concerns:

Has your year 1 achieved the following

- (1) Is the project clearly defined?
- (2) Are the objectives to be achieved within the second 12-month period realistic and achievable within available resources
- (3) Does the PhD/MD/MRes as it stands offer adequate research training for the student to PhD level?
- (4) Track record of achievement on taught modules
- (5) Is the programme of work likely to provide a sufficient foundation for PhD/MD/MRes research?
- (6) Does the student show evidence of understanding the research question and its implications, the limitations of the techniques to be employed and the significance of their work within the broader literature?
- (7) Is the research sufficiently well-defined to proceed?
- (8) Are the proposed supervisor/advisor arrangements satisfactory?
- (9) Are there any ethical problems associated with the project?

Year 2

- (1) Have the stated objectives been achieved?
- (2) Is the proposed programme of work achievable?
- (3) Are the defined objectives likely to be achieved with the available resources?*
- (4) If data collection is not complete what are the obstacles to completion?
- (5) Does the student show evidence of ability to critically evaluate the work and place it within the context of related studies?
- (6) Track record of achievement on taught modules
- (7) Is there any evidence of a publication plan?
- (8) Is (are) the supervisor(s) satisfied with the student's progress to date?
- (9) Is the student satisfied with the current supervisory arrangements?

Year 3

- (1) Is this PhD/MD/MRes research likely to make, a measurable and worthwhile contribution to the field of study?
- (2) Is the practical component of the work completed, or almost completed? If not, how can it be completed?
- (3) Has an outline of the thesis been decided upon?
- (4) Has the sPhD student completed all non-research credits of the sPhD programme?
- (5) Has the work been (or will it be in the near future) subject to external review through conference presentation or as full papers?

Year 4 *criteria 1-4 of year 3 and in addition:

- (1) Are the student and supervisor(s) satisfied that the written thesis will be submitted on time?
- (2) What are the supervisor's and student's thoughts on examiners and arrangements for submission and viva voce?
- (3) *Will another review be required at the end of Year 4?

Refer to the regulations which can be accessed here <http://www.ul.ie/graduateschool/codes-practice-and-regulations> Version 2 Revised 05/12/14

Appendix 3
EHS Progression Panel Report Template

Student name:
Student ID:
Year of registration:
Date of progression meeting:
Panel members:

The panel noted the following points in relation to your progression panel meeting:

Areas of strength

-
-
-

Areas of weakness

-
-
-

Has the student completed Research Integrity training No Yes If no, when do they plan to do it?

As per the Handbook of Academic Regulations (Section 5.6.7.5), the recommendations made to the Academic Council Grading Committee following the panel review will be as follows:

G

NG

You will be notified formally of the outcome by the Graduate School in due course.

Chair signature:

Panel member signature:

Date: