**Guidance for FMD postgraduate research student annual progressions**

Progression is a formal process that permits students to continue to the next stage of their research studies programme.

Students should liaise with their supervisors for advice and feedback on preparation of annual progression reports.

If supervisors have any concerns regarding a student’s progress, they should notify their institute DGS at the first opportunity. **At each annual progression supervisors must complete a Supervisor Report Form**. This can be downloaded through the following link: [Supervisor\_Update\_Report\_Form\_for\_PhD\_MDRes\_Students.doc](https://qmulprod-my.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/g/personal/raw290_qmul_ac_uk/EY0Oy228CYxMqbnOctHVQcoBZW1U-VxAnFbKmAU65g2NFA?e=y9hpsl). Completed forms should be send to the institute PGR administrator (Institute PGR administrators and DGS confirm forms have been submitted and DGSs approve). This is necessary for final approval of progressions.

**Year 1 progression: 9-month report**

For full time students the window for the first (Year 1) progression is 6-9 months from initial registration, with an expectation that by the end of this period the progression outcome will be logged on the students MySIS record. If a Year 1 progression has not been completed within 12 months, the student’s registration will be ended.

For part-time students, the Year 1 progression point should occur by 18 months from initial registration and must be completed before 24 months.

For the Year 1 progression students are required to submit a report and undergo an oral examination.

The report should be approximately 3,000 and not more than 4,000 words in length.

The report should include:

* Lay summary of the project (200 words).
* Introduction to the project, including a brief literature review that may include a critique of key methods and models to be used.
* Overarching aim of the project, hypotheses to be tested and specific research objectives.
* How the research objectives will be addressed.
* Results and discussion (there is not a requirement that the report will include original data but any results, including method validation, should be included).
* Plan of future work, including a timeline in the form of a Gantt chart.

In addition to the progression report, students should report on the training they have undertaken as part of their Personal Development Planning (70 points are expected at this stage). Students should submit their skills point record and details of what future training they intend to take to their progression panel at the same time as their report for discussion at the panel meeting. Student should also have completed mandatory QMUL training in research integrity: <https://courses.epigeum.com/register>.

The report will be considered by a progression panel comprising at least two members of academic staff who have been approved by the Institute Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). The progression panel examiners will not be the student’s supervisors and cannot examine the student’s final thesis. They will normally be internal to QMUL but in a different research centre to that of the student and primary supervisor. In combination the examiners appointed to the progression panel will be experienced in supervision and examination.

The panel will also meet with the student for an oral examination. This will start with the student giving a short (approximately 15-20 minute) presentation summarising their project and progress to date.

The panel will then question the student to assess their understanding of the following:

* Research area.
* Goals of the project.
* Methods and or study design.
* Research process (including where appropriate ethics, statistics, data analysis etc).
* Feasibility of future research plans.
* Likelihood of submitting within four years (full-time students) or 7 years (part-time students).

**The panel should provide constructive feedback to the student. This will include a written report that should comment on both the strengths and weakness of the project/study design, the quality of the written report and the students’ performance in the oral examination.**

The lead panellist will make a progression outcome recommendation and submit the panel report through MySIS. The possible outcomes of the panel are:

* Progress – the student may progress to the next stage of the research studies programme
* Referred – the student must undertake further specified work (communicated in writing by the Institute DGS) and be reconsidered for progression within a maximum time period of 3 months.
* If referred, the student will have one further opportunity to resubmit their report and be re-assessed by the panel. This may require an additional oral examination where the institute DGS may also be present.

The only possible outcomes after referral are:

* Progress – the student may progress to the next stage of the research studies programme
* Fail to progress – the student’s registration should be terminated

De-registration will result in the immediate cessation of any studentship payments and the student will be liable for tuition fees.

The chair of the progression panel will be responsible for ensuring that the student’s MySIS record is updated appropriately by uploading the progression outcome and written feedback.

The progression process will normally be completed by the end of the ninth month of registration. Failure to do this will automatically result in the student being referred.

If a student does not engage with this process, it will be considered as the equivalent of failing to attend the progression examination and the student’s registration will be terminated.

It should also be noted that the panel may request further meetings with the student, between formal progression, to support progress and offer guidance.

**Summary**

* **Supervisors: nominate assessors via MySIS and reports any concerns regarding the student’s progress to the DGS.**
* **Students: write the 3,000-4,000 word report, submit training record, and prepare a 15-20 minute presentation.**
* **Supervisors and Students: organise the time and location of the panel meeting.**
* **Panel assessors and Students complete the panel meeting.**
* **Panel assessors: upload decision on to MySIS by submitting report and selecting the relevant outcome options**

**Year 2 progression: 18-month report**

Students are required to complete a progress report 18 months after their initial registration. Students should:

1. Write a report to include:

* A Lay (300 word) or graphical abstract
* A fully referenced literature review setting out the background to the research (this is a key element of the report and is intended to form the basis of the introduction/ literature review for the final thesis)
* A materials and methods section
* Summary of results obtained to date (these may be presented as fully formed results chapters suitable for inclusion in the final thesis)
* A brief discussion of data presented as results
* A detailed plan of future studies with an outline of the planned thesis and a timetable for its completion.

If the project aims have changed significantly from the 9-month stage, then an explanation for this should also be included.

The report **should be no more than 20,000 words** (excluding refs and figures) Writing and preparation of the progression report should NOT require a long period of absence from experimental work/data collection.

The report’s purpose is to demonstrate progress and potential. It is envisaged the literature review will form a basis of the introduction of the final thesis. Near to completed results chapter/s, that could be part of the final thesis, may also be included.

2. Provide evidence of satisfactory participation in doctoral development training by submitting their skills point record (students should be on track to complete 210 hours of training before submitting their final thesis).

3. Undergo a *viva voce* examination with their progression panel (the panel makeup will normally be the same as the assessors for the Year 1 progression). At the *viva voce* examination, a student is expected to give a 20-30 minute presentation which should include details of results to date. This will allow assessors to evaluate the likelihood of completion on time.

Criteria for progression:

In both the submitted written work and the viva examination students must satisfy their assessors that they have:

* Deep knowledge and critical understanding of the relevant literature.
* Developed an appropriate methodology to undertake the required research and made adequate progress with the methodology.
* The ability to produce work of an appropriate level in terms of independent research, critical argument, use of sources, clarity of writing, and consistent use of scholarly apparatus.
* The ability to complete the thesis on time (we would expect full time students to be on track to submit within 3 years and 3 months from the date of initial registration.
* The ability to defend ideas and to accept constructive criticism.
* Demonstrated that their research will make a clear contribution to knowledge in one or more areas of the topic.

The chair of the progression panel will be responsible for ensuring that the student’s MySIS record is updated appropriately by uploading the progression outcome and a report containing constructive written feedback.

If a student is unable to meet the criteria for progression the independent assessors can recommend a referral. The student will then meet with the DGS to agree requirements and period to make up the deficiency. If at the end of this period, the assessors are not satisfied that the student has made the necessary progress then they will recommend termination of registration to the DGS. This assessment may require an additional oral examination where the DGS may also be present.

If a student has not passed this progression point after 24 months (full-time) it is likely that their registration will be terminated as they will have failed to demonstrate the progress necessary for continued enrolment.

**Summary**

* **Students: write the <20,000 word report, submit training record, and prepare a 20-30 minute presentation.**
* **Supervisors and Students: organise the time and location of the panel meeting.**
* **Panel assessors and Students complete the panel meeting.**
* **Panel assessors: upload decision on to MySIS by submitting report and selecting the relevant outcome options**

**Year 3 progression: 30-month report**

Students are required to complete a report on their progress at the 30-month stage. The report should include the following:

* A short summary of new results obtained since the 18-month review (1000 words maximum excluding figures). Alternately a draft of a results or final discussion chapter, that was NOT part of 18-month progression report or has been significantly expanded since the 18-month progression report, may be submitted. You should discuss which of these options you will submit with your supervisor.
* A summary of work that needs to be done in the remaining months - this should be ranked in order of priority and can be presented as bullet points. It should include a timetable for the completion of any experimental work/data collection.
* A draft version of the contents pages for the thesis which should be in sufficient detail to clearly define the thesis (this is also required for transfer to write up).
* A timetable for completion of thesis chapters and submission of thesis.
* Evidence of satisfactory participation in doctoral development training (students need to complete 210 hours of training before submitting their thesis).

The student’s progression panel will review this written report, which should also be sent to the institute DGS. In some instances, the panel may wish to meet with the student to discuss the report although this is not mandatory.

The chair of the progression panel will be responsible for ensuring that the student’s MySIS record is updated appropriately by uploading the progression outcome and written feedback.

**Writing-up**

A student who has completed the vast majority of their experimental work and data collection, and in the judgement of their supervisor is in a position to submit their thesis within 12 months, can apply to transfer to writing-up status.

The maximum period for writing up before submission of the final thesis is **one calendar year** irrespective of mode of attendance. In exceptional circumstances the writing up period may be extended. In such circumstances an additional fee will be payable. Writing up status counts as part of the overall period of registration.

Students must have completed the minimum registration period (2 years fill-time or 4 years part-time) and not exceeded the maximum registration period (4 years full-time or 7 years part-time) at the time of thesis submission.

Failure to submit a thesis within the maximum period is grounds for the student’s registration to be terminated.

Students with writing up status are not liable for tuition fees. However, students **must continue to re-enrol during the period of writing up until they have submitted.**

<http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/research-degrees/research-degree-students/writing-up/>