POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH MONITORING FRAMEWORK:
CORE EXPECTATIONS FOR PGR MONITORING AND REVIEW

Version No.	Description	Author	Approval	Effective Date
1.0	This document outlines the core expectations for monitoring and review of PGR students.	DAP (Quality Assurance and Student Experience) Education Enhancement	Senate February 2024	March 2024

Version 1.0

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Postgraduate Research Monitoring Framework:
Core Expectations for PGR Monitoring and Review

Background

Following an action which arose at the meeting of ESC in October 2022, QAC has been tasked with developing a Postgraduate Research (PGR) Monitoring Framework which outlines the core, minimum expectations for monitoring and review of PGR students across the Institution.

This Framework is intended to provide a baseline, broad structure and it is understood that subject-specific information relevant to each Department/School will also supplement the review and monitoring of individual students.

The proposed Framework sets out the key principles of PGR monitoring and review and provides a baseline standard upon which staff can structure the regular monitoring of progress, in partnership with students. The Framework will ensure greater parity across the University, support staff in their monitoring of PGR progression, and align to the UK Quality Code. The Framework will also provide clarity and structure and confirm expectations for PGR students throughout their programme of study.

This Framework supplements the Supervisory Agreement for PGRs and their Supervisors, PGR General Academic Regulations, Code of Practice for PGR Students, and Strathclyde Doctoral School guidance on progression monitoring.

In developing the Framework, a review of current PGR monitoring and review policy and practice from across the University has been undertaken and commonality of practice across all faculties noted. A review of regulatory guidelines and current practice across the sector, in relation to PGR monitoring and review, was also undertaken. Details can be made available on request.

In accordance with the ESC action, this process has been led by the Deputy Associate Principal (Academic Quality & Student Experience) in conjunction with the Quality Enhancement and Assurance Team (QEAT), and the Strathclyde Doctoral School (SDS) with extensive Faculty input. The initial consultation paper was prepared by the DAP, QEAT and SDS then circulated to Faculty colleagues, via Vice Deans Academic for comment. Feedback from the initial consultation was incorporated into the Framework which was then reviewed by QEAT and SDS colleagues. A series of further consultations, of the updated Framework paper, were undertaken with Faculty staff and, again, the paper was updated to reflect their comments. Further updates were made following review by QAC and ESC in December 2023.

Proposed Framework: Core Expectations for PGR Monitoring and Review

	Timescales	Reviewers	Progression decision made by
Initial Review	Between 3 and 6 months from student enrolment on programme of study[1]	Supervisory Team[2]	Supervisory Team
First Annual Review	Between 7 and 12 months	Review Panel[3]	Review Panel
Interim Review	c. 18 months	Supervisory Team	Supervisory Team
Second Annual Review	c. 24 months	Review Panel	Review Panel
Interim Review	c. 30 months	Supervisory Team	Supervisory Team
Final Review/ Pre-submission Period[4]	Prior to thesis submission deadline, allowing the student sufficient preparation time.	Review Panel	Review Panel[5]

It is recommended that Supervisory Teams implement additional regular supervisory meetings or additional interim reviews if required, for example as a consequence of changing circumstances or concerns relating to student performance.

In line with paragraph 196 of the [Code of Practice for PGR Students](), part-time students should follow the same review schedule pattern or sequence as full-time students; this should be extended for the duration of study.

Examples of Progression Requirements

It is acknowledged that progression requirements will be determined by Faculty/Department and subject-specific guidance, however, in developing these guidelines for Minimum Expectations for PGR Monitoring and Review a number of examples of best practice were identified. The following are examples of progression requirements at various stages of PGR programmes (PhD and professional doctorates). They **are indicative of a range of current good practice from across the University**. These reflect the diversity and range of progression monitoring activities and expectations across Faculties, and Departments. **They will not be applicable to all disciplines but are presented below for information and consideration, if appropriate.**

Initial Review

- A clear research focus and plan for literature review, with some consideration given to research methodology and philosophical assumptions
- Planning for ethical approval, environmental impact assessment and equality impact assessment
- Planning for health and safety, and risk assessments, including work undertaken off-campus

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[1] PhD and, where applicable, Professional Doctorate, Master of Research and MPhil programmes.
[2] The Supervisory Team comprises the Primary Supervisor and any secondary Supervisors. The Supervisory Team provides independent advice and support, brings subject expertise to the team, and, in some cases, provides pastoral support. External team members are not expected to undergo supervisory training.
[3] The Review Panel comprises of a minimum of two members of academic staff, at least one of whom must be independent of the Supervisory Team.
[4] The point at which the decision is made regarding progress to completing stage to be agreed at Faculty-level. In cases where a student has not submitted within the expected timeframe following the final review, progress reviews should continue in line with the usual timescales.
[5] Where Departmental standard practice does not include a formal final review, the decision to progress to completion stage may then be made by the Supervisory Team.

- Completion of training modules on Tackling Gender-Based Violence and #StrathEqual: equality, diversity and inclusion for students
- Establish and agree professional development requirements
- Finalise PhD Development Plan:
  - brief description of objectives of PhD
  - expected activities during development of project including expected deliverables
  - publication strategy
  - data management strategy
  - mode of engagement between student and supervisor
  - training requirements

Interim Reviews

- Written progress report
- Evidence of progress

First Annual Review[6]

- Written report comprising outline of research project and provisional calendar for future work
- A clear research focus and defined research question(s)
- A clear research methodology and the philosophical assumptions guiding the research; any results obtained to date
- Completed literature review
- Some progress made on experimental or case study work (data collection)Thesis chapters: titles and potentially some chapters drafted
- Journal paper or conference paper drafted and submitted
- Progress to date on professional development activities, including Postgraduate Certificate in Researcher Professional Development/Research Methodology for Business and Management (PgCert RPD/RMBM) update if relevant, and plan to continue development activities.
- Details of any publications/planned publications (journal/conference)
- Presentation

Second Annual Review (*in addition to* examples provided for First Annual Review)

- Data analysis completed, or in the final phases of completion
- Thesis structured/planned, with some chapters drafted
- Journal paper or conference paper drafted and submitted
- Experience of presenting at national or international conference

Final/Pre-submission Review (*in addition to* examples provided for First and Second Annual Reviews)

- Data analysis completed
- Thesis writing well underway, nearing completion
- Presented at more than one national or international conference, with paper(s) included in conference proceedings
- Completion of PgCert RPD/RMBM/researcher development skills training
- Environmental Impact Assessment/Equality Impact Assessment

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[6] In cases where a student's period of funding is limited to the minimum duration of study, additional support measures may be put in place, from the outset, to assist students to complete within their funding timescales.

Potential Outcomes of Review and Corresponding Actions [7]

1. **Satisfactory progress[8] –** the student is progressing well against their research plan and their training and development plan and is ready to engage with the next stage of the research.
   a. Proceed to next academic stage/submission of thesis *and*
   b. Performance targets agreed for next review.

2. **Satisfactory progress with reservations** – the student has not made sufficient progress against the research plan or the training and development plan, and the supervisory team has put a remedial plan in place to get the student to the required level to progress to the next stage of research.
   a. Proceed to next academic stage *and*
   b. Agree set of actions, based on detailed and comprehensive feedback, to address identified weaknesses/omissions to be completed by specified deadline (this should be scheduled in advance of the next review, for example within a three-month period).

3. **Unsatisfactory progress[9] -** there are significant concerns with the student's progress, and their ability to progress to the next stage of research.
   a. Student is required to undertake corrective action, based on detailed and comprehensive feedback, within specified timeframe (e.g. three months), at the end of which a subsequent formal review will be undertaken *or*
   b. Transfer to alternative degree (e.g. MPhil, MSc, PgDip, PgCert) *or*
   c. Student required to withdraw.

An unsatisfactory outcome should result in a registration review to assess the circumstances around the student's progress and determine if the student can be provided with support to get them back on track, or if the student should consider a period of voluntary suspension, be recommended for an exit award, or recommended for withdrawal from the programme[10]. In instances where a student is transferred to an alternative degree or required to withdraw, this should be signed off by the PGR Director, or equivalent, and Head of Department, and reported to the Associate Dean (PGR), or equivalent.

Student Support

When required, a range of support mechanisms may be employed to aid PGR student progress. In addition to faculty and departmental support, the University offers a range of student support facilities via Strathlife, the Strathclyde Doctoral School, and Strath Union including the Researcher Development Programme and Doctoral Researchers Group. Further guidance can be found in the UK Quality Code (Research Degrees).

Safe360°

Safe360° underpins our duty of care and enhances support mechanisms for students and staff, integrating national guidance and University policies and procedures.

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[7] This section should be read in conjunction with paragraphs 42 and 87 of the PGR General Academic Regulations and paragraphs 195 to 209 of the Code of Practice for PGR Students
[8] Whilst the terminology 'satisfactory' is utilised in the Annual Progress Reports, this outcome also refers to progress that surpasses satisfactory.
[9] Review Panels should take the maximum period of registration into account when agreeing outcomes and actions. These are detailed in Table A (p. 6) of the PGR General Academic Regulations.
[10] The individuals with the right to recommend withdrawal will vary by faculty.

Aligned to this, the University has in place a supervisory agreement for postgraduate researchers and their supervisors. Within this, all parties recognise the University's Dignity and Respect Policy, and its role in ensuring that every member of the University community is expected to understand, respect and behave in accordance with our Strathclyde Community Commitment.

This Policy underpins the University's approach to supporting effective PGR supervisory relationships.

Relevant parties may seek support for any matters relating to this via the following routes as appropriate:
    a. Report and Support
    b. Any Dignity and Respect Officer
    c. Your Progression Chair, Head of Department, or Vice-Dean Research and
    d. The University Complaints Procedure.

Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of the student, supervisory team, and Faculty/School/Department are detailed in the Code of Practice for PGR Students (sections 114 to 121) and the Supervisory Agreement.

Students on a Student Route Visa

In instances where a student on a Student Route Visa is required to return to their home country prior to completion and submission of their PhD, the Supervisory Team must ensure that the student has access to appropriate resources to allow them to complete the programme and is adequately supported. The monitoring and review process should continue, as noted above, via electronic means, with reference to the Guidance on the Operation of Virtual or Hybrid Oral Examinations.

Professional Development

Ongoing personal and professional development is a core component of PhD study at Strathclyde and students, along with their supervisory team, are required to consider the student's training and development to ensure they are supported to meet the requirements of their PhD studies and for their future career ambitions.

Students registered on a standard PhD programme must satisfy the requirements of the professional development programme specified in the PGR General Academic Regulations (Section 57) before submitting their thesis for examination. Any student who successfully completes the associated professional development programme element will be eligible to receive the appropriate award at the appropriate time. In appropriate cases, Recognition of Prior Learning may be applied.