Graduate Research School
Research Progress Reviews

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Research Progress Review

The formal structure for managing progress and planning key milestones

Condition of continual enrolment

Opportunity to outline your achievements since your last review, and plan the next 12 months

Get help with any issues impeding your progress from an independent panel
Review Scheduling

• All candidates, both full-time and part-time, need to be reviewed every 12 months

• Reviews are scheduled by your School
  • Auto-email sent with link to review
  • School will let you know time, date and location

Find information about Research Progress Reviews at:
http://research.unsw.edu.au/managing-your-candidature

Access the GRIS Manual for Candidates at:
https://research.unsw.edu.au/forms-procedures-and-policies-research-candidates
Progress Reviews - Panels

- Independent and objective review
- At least two members
- Ideally the same Panel should review progress throughout candidature
Progress Reviews - Panels

- Chair – Postgraduate Coordinator (PGC) or a Senior Academic
- Supervisors cannot be Panel members, but should attend the review
- Candidate/supervisor can ask for people to be excluded (not automatically granted)
Progress Reviews
- How are they conducted?

- Complete an online form in the Graduate Research Information System (GRIS)
- List the achievements you’ve made against your milestones
- Demonstrate that you’re on track for timely completion
- Candidates, Supervisors and the Review Panel all complete parts of the form
Online Progress Review

Main sections
- Candidate
- Supervisor
- Panel
## Research Progress

### B1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>i. Aims of your higher degree research program:</th>
</tr>
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### B2.

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<th>i. Progress over the last 12 months (or since last review):</th>
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### B3.

<table>
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<th>i. List written reports, publications, exhibitions/performances, conference presentations or other achievements in the last 12 months:</th>
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### B4.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>i. Goals for the next 12 months:</th>
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### B5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>i. Have any issues that you raised in your last progress review been addressed?</th>
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</table>

### B6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>i. Please indicate if any of the following problems affected progress over the past year:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Academic background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Setting in</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Experimentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ English language/comprehension and/or writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Access to resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Understanding work expected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Health/Personal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Online Progress Review

Main sections
• Candidate
• Supervisor
• Panel

Candidature Progress

C1. Schedule
i. How many hours per week are devoted to your candidature?

ii. How many hours per week are in paid employment (not including time spent on research work covered by a scholarship)?

C2. Location
i. How many hours per week do you spend on campus (Kensington, UNSW Canberra, UNSW Art & Design or Teaching Hospital)?

ii. Will any of the project be conducted during the next 12 months in a UNSW Research Centre/Affiliated Institution or Off-Campus?

Please provide any further details you wish to add regarding the above:

C3. Supervision
i. How often do you meet and discuss your research with your supervisor?

ii. How often do you meet and discuss your research with your secondary supervisor/joint supervisor?

iii. Do you consider your supervision arrangements to be satisfactory?

iv. Please elaborate on the level of support and advice you have received during the last year from your supervisor(s):

fully satisfied

C4. Resources
i. Do you have sufficient resources to support your research program?

ii. Have you received conference travel support under the Postgraduate Research Student Support (PRSS) Scheme?
Filling in the Form

Research Progress

B1.
1. Aims of your higher degree research program:

B2.
2. Progress over the last 12 months (or since last review):

B3.
3. List written reports, publications, exhibitions/performances, conference presentations or other achievements in the last 12 months:

B4.
4. Goals for the next 12 months:

B5.
5. Have any issues that you raised in your last progress review been addressed?

B6.
6. Please indicate if any of the following problems affected progress over the past year:
   - [ ] Academic background
   - [ ] Setting in
   - [ ] Experimentation
   - [ ] Communication
   - [ ] English language/comprehension and/or writing
   - [ ] Access to resources
   - [ ] Understanding work expected
   - [ ] Health/Personal
Progress Reviews
- How are they conducted?

• Both you and your supervisor should have an opportunity to meet with the Review Panel alone.

• The way your Review is run will depend on several factors, including disciplinary area, School size and attendance mode.

• Talk to your supervisor and/or PGC about how Research Progress Reviews are conducted in your School.
Progress Review - Confirmation

- PhD candidates only
- Ideally completed 9 months from commencement
- Confirms that satisfactory progress has been achieved, and an established research plan likely to lead to successful completion has been developed
Progress Reviews - Confirmation

- Research Progress Review interview plus a report:
  - Review of research area (literature review)
  - Detailed, feasible research proposal
- Talk to your supervisor and PGC about School and Faculty requirements
Outcomes for Confirmation

**Satisfactory** — progress since commencement has been satisfactory. Candidate on track for timely completion.
- next Research Progress Review in approx. 12 months

**Marginal** — concerns about capacity to complete program in a timely manner
- re-review within 3 months

**Unsatisfactory** — major concerns about capacity to complete program in a timely manner
- leads to show cause
What if you are transferring from Masters to PhD?

• Before consideration for transfer to PhD:
  • you must be eligible for admission to the PhD
  • your candidature must be Confirmed (as per PhD standards)

• If your transfer request doesn’t coincide with your Research Progress Review, an additional Review may be scheduled for Confirmation

• Ideally occurs at 1 – 1.5 years (full-time equivalent)
Masters Candidates and Confirmed PhD Candidates

- Research Progress Review takes place annually
- Both full time and part time candidates have an annual review
- Opportunity to assess your progress and ensure you stay on track
Progress
Review
Outcomes

**Satisfactory** – milestones have been achieved and candidate is on track for on-time completion
- next Research Progress Review in approx. 12 months

**Marginal** – although some of the milestones were met, others have been partially achieved or have not been achieved and candidate is at risk of not completing on time
- re-review within 3 months

**Unsatisfactory** – reflects poor progress of the research and suggest the candidature is at risk of non-completion
- re-review within 3 months
On-Time Completion

- 4 years for PhD
- 2 years for Masters

Candidates unable to submit on-time can apply to the Faculty Higher Degree Committee for permission to extend their candidature
Overtime Enrolment and Reviewing Progress

If you’re unable to submit your thesis during your final semester, you must participate in a Research Progress Review.

The outcome of this Review can only be Marginal or Unsatisfactory, depending on how close you are to submitting your thesis.
What happens next?

- Milestones will be set to achieve on-time completion
- Participate in another Research Progress Review in 3 months’ time
- Outcome will be either **Satisfactory** or **Unsatisfactory**

If unable to submit your thesis by the end of semester, you can go through the overtime enrolment procedure one more time.

If you’re still unable to submit at the end of 5 years, you will be asked to **Show Cause**.
What happens if I’m not happy with the way my Review was carried out?

- You can appeal the outcome of your Review on procedural grounds.
- Appeals must go to the Faculty Higher Degree Committee (HDC)
- Seek advice and assistance from your PGC or Associate Dean (Research Training)
- You can also seek advice from Arc Advocacy
You are not alone

Also:
- Counselling and Psychological Services
- Arc Advocacy

Faculty
- Associate Deans (Research and Research Training)
- Dean

School
- PGC
- Head of School
- Peers

Graduate Research School
- Candidature Management Officer
Research Progress Review Tips

• **Take responsibility**
  Be open and honest and report all issues that have impeded your progress

• **For protracted issues**
  Consider taking leave or enrolling part-time

• **Be proactive**
  Don’t wait for your Progress Review to sort out significant problems!
Consideration of mitigating circumstances

All reviews should consider any mitigating circumstances raised by the candidate or supervisor(s) and ensure that they are proactively and sensitively managed.
Consideration of mitigating circumstances

A management plan can be used to outline a clear pathway to completion and ensure appropriate support is in place.

- The management plan must be done in consultation with the candidate and supervisors, and relevant student support services.
B2 – Progress over the next 12 months

What have you done?
• Experiments
• Data collection
• Literature review
• Manuscript preparation
• Completion of chapters

Show what you’ve achieved/not achieved
• Put your progress in context
• It’s ok to mention challenges
• If you don’t engage with this, the Panel may think you haven’t progressed
Use of Timelines and Gantt Charts

In addition to the form, you should upload either a timeline or a Gantt chart

- Provides a clear statement to the panel that you have thought carefully about how you will achieve your goals
## Thesis Completion Timeline – Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Written (Y/N)</th>
<th>Published (Y/N)</th>
<th>Experimental Work Required (Y/N)</th>
<th>Experimental timeline (% completed, date for remaining work)</th>
<th>Writing timeline (% completed, date for remaining work)</th>
<th>Date to be sent to Supervisor</th>
<th>Date to be returned</th>
<th>Revision timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>70% completed. Remainder to be finished by 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; July</td>
<td>7&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; June</td>
<td>21&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; June</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>80% completed. Remainder to be finished by 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; April</td>
<td>60% completed. Remainder to be finished by 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; June</td>
<td>7&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; May</td>
<td>21&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; May</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>90% completed. Remainder to be finished by 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; April</td>
<td>12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; March</td>
<td>26&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; March</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>90% completed. Remainder to be finished by 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; May</td>
<td>7&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; April</td>
<td>21&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; April</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0% completed. Remainder to be finished by 14&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; July</td>
<td>21&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; June</td>
<td>5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; July</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PLANNED SUBMISSION DATE:** 30 July
THESIS SUBMISSION PLAN

Written work completed to date:
• Introduction half written
• Data Chapter 1 has been written, reviewed and edited
• Data Chapter 2 has been written
• Data Chapter 3 has been written, reviewed, and most edits completed

Timeline to completion
• Week 1 - 2 (21 August – 3 September)
  • Finalise statistics and send to supervisor for review
  • Edit Chapter 2 and send to supervisor for review
  • Send amended Chapter 3 to supervisor for review
  • Commence writing Discussion Chapter
• Week 3 – 4 (4 – 17 September)
  • Complete writing Discussion Chapter and sent to supervisors for review
• Week 5 - 6 (18 September – 1 October)
  • Complete Introduction Chapter and send to supervisor for review
  • Edit Chapter 2 and send amended work to supervisor for review
• Week 7 - 8 (2 – 15 October)
  • Make final changes in response to supervisor’s second review of Introduction Chapter, Discussion Chapter and Data Chapters
• Week 9 - 10 (16 – 29 October)
  • Cross check references, check formatting, send to supervisor for final review
  • Bind and submit

Planned thesis submission date: Monday 31 October
**B4 – Goals for the next 12 months**

What do you want to achieve?

It is okay to think big here!
- But remember it is for the next 12 months

**Examples**
- Write a paper
- Publish your literature review
- Write thesis and submit
- Obtain skills in a particular area
Goals and Milestones

So how do you....

• achieve your goals?
• show others that you are heading in the right direction?

• Milestones!
Milestones - what are they?

The things you need to do to progress towards your goals

- Used to ensure candidates make progress towards the completion of their degree
- The panel uses them to monitor progress towards your goals
Milestones - a poor example

- Make 10 compounds
- Write

What will the panel assess in the next review?
Milestones
- a better example

- Complete the 1st draft of my literature review by April 1 and get supervisor’s feedback by mid April
- Complete the experimental work for Chapter 2 (end of June)
  - Requires 10 compounds to be synthesised
  - Carry out biological assays on these compounds
- Initiate the experimental work for Chapter 3 (start in October)
  - Develop synthetic strategy to assess key scaffold
- Write first draft of manuscript on the work detailed in Chapter 2 (end of November)
Milestones

You can’t demonstrate your progress without milestones.

Discuss your milestones with your supervisor to make sure you’re on the same path.

Can do in conjunction with development of thesis plan.

Your milestones become the B2 bullet points in your next review.
Milestone setting – role of the candidate

- Provide an outline of achievements since last review against agreed milestones
- Outline of key objectives/criteria and milestones to be met by the next review
- Milestones need to have specific dates by which they should be achieved
- Timeline and milestones for completion of the thesis
Milestone setting – role of the panel

Milestones are agreed, with specific dates by which they should be achieved.

Ensure candidates are given appropriate time to achieve the milestones.

Ensure the candidate and the supervisors are actively involved.
Examples of Milestones in Research Progress Review

The candidate has made little tangible progress towards the completion of the thesis. The agreed milestone of thesis submission was not achieved. The last chapter was supposed to be completed before August 2017 but the candidate obtained mixed and unclear results, making it not possible to include that analysis in the thesis. The candidate indicated with the supervisors that he also faced significant personal issues. With respect to the other two chapters, one is quite polished but one still requires more work. The committee also views that the remaining timeline is unrealistic. The candidate has not provided any evidence of work-in-progress towards a new third chapter, apart from mentioning that there is new data. It is quite unclear how this proposed new work will take shape beyond some initial ideas. Given the previous (scrapped) third chapter turned up mixed results, there is considerable uncertainty of finishing the final chapter within 3-4 months. The candidate will also need to polish up the 2nd chapter, and this could take quite some time.
Examples of Milestones in Research Progress Review

Candidate is progressing well, and could submit Masters thesis in 3 months, prior to the census date (2 years FTE). However the panel agrees with the candidate and supervisor that there is sufficient scope for a PhD project, and therefore recommends transfer to a PhD. Candidate has met the requirements for PhD confirmation. Candidate should apply to the HDC for the transfer.

Milestones: Publish paper
What happens if you get a Marginal or Unsatisfactory result?

Must detail new milestones and remedial actions to address issues raised
- Specific deadlines for milestones must be set
- Develop a plan with your supervisor to ensure you can meet the deadlines

Interim review 3 months after initial review:
- Progress will be measured against the new milestones and deadlines
- Only possible recommendations are Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory
What happens if you get two Unsatisfactory results in a row?

If you are given two Unsatisfactory results in a row, your candidature will be considered for Show Cause.

Show Cause is a serious matter.

It is an opportunity to stop, consider any issues that have affected your progress, and reset your candidature.
Supporting Progress

Several factors may support your progress:

• Good supervisory relationships
• Appropriate resources
• Understanding what is required
• Being in the right space personally

Be proactive and address the small issues before they become big problems
What happens if you are having issues with your supervisor?

• Lack of progress can lead to both the candidate and the supervisors believing the other is the problem
• What are your options?
Research Progress Review Tips

- **Take responsibility**
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Questions and discussion