

PhD Handbook - Progression

Formal reviews of progress: overview

All PhD and MPhil students (but not MA/MSc by research students) are subject to formal reviews of progress. The purpose of formal reviews of progress is to ensure that you are making satisfactory progress with your research project and other elements of your PhD or MPhil programme. A formal review of progress should give you a clear sense of the progress you are making on your degree but the decision of a progression panel does not serve as a prediction for the outcome of the final examination.

Formal reviews of progress take place on an annual basis, towards the end of each year of enrolment, for full-time PhD and MPhil students, and on a biennial basis for part-time PhD and MPhil students. Formal reviews of progress are not required for entry into a continuation period, where this is permitted.

You have a maximum of two opportunities to meet the relevant University progression criteria at each formal review of progress. If you have not met the relevant University progression criteria after two attempts you will have failed the progression point and will be transferred to an alternative programme or your enrolment will be terminated.

Procedure for formal reviews of progress

In a formal review of progress, you will be assessed against University progression criteria (see below) which set out the *threshold* requirements for progression to the next year (or equivalent period for part-time students).

The assessment is undertaken by a progression panel, which is independent of your supervisor(s) to gain an external perspective on the progress that you are making, and to ensure that your relationship with your supervisor remains focused on your development as a researcher.

Your department determines what evidence (oral and/or written) its PhD and MPhil students should provide to demonstrate that they have met the relevant University progression criteria (see below for details). The evidence you provide is considered alongside a supervisor's report on your progress *and* agreed TAP reports.

Progression criteria and student evidence for a first formal review of progress

For progression into year 2 of a full-time PhD or MPhil programme (or equivalent stage of a part-time PhD or MPhil programme), a student must demonstrate that they:

- (a) can articulate the direction their research is taking and the research questions it addresses;
- (b) have planned in a realistic fashion the second year (or equivalent) of their research, indicating any risks and how these will be mitigated;
- (c) have sufficient acquaintance with the relevant field of knowledge to place their research into context;
- (d) have sufficient proficiency in the relevant research methods, techniques and theoretical approaches to move their research to the next stage;

- (e) have undertaken all required training (including successful completion of the Research Integrity Tutorial);
- (f) have considered ethical issues (including data management and authorship) where applicable and have in place an appropriate data management plan.

Progression criteria for a second formal review of progress

For progression into year 3 of a full-time PhD programme (or equivalent stage of a part-time PhD programme), a student must demonstrate that they:

- (a) can articulate the direction their research is taking and the research questions it addresses and how this will lead to a substantial original contribution to knowledge or understanding;
- (b) have planned in a realistic fashion the third year (or equivalent) of their research, based on the expectation that the project will be completed and the thesis submitted on time, indicating any risks and how these will be mitigated;
- (c) have the ability to write up their research in an appropriate academic format for it to be critically assessed by peer reviewers and examiners;
- (d) have begun to acquire the wider background knowledge of their research field required for the degree of PhD;
- (e) can apply the relevant research methods, techniques and theoretical approaches required to make an original contribution to knowledge or understanding;
- (f) have undertaken all required training;
- (g) have considered ethical issues (including data management and authorship) where applicable and have in place an appropriate data management plan.

Progress review meeting

The progression panel will consider your evidence, the supervisor's report *and agreed TAP reports (delete if not applicable)* at a progress review meeting. Based on these elements, the progression panel will make a decision as to whether you have met, exceeded or not met the relevant University progression criteria as well as a recommendation regarding your progression.

Progression panel decision and recommendation

If a progression panel decides that you have met or exceeded the relevant University progression criteria at the first attempt, they will recommend to the Standing Committee on Assessment (SCA), which is responsible for approving progression decisions on behalf of Senate, that you progress into the next year of your programme.

If the progression panel decides that you have *not* yet met the relevant University progression criteria, you will be permitted a second attempt at progression within three months but the panel may recommend that it would be in your best interests to transfer to an alternative programme or to withdraw from the University. You will need to let your department know as soon as possible if you wish to accept a recommendation for transfer or withdrawal.

Second attempt at progression

If you make a second attempt at progression but *do not* meet the relevant University progression criteria at this attempt, the progression panel will recommend that you are transferred to an alternative programme or that your enrolment with the University is terminated.

If you make a second attempt at progression and *do* meet or exceed the relevant University progression criteria at this attempt, the progression panel will recommend that you are progressed but this *does not* alter the timing of the next formal review of progression (if applicable) or the deadline for submission of the thesis.

See <https://www.york.ac.uk/research/graduate-school/support/policies-documents/research-degree-policy/> (Appendix 4) [*University process*] for full details of the procedure to be followed for making a second attempt at progression.

Exceptional circumstances

If you have any exceptional circumstances that may impact on a formal review of progress then you should contact your supervisor as soon as possible to discuss your options.