POLICY AND PROCEDURE ON THE MONITORING OF RESEARCH STUDENTS

Document title	Policy and Procedure on the Monitoring of Research Students
Version	5.0
Date approved by Senate / ASQC	First approved: 25.04.2018 (ASQC) Current version: 25.05.2023 (minor changes) (ASQC)
Date of effect	01.08.2023
Document owner	Education Governance (PGR Quality and Operations)
Contact	pgr@cardiff.ac.uk
Related documents	Unsatisfactory Progress or Engagement Policy and Procedure (Research Students) Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Procedure (Research Students) Student Support Intervention Policy and Procedure Interruption of Study and Extension to Time Limit Policy and Procedure (Research Students)

Alignment with the Expectations and Core practices of the revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education

This policy and procedure aligns with the following relevant Expectations and Core practices of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education:

Expectations for standards	**Expectations for quality**
The academic standards of courses meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications framework.	Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.
The value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualification and over time is in line with sector-recognised standards.	From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.
Core practices for standards	**Core practices for quality**

The provider ensures that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications frameworks.	The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses.
The provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.	The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.
	The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.
	Where the provider offers research degrees, it delivers these in appropriate and supportive research environments.
	The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.
Common practices for standards	**Common practices for quality**
The provider reviews its core practices for standards regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.	The provider reviews its core practices for quality regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.
	The provider engages students individually and collectively in the development, assurance and enhancement of the quality of their educational experience.

Policy and Procedure on the Monitoring of Research Students

Policy

1. General Statements

1.1 This Policy and Procedure applies to all research students for the duration of their programmes, with the following exceptions:

.1 DClinPsy and DEdPsy professional doctorates;

.2 the taught stage of other professional or integrated doctorates, where agreed by the Programme Director.

1.2 As a research student, you have responsibility for your academic progress, as well as your training as a professional researcher. Continued registration on your research degree programme is conditional on you maintaining adequate progress.

1.3 'Progress' is the conduct of research at an adequate rate along with the production of outputs of sufficient quality, that together lead to successful completion of the degree within the regulatory timescale.

1.4 You are supported by the University's policies and procedures for monitoring and supervision: the regular review and feedback that these provide should help maximise the likelihood that you complete your research degree programme. Supervision and review meetings also provide an audit trail of formal engagement points, and of agreements regarding tasks, commitments and any concerns that you, your supervisor(s) or reviewer(s) raise.

1.5 The Policy and Procedure on the Monitoring of Research Students is based on the following expectations:

.1 feedback from those who review your work will be honest, accurate, timely and constructive;

.2 the production of your thesis will be supported through the interim submission and review of directly relevant work;

.3 training and professional development will be integrated with your Research Plan, to support research and career development;

.4 where progress is not satisfactory there will be a transparent approach to downgrade and/or exclusion, and clear mechanisms for appeal;

.5 monitoring requirements and criteria for continued registration will be clearly communicated;

.6 performance issues will be identified and addressed in accordance with the relevant University procedure.

1.6 If you do not comply with the requirements of the Research Student Progress Monitoring Procedure, your registration will be reviewed in accordance with the University's Unsatisfactory Progress or Engagement Policy and Procedure (Research Students).

1.7 If you do not maintain adequate progress, your School will review your continued registration in accordance with the Unsatisfactory Progress or Engagement Policy and Procedure (Research Students).

1.8 If you experience personal circumstances that disrupt your progress you should report them in accordance with the Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Procedure (Research Students). The possible remedies, including adjustments to the Research Student Progress Monitoring Procedure, are described in the Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Procedure (Research Students).

1.9 If a School has growing concerns about any student's medical, psychological or emotional health, the Head of School may initiate the Student Support Intervention Policy and Procedure.

1.10 To avoid any potential conflict of interest, a Director of Postgraduate Research should delegate their role defined under this policy and procedure to another member of academic staff for the monitoring of students who they supervise.

1.11 The term 'student' includes staff candidates registered for research degrees.

2. Your Research Plan and Thesis Completion Plan

2.1 Your Research Plan is critical to the University's approach to monitoring your progress.

2.2 You should think of your Research Plan as a live, developing document that is central to your study, research and thesis production, and to your professional development as a researcher. From the outset, you should see your Research Plan as a strategy for completing your project within your period of fee-paying registration, and for developing your professional skills and competencies. [*See Research Plan guidance note*]

2.3 An agreed Research Plan is a vital element of your Initial Review[1]; it will then be reviewed and updated at each subsequent progress monitoring event, and should be adjusted to take account of developments or circumstances over the previous or upcoming periods.

[1] The first monitoring event of the Research Student Progress Monitoring Procedure.

2.4 As you prepare to move from your 'registered, fees-payable' status to 'thesis completion' status, your Research Plan will be replaced by a Thesis Completion Plan, which will provide a clear schedule for the final writing and editing of your thesis. If you are a full-time PhD student whose fee-paying status extends into your fourth year, you should replace your Research Plan with a combined Research and Thesis Completion Plan as you move into your fourth year.

2.5 If you are a part-time PhD or professional doctorate student, or you are studying for an MPhil, your Research Plan will be replaced by a Thesis Completion Plan at an equivalent stage, as you approach completion of your 'fees-payable' status.

3. Training Needs Analysis

3.1 Each iteration of your Research Plan that you submit as part of the Research Student Progress Monitoring Procedure will be informed by a Training Needs Analysis (TNA). This will ensure that your training needs are reviewed twice per year.

3.2 The TNA will support the development of a progressive training agenda over the course of your programme to provide you with the skills and knowledge required for your thesis, and your broader development as a researcher. [*see TNA guidance note*]

4. Progress Monitoring Events

4.1 Your progress on your research degree programme will be monitored formally through a series of events in accordance with the Research Student Progress Monitoring Procedure.

4.2 This Procedure is student-centred and purpose-driven, and complements the ongoing monitoring that is part of your regular supervision. It includes the following monitoring events:

.1 Initial Review (undertaken in the first year only);

.2 9-Month then Annual Review (undertaken every year);

.3 Interim Review (undertaken mid-way between the Annual Reviews).

4.3 The monitoring events provide regular opportunities for your School to assess the quality of the work you are producing, and your rate of progress against the research aims and schedule of work described in your Research Plan. The events also give you an opportunity to raise any issues or concerns directly with the Director of Postgraduate Research, with a reminder on how to access student support services.

4.4 Your progress will be monitored until you submit your thesis or you withdraw from the University; once you have reached the end of your programme,

your School will agree an appropriate plan to monitor your progress until completion, which may be a variation of the standard monitoring events.

4.5 If you are a part-time student, your monitoring events will follow the same schedule as for full-time students. Your rate of progress will be assessed on the basis of your Research Plan which will take account of the overall duration of your programme and your part-time status.

5. Initial Review

5.1 The Initial Review is the first monitoring event and provides a firm basis for your programme of research and training, through an assessment of your training needs and confirmation of a carefully considered and suitably detailed Research Plan. At this stage, the Research Plan will include a general timeline for completing your research programme within the 'fees-payable' period, taking into account your research and professional skills training needs.

5.2 The Initial Review should be fully completed within 3 months of the start of your programme, though your School has the discretion to extend this to 4 months if you are studying on a part-time basis and the nature of your project/Research Plan requires this extended period.

5.3 You will be expected to demonstrate your ability to formulate viable research questions and to construct a feasible Research Plan, and your capacity to undertake the necessary work. If there are any concerns about your progress during this early stage, the Initial Review will provide the opportunity for remedial action to be taken.

5.4 You will be required to provide evidence that you have completed a compulsory Research Integrity Training online module as part of your Initial Review.

5.5 The Initial Review will also provide an opportunity for you and your supervisor(s) to raise any early concerns about the academic or practical arrangements to support your project.

5.6 The Initial Review will be centred on meetings with your supervisor(s) and will comprise both forward-planning through your Research Plan and TNA and a reflection on the first stage of your programme through assessments of your progress.

5.7 Your Research Plan will be the foundation for developing your programme of work, and a key document against which your progress will be assessed. Given its importance, either your lead supervisor plus a second or co-supervisor, or your lead supervisor plus an independent reviewer need to approve the Research Plan as part of the Initial Review.

5.8 The School Director of Postgraduate Research will consider the reports submitted for the Initial Review and will determine whether your continued

registration is to be confirmed or provisional, in accordance with the Progress Monitoring Procedure (Initial Review).

5.9 If your progress is considered unsatisfactory the Director of Postgraduate Research will arrange to meet with you in accordance with the Unsatisfactory Progress Procedure.

6. 9-Month and Annual Reviews

6.1 You will be required to provide the evidence for your first Annual Review approximately 32 weeks into your programme, so that the monitoring event can be completed within 9 months. To avoid confusion, this first Review is therefore known as the 9-Month Review. It is then repeated every 12 months, and known subsequently as the Annual Review.

6.2 The 9-Month/Annual Review allows your School to make an informed judgment on the quality of your work, including your ability to produce written work of the required standard, and your rate of progress against the schedule in your Research Plan/Thesis Completion Plan. If you or your supervisor(s) have any concerns about progress or the academic or practical arrangements supporting your project, the 9-Month/Annual Review also prompts these concerns to be raised.

6.3 The 9-Month and Annual Reviews will be conducted by a Review Panel established by your School, which will make a recommendation to the Director of Postgraduate Research regarding your continued registration on the programme.

6.4 The Review Panel will comprise a minimum of 2 members of academic staff; at least one Panel member must be an independent reviewer, unconnected to your project, and no more than one member of your supervisory team may be included in the Panel. One member of the Panel will take the role of Chair.

6.5 You will meet with your Review Panel to discuss the written work you have submitted and your overall progress. Your School will define the format of the Review Panel meeting (e.g. whether you are required to make a formal presentation), and will inform you of this in advance. The meeting will normally take place in person, but your School may agree to a request to hold the meeting by electronic means.

6.6 The format of the written work is defined by your School, but it must be sufficiently substantial to be fit for purpose, and comply with any guidance that has been approved at College level.

6.7 If you do not attend the Review Panel meeting and do not provide reasonable grounds for a postponement, the Review Panel may review the evidence in your absence.

6.8 The Review Panel will report on its assessment of your progress and standard of work, and will make a recommendation concerning your continued registration on the programme, in accordance with the Progress Monitoring Procedure (9-Month/Annual Review) below.

6.9 You will have access to the Panel's report, providing you with feedback on the quality of your work and your rate of progress.

6.10 If the rate or quality of your work is considered inadequate, the Director of Postgraduate Research will arrange to meet with you in accordance with the Unsatisfactory Progress or Engagement Policy and Procedure (Research Students).

6.11 The membership of your Review Panel may change for the Annual Review that takes place toward the end of your 'fees-payable' period: a subject expert may be replaced by another independent reviewer who is an experienced supervisor, as there will be an emphasis on advising you on the completion of your thesis. You will be expected to provide regular progress updates to your supervisor(s) while completing the writing and editing of your thesis.

6.12 It is not expected that an Annual Review will be held in the final year of your candidature as, by then, you should have submitted your thesis or be about to do so. The exception is where you have been permitted, or you are applying for, an extension (of 6 months or more) to your submission deadline, in accordance with the Interruption and Extension to Time Limit Policy and Procedure (Research Students).

6.13 If you are permitted an extension to your submission deadline, or you are resubmitting your thesis after examination, your School will agree a schedule of monitoring points tailored to your circumstances.

7. Interim Review

7.1 The Interim Review provides an opportunity for you and your lead supervisor to reflect on your progress at a mid-point between the Annual Reviews (or 9-month and first Annual Review). It allows you and your School to be confident that you are continuing to progress at a satisfactory rate and that the academic and practical arrangements supporting your programme remain adequate. Any alterations to your project must be accommodated in an updated Research Plan. If either you or your lead supervisor have any concerns, the Interim Review also prompts these to be raised with the Director of Postgraduate Research.

7.2 The Interim Review will involve a progress meeting with your supervisor(s), where you reflect on your progress during the reporting period,[2] re-evaluate your training needs, and discuss the updating of your Research Plan. Both

[2] The previous 6 months, unless this has been adjusted.

you and your lead supervisor will be required separately to provide an assessment of your progress.

7.3 Where your lead supervisor's recommendation is that progress is satisfactory, your continued registration on the programme will be confirmed by the Director of Postgraduate Research.

7.4 Where your lead supervisor's recommendation is that your progress is not satisfactory, the Director of Postgraduate Research will arrange to meet with you and your supervisor(s) to explore the concerns and to decide an appropriate course of action. This will be in accordance with the Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Procedure (Research Students) or the Unsatisfactory Progress or Engagement Policy and Procedure (Research Students), as appropriate.

Research Student Progress Monitoring Procedure

8. Overview

8.1 The Research Student Progress Monitoring Procedure should be read in conjunction with the Policy on Monitoring Research Students that underpins it.

8.2 The Procedure comprises a system of reporting, review and feedback, built around your Research Plan.

8.3 Compliance with the Progress Monitoring Procedure is mandatory and applies to all students registered for research degrees,[3] including full-time, part-time and staff candidates.

8.4 Monitoring events are informed by your Research Plan and other supporting documents, such as your Training Needs Analysis (TNA) and assessment reports; and, on an annual basis (in the first instance commencing nine months into your programme), a formal review of the quality of your work and rate of progress.

8.5 The Research Student Progress Monitoring Procedure is managed via SIMS-Online.

9. Initial Review

Refer to the Initial Review flowchart

9.1 The Initial Review should be fully completed within 3 months of the start of your programme. Your School has the discretion to extend this to 4 months if you are studying part-time and a longer period is appropriate for the discipline.

9.2 During your early supervision meetings, you will discuss your Research Plan as well as your Training Needs Analysis (TNA) which will inform and support the Research Plan. Both the Research Plan and the TNA will be completed with your lead supervisor's input, and that of other member(s) of your supervisory team where agreed.

9.3 You will also be required to complete a Self-Assessment Report, in which you reflect on your progress during the first stage of your programme. Your self-assessment should be accompanied by a record of any training, including induction, which you have undertaken by that point.

9.4 You will be prompted to upload the following into SIMS-Online:

.1 your Research Plan;

[3] With the exception of: (a) those programmes that are highly structured and include substantial taught elements and have built-in schedules of assessment: MRes, DClinPsy, DEdPsy; (b) PhD by Published Works.

.2 your Training Needs Analysis (TNA), including a record of training undertaken (to include the compulsory Research Integrity Training module);

.3 a Self-Assessment Report;

.4 a list of supervisor meeting dates for the reporting period.

9.5 You will be required to complete this task within 10 weeks from the start of your programme.

9.6 Your lead supervisor will be required to provide an Initial Review Report that assesses your progress during this first stage of your programme. Your lead supervisor should discuss their Initial Review Report with you at a supervision meeting.

9.7 In their Initial Review Report, your lead supervisor will be required to confirm that the agreed Research Plan has been endorsed by a second supervisor or an independent reviewer.

9.8 Your lead supervisor will make a recommendation to your Director of Postgraduate Research regarding (a) the viability of your Research Plan; and (b) your academic progress.

9.9 Completion of the Initial Review will be confirmed by your Director of Postgraduate Research who will determine one of the following outcomes:

.1 "The School is satisfied that the student has a viable Research Plan and their progress to date is satisfactory: **continued registration on the programme is confirmed**"; or

.2 "The student does not yet have a viable Research Plan, but progress with their research is otherwise satisfactory: the **student is required to revise and resubmit** their Research Plan"; or

.3 "The **student's progress is not satisfactory,** and the Unsatisfactory Progress or Engagement Policy and Procedure (Research Students) will be implemented".

9.10 Where the outcome is to revise and resubmit the Research Plan, the Director of Postgraduate Research will stipulate the period permitted: to a maximum of 2 months, and on one occasion only. Continued registration on the programme is provisional as further assessment is required.

9.11 As part of the Initial Review you will be invited to raise any issues or concerns directly with your Director of Postgraduate Research, should you wish to do so.

9.12 You will be alerted when the monitoring event has been completed and will be able to view all uploaded documents in SIMS-Online.

10. 9-Month/Annual Review

Refer to the 9-Month/Annual Review flowchart

10.1 As part of the 9-Month and Annual Progress Reviews you will be prompted to upload the following into SIMS-Online:

.1 a substantial piece of written work;

.2 an updated Research Plan;

.3 a new TNA, including a record of training and development undertaken;

.4 a Self-Assessment Report;

.5 a list of supervisor meeting dates for the reporting period.

10.2 Your lead supervisor will be prompted to upload a report on your progress (Supervisor Progress Report) into SIMS-Online. This will include confirmation of the work that you have done, and an assessment of whether you are on track to complete in accordance with your Research/Thesis Completion Plan.

10.3 You will then meet with your Review Panel to discuss the written work you have submitted and your overall progress, with reference to your Research Plan/Thesis Completion Plan.

10.4 Following the meeting, the Review Panel will report on its assessment of your progress and standard of work, and will make one of the following recommendations to your Director of Postgraduate Research:

.1 "**The student's progress is satisfactory** and, if it continues at this rate, they are considered to be on track for submitting a viable thesis within their time limit"

.2 "**The student's progress is considered satisfactory overall but one or more minor unsatisfactory aspects have been identified**, which, if adequately addressed through adjustment to the Research Plan, should not delay the submission of a viable thesis within the time limit"
(*A revised Research Plan will take account of additional work or training required, or a necessary change in direction; monitoring will be undertaken through standard supervision and evaluated at the next review point*)

.3 "**The student's progress is considered satisfactory in the circumstances**. The School is aware of extenuating circumstances which can be dealt with by reasonable adjustments that have been made to the Research Plan or which may justify an application for extending the student's final submission deadline"

.4 "**The student's progress is not yet confirmed as satisfactory** at this point and the Panel has resolved to defer its recommendation. The student will be required to **revise and resubmit** their written work, Research Plan, and/or any other relevant documentation for further consideration by the Panel, within one month of the Panel meeting (which may be extended to two months, if required, for part-time students), and on one occasion only. The Panel will determine if a further interview is required."

.5 "**The student's progress is not satisfactory**, and the Unsatisfactory Progress or Engagement Policy and Procedure (Research Students) will be implemented".

10.5 Where the Review Panel's recommendation is that your progress is satisfactory (recommendation 10.4.1, 10.4.2 or 10.4.3 above), your continued registration on the programme will be confirmed by the Director of Postgraduate Research.

10.6 Where the Review Panel's recommendation is that your progress is not yet confirmed as satisfactory (recommendation 10.4.4 above), your continued registration on the programme will be provisional until further assessment has been completed. You will be prompted to re-upload the necessary document(s) into SIMS-Online within the permitted period.

10.7 Where the Review Panel's recommendation is that your progress is not satisfactory (recommendation 10.4.5 above), continued registration will be provisional pending the outcome of the Unsatisfactory Progress or Engagement Policy and Procedure (Research Students).

11. INTERIM REVIEW

Refer to the Interim Review flowchart

11.1 The Interim Review Procedure should be read in conjunction with the policy statement that supports it.

11.2 As part of each Interim Review, you will meet with your lead supervisor (and other member(s) of your supervisory team as agreed), to review the documents required for the monitoring event, undertake a new TNA, and agree an updated Research Plan.

11.3 You will be prompted to upload the following into SIMS-Online:

.1 an updated Research Plan

.2 a new TNA, including a record of training and development undertaken;

.3 a Self-Assessment Report, in which you reflect on your progress;

.4 a list of supervisor meeting dates during the reporting period.

11.4 You will also be invited to raise any issues or concerns directly with your Director of Postgraduate Research, should you wish to do so.

11.5 Your lead supervisor will be required to complete an Interim Review report form, and will confirm that:

.1 "The student is continuing to make satisfactory progress in accordance with their Research Plan/Thesis Completion Plan"; or

.2 "The student's progress is considered satisfactory, subject to mutually agreed adjustment to the Research Plan/Thesis Completion Plan that will facilitate completion of the programme within the permitted period"; or

.3 "The student's progress is not satisfactory".

11.6 Where your lead supervisor's recommendation is that progress is satisfactory, your continued registration on the programme will be confirmed by the Director of Postgraduate Research.

11.7 Where your lead supervisor's recommendation is that progress is not satisfactory, the Director of Postgraduate Research will arrange a meeting with you and your supervisor(s) to explore the concerns and inform an appropriate course of action, in accordance with the Unsatisfactory Progress or Engagement Policy and Procedure (Research Students) and/or the Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Procedure (Research Students), as appropriate.

INITIAL REVIEW FLOWCHART

Student and supervisors(s) conduct Training Needs Analysis (TNA) in early meetings

Student produces draft Research Plan, Self-Assessment Report and record of training

Lead supervisor and second supervisor or independent reviewer review Research Plan

Student and supervisors(s) meet and discuss Research Plan, the student's Self-Assessment and the supervisor's Initial Review Report

Student uploads TNA, agreed Research Plan, self-assessment report and supervision meeting log into SIMS-Online

Student is signposted to means by which to voice any concerns to the Director of Postgraduate Research, and how to access the University's Student Support services

Lead supervisor uploads their Initial Review Report into SIMS-Online

Director of Postgraduate Research reviews the Initial Review documents uploaded into SIMS-Online and determines Initial Review outcome, in accordance with the range of options permitted by the Research Student Progress Monitoring Procedure

9-MONTH REVIEW/ANNUAL REVIEW FLOWCHART

Student prepares written work to be reviewed and their Self-Assessment Report

Student produces training record, prepares TNA and updates Research Plan

Student and supervisor(s) meet to discuss progress, the Research Plan and TNA

Student uploads written work, meeting log, agreed Research Plan and TNA into SIMS- Online

Student is signposted to means by which to voice any concerns to the Director of Postgraduate Research, and how to access the University's Student Support services

Lead supervisor produces a Supervisor Progress Report with input from supervisory team and uploads it into SIMS-Online

Review Panel reviews written work, reports and other documents that have been uploaded into SIMS-Online by student and supervisor

Student and Review Panel meet to undertake Progress Review

Review Panel convenor uploads Panel's report and recommendation into SIMS-Online

Director of Postgraduate Research considers the Panel's report and recommendation, and determines Review outcome, in accordance with the range of options permitted by the Research Student Progress Monitoring Procedure

INTERIM REVIEW FLOWCHART

Student produces Self-Assessment Report, and prepares TNA and updates Research Plan

Student and supervisors(s) meet and discuss the student's Self-Assessment, TNA and Research Plan

Student uploads TNA, agreed Research Plan, Self-Assessment and supervision meeting log into SIMS-Online

Student is signposted to means by which to voice any concerns to the Director of Postgraduate Research, and how to access the University's Student Support services

Lead supervisor completes Interim Report Form (web form) in SIMS-Online

Director of Postgraduate Research reviews the Interim Review documents uploaded into SIMS-Online and determines outcome, in accordance with the range of options permitted by the Research Student Progress Monitoring Procedure