

Annual Progress Reviews

Guidance for PGR Tutors and Administrators

(Updated January 2018)

A. Background

1. With effect from session 2015/16 all Faculties are required to conduct Annual Progress Reviews (APRs) for the following Postgraduate Researchers (PGRs):
 - Full-time and Part-time doctoral candidates (post-transfer)
 - Full-time and Part-time MPhil candidates (from end of year 1)
 - Part-time Mastership by Research candidates (from end of year 1)

APRs should take place each year on or before the anniversary of the commencement of study, until submission of the thesis. For PGRs studying for doctoral awards APRs should start after the transfer stage.

2. APRs are designed to put in place arrangements for reviewing a PGR's progress involving individuals independent of the supervisory team and the PGR. They are intended to be developmental and supportive enabling a reflection on progress to date and forward planning for completion of the thesis. The process should not be so onerous that it distracts the PGR from progressing their research and thesis writing.
3. Benefits include:
 - Maximising the likelihood of PGRs completing successfully and on time
 - Parity of experience for PGRs
 - Ensures concerns are raised and addressed
4. Result: Improved submission and completion rates, improved standard and quality of support and feedback for PGRs and compliance with [QAA Quality Code \(Chapter B11: Research Degrees\)](#).

B. Annual Progress Review Models

5. Graduate Board has agreed two possible APR models and faculties were invited to adopt one of the following:

Model A – an APR meeting between the supervisor(s), PGR and an individual independent of the supervisory team¹

OR

Model B –an APR meeting between the supervisor(s) and the PGR – with oversight of the report emerging from that review by a Research Degrees Committee (or equivalent body)

6. Faculties have indicated that Models will be adopted as follows:

¹ It is not necessary for the individual, independent of the supervisory team, to be an academic expert in the field of study. It is acceptable for the supervisor to evaluate the academic work and the independent assessor (non-expert) to review the academic progress.

Model A
PGR, supervisor(s) + independent individual = Progression Panel
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biological Sciences • Engineering • MAPS • Medicine and Health

Model B
PGR + supervisor(s) with oversight by Research Degrees Committee (or equivalent body)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts, Humanities and Cultures • Business • Environment • ESSL • Leeds Trinity University

C. Independent Assessor/Internal Examiner (Model A)

- The same individual may act as the independent assessor at the “transfer” stage and as the Internal Examiner. However, if an assessor is to act subsequently as an Internal Examiner it is considered that direct involvement in the academic assessment, monitoring and provision of feedback on the PGR’s work is not appropriate subsequent to the transfer review (for example reading and commenting on academic work submitted by the PGR at the end of years 2 and 3) and prior to the final examination.
- An individual, therefore, who has been involved in an Annual Review (Post-Transfer) progression meeting (under Model A) will not be eligible to act as the Internal Examiner for the final examination².

The table below applies to Model A (only)

Milestone	Scenario A Individual acts as a member of	Scenario B	Scenario C	Scenario D	Scenario E
The Transfer Panel	✓	x	✓	x	x
End of Year 2 Progression Panel	✓	✓	x	✓	x
End of Year 3 Progression Panel	✓	✓	x	x	✓
Internal Examiner for the Viva	x	x	✓	x	x

- Involvement in the monitoring and oversight of progress (Post-Transfer), as part of a Research Degrees Committee (or equivalent body) (under Model B), will not normally preclude an individual from acting as the Internal Examiner.

² It is the responsibility of the Faculty/School to ensure that a nominated internal examiner has not acted as an independent assessor as part of an Annual Review (Post-Transfer) under Model A. PGR and Operations will NOT undertake such checks as a matter of routine on receipt of the examination entry form and, therefore, for Faculties adopting Model A the Faculty/School must do this before forwarding the examination entry form to PGR and Operations.

D. Research Degrees Committee (or equivalent body)³ (Model B)

10. It is expected that the Research Degrees Committee (or equivalent body) will:

- a) Maintain oversight of the Annual Review process within the Faculty/School
- b) Consider the content of each Annual Review report to ensure that it is clear and unambiguous and addresses the points required by the University/Faculty. Where appropriate reports will be referred back to the supervisor(s) for clarification
- c) Monitor the progress of individual PGRs
- d) Ensure parity of experience for PGRs
- e) Where progress is not satisfactory or significant issues have been raised to ensure that appropriate remedial action has been/will be taken promptly
- f) Identify any general themes emerging from the reports and to refer these to the relevant University/Faculty/School body

E. Information to be submitted by the PGR

11. In advance of the Annual Progress Review meeting the PGR will be required to submit the following through GRAD:

- Report on progress (including an opportunity to identify any issues affecting progress)
- Plan for completion of the research and thesis (eg Gantt chart)
- Written work as required by the Faculty/supervisor(s) for the annual review
- Thesis plan (optional – only if required by the Faculty/supervisor(s))

F. Timeline

12. Annual Progress Review interviews (meetings) should take place each year on or before the anniversary of the commencement of study, until submission of the thesis. For doctoral candidates these should commence after the transfer stage.

13. For example, for a full-time Provisional PhD candidate commencing study on 01 October 2017 the following is expected:

Date (by no later than)	Milestone
01 October 2017	Commencement of studies
31 October 2017	Training plan agreed
31 March 2018	First Formal Progress Report (by end of 6 months study)
30 September 2018	Transfer assessment
30 September 2019	Annual Progress Review (End of Year 2)
30 September 2020	Annual Progress Review (End of Year 3 – if thesis not ready for submission and annually thereafter until submission of the thesis or the PGR is out of time)

14. For example, for a part-time Provisional PhD candidate commencing study on 01 October 2017 the following is expected:

Date (by no later than)	Milestone
01 October 2017	Commencement of studies
31 October 2017	Training plan agreed
30 June 2018	First Formal Progress Report (by end of 9 month study)
30 September 2019	Transfer assessment
30 September 2020	Annual Progress Review (End of Year 3)

³ For example a sub-group of the FGSC or a School PGR Committee

30 September 2021	Annual Progress Review (End of Year 4)
30 September 2022	Annual Progress Review (End of Year 5– if thesis not ready for submission and annually thereafter until submission of the thesis or the PGR is out of time)

15. For example, for a full-time M Phil candidate commencing study on 01 October 2017 the following is expected:

Date (by no later than)	Milestone
01 October 2017	Commencement of studies
30 September 2018	Annual Progress Review (End of Year 1)
30 September 2019	Annual Progress Review (End of Year 2)
30 September 2020	Annual Progress Review (End of Year 3 – if thesis not ready for submission and annually thereafter until submission of the thesis or the PGR is out of time)

16. For example, for a part-time M Phil candidate commencing study on 01 October 2017 the following is expected:

Date (by no later than)	Milestone
01 October 2017	Commencement of studies
30 September 2018	Annual Progress Review (End of Year 1)
30 September 2019	Annual Progress Review (End of Year 2)
30 September 2020	Annual Progress Review (End of Year 3)
30 September 2021	Annual Progress Review (End of Year 4 - if thesis not ready for submission and annual thereafter until submission of the thesis or the PGR is out of time)

17. For example, for a part-time Mastership by Research candidate commencing study on 01 October 2017 the following is expected:

Date (by no later than)	Milestone
01 October 2017	Commencement of studies
30 September 2018	Annual Progress Review (End of Year 1)
30 September 2019	Annual Progress Review (End of Year 2 – if thesis not ready for submission and an extension/suspension of study has been granted lengthening the maximum time limit)

G. Suspensions of Study

18. For those PGRs who are on suspensions of study, at the point the APR is due, the APR should be postponed. It should then take place one or two months after their return to study. Any Faculty/School requirements for submission of work for the APR should be adjusted accordingly to take account of any study time lost during the suspension of study. It is important that the APR takes place as close to the anniversary of the date of commencement as possible, when the PGR has returned to study, to ensure regular progress reports are recorded. It is understood that when a PGR has been suspended for a substantial period of time the progress review will reflect limited progress but will provide an opportunity to plan for further study and explore any issues which may be affecting progress going forward.

H. Extensions of Study

19. In those cases where a PGR has already been granted a short extension to the deadline for the submission of their thesis an APR is not normally required in the final year if the supervisor(s) is confident that the PGR is on track to submit their thesis by the revised maximum time limit. If, however, a further extension of study is anticipated, then an

APR should be held on the anniversary of the date of commencement to discuss progression and the plan for completion.

I. PGRs Away from Leeds or on Integrated PhD and Master Programmes

20. For those PGRs who are not in Leeds at the point the review meeting is due, on non-traditional programmes or are Mastership by Research/M Phil candidates the following approaches are suggested:

On placement, Marie Curie, ETN/ITN, split-site PhD, fieldwork

- Arrange for the meeting to be held by Skype or delay for a month or two and organise on the PGR's return. If this is not possible case to be made to PSAG

Integrated PhD and Master

- The end of the 2nd year sees completion of the Masters and Transfer Process
- The Annual Progress Review meeting takes place at the end of Year 3 of full-time study (and annually thereafter until completion of the thesis).

J. Using GRAD to support Annual Progress Reviews

21. GRAD must be used to support the APR process. Full details of how GRAD can support the APR are attached as Annex I.

K. Unsatisfactory Academic Progress

22. There is no requirement for a PGR to “pass” an Annual Progress Monitoring review in order to proceed to the next year of study. The [University's Unsatisfactory Academic Progress Procedure](#) (UAPP) should be initiated in those exceptional cases where lack of progress is causing significant concern.

L. Re-Registration

23. Re-registration for the next year of study is not dependent on this process taking place. PGRs should proceed with registration on the anniversary of their start date as required and without waiting for the completion of the annual review.

M. Attendance Monitoring/Formal Supervision Meetings

24. Attendance at an annual review meeting is regarded as a contact point for attendance monitoring. An annual review meeting may also count as one of the required number of formal supervision meetings.

N. Further Questions

25. Further questions about the process can be directed to Sarah Throp, PGR and Operations s.throp@adm.leeds.ac.uk

ST/
Ext 35778
24/01/18

Using GRAD to support Annual Progress Reviews

GRAD must be used to support the APR process.

1. GRAD workflow process

Set out below are the steps for managing APR in GRAD for both Model A and Model B

Model A (independent assessor)	Model B (oversight by Faculty/School Committee)
<i>Faculties of Biological Sciences, Engineering, MaPS, Medicine and Health</i>	<i>Faculties of AHC, Business, ESSL, Environment</i>
STEP 1: PGR starts the process by selecting 'Annual Progress Review' and completing the form and uploading the relevant documentation before submitting the review. The supervisor(s)* are alerted via email to the submission of the review.	STEP 1: PGR starts the process by selecting 'Annual Progress Review' and completing the form and uploading the relevant documentation before submitting the review. The supervisor(s)* are alerted via email to the submission of the review.
STEP 2: The main supervisor confirms interview (meeting) details by selecting the names of those who will be in attendance at the interview (meeting) and adding the independent assessor details.	STEP 2: The main supervisor confirms interview (meeting) details by selecting the names of those who will be in attendance.
STEP 3: PGR and the Panel are notified of the interview (meeting) date automatically via email. The Panel members (including the independent assessor) can view the PGR's report and their uploaded submission in GRAD. On the day of the interview (meeting) the independent assessor is prompted via email to complete the APR report.	STEP 3: Those expected to be in attendance are notified of the interview (meeting) date automatically via email.
STEP 4: The independent assessor completes the APR form. It is considered best practice for this to be completed immediately after the interview (meeting) when the supervisor(s) and independent assessor are present but the PGR has left the meeting. The final report can then be submitted and the process is complete.	STEP 4: After the interview (meeting) normally the main supervisor completes the report in GRAD. It is considered best practice to do this immediately after the meeting when those attending the meeting, apart from the PGR, remain present. The final report can then be submitted and the process is complete.

* All supervisors receive a copy of the email but only the main supervisor receives the task. However any co-supervisor can go into the GRAD record and take over this action if necessary.

<p>STEP 5: <i>(this additional step may be necessary when the independent assessor completes the report independently after the interview (meeting) without the supervisor(s) being present)</i></p> <p>After the independent assessor has drafted the report in GRAD they should opt to 'save it for later'. Outside of GRAD they can email the supervisor(s) to let them know the draft report is available to view in GRAD and invite comments. The supervisor(s) will have the option to view the draft report in GRAD (but not edit it) in the APR workflow for the relevant PGR. They will need to forward comments on the draft to the independent assessor outside of GRAD. At this stage the report is not visible to the PGR.</p> <p>The independent assessor can then edit the report to include any comments before saving and submitting it. The process is now complete.</p>	<p>STEP 5: <i>(this additional step may be necessary when the main supervisor completes the report independently after the interview (meeting) without the other supervisor(s) being present)</i></p> <p>Normally the main supervisor drafts the APR form and opts to 'save it for later'. There are two possible ways to collect comments from other supervisor(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Contact the other supervisor(s) off-line (outside of GRAD) eg via email. The other supervisor(s) will be able to view the draft report in GRAD by selecting the relevant PGR and clicking on draft progress review. The supervisor will not be able to edit the report but should send any comments to the main supervisor outside of GRAD. At this stage the report is not visible to the PGR. (ii) On the right hand side menu the main supervisor will have the option to delegate this task (grey button). If they click on this button the name of the co-supervisor(s) will appear. They should select the relevant individual to delegate to. The co-supervisor will then receive an email notification and task. The co-supervisor can view the draft report and edit as necessary. They can then either 'save for later' and delegate back to the main supervisor or 'save' and submit the APR as complete.
<p>All parties are notified the process is complete via email and the report is now available to the PGR.</p>	<p>The report is complete once the APR is submitted to GRAD and is now visible to the PGR (at this stage no notification is sent).</p>
<p>The Process for Model A is now complete.</p>	<p>STEP 6: the PGRA is notified that the report is waiting for a Committee decision. The PGRA has a number of options:</p>

STATUS Waiting for committee meeting
CURRENTLY WITH Charlie Fernandez
<input type="radio"/> Schedule meeting
<input type="radio"/> Send for review
<input type="radio"/> Edit committee decision
<input type="radio"/> Forward application to Chair
<input type="radio"/> Return form

PGRO suggests that you make arrangements for the report to be considered by the Committee off-line (outside of GRAD) and when this has taken place you 'Edit committee decision' as follows.

Meeting date

Please enter the committee's decision below
 Approval of annual progress review

Enter any notes or comments for the researcher

There are options to enter notes/comments and upload a file for the PGR.

All parties are notified the report is complete via email and the report is available to the PGR (the report is available to the PGR in GRAD at the point the supervisor submits it but the email notification is only sent when the Committee meeting date and approval is submitted.

Note: If the Committee meeting is some time away and significant issues have been identified in the report then the PGRA may wish to arrange for the Committee Chair (normally the PGRT from a GRAD point of view) to review the report so immediate action can be taken. The PGRT can review the report in GRAD and then the Committee Chair should use the return to Committee Rep option.

The process for Model B is now complete

2. Project date functionality available to PGRAs

1 Annual progress review, submission	Set	Set
2 APR interview	Set	Set
3 Annual progress review, completion	Set	01 Oct 2013 Edit

(1) Annual Progress Review Submission

Although the deadline for APR is fixed, PGR Administrator (PGRA) can record the APR submission date in GRAD using the 'Project Dates' edit functionality. This should be used if the Faculty/School requires a slightly earlier date for submission of the material required for APR. Once completed this information will be displayed in GRAD on the PGR's project page.

(2) APR interview

PGR Administrators (PGRA) can record details of the APR interview (attendees and date) in GRAD using the 'Project Dates' edit functionality. Once completed, this information will pre-populate in the workflow when the supervisor is prompted to complete the interview date. This is only available before the PGR has started the APR workflow. Once a PGR has started the APR workflow (under step 1 above) a PGRA can no longer use the project dates function to record these details. Instead the Supervisor will be prompted to complete this information when they complete the interview arrangements for the APR.

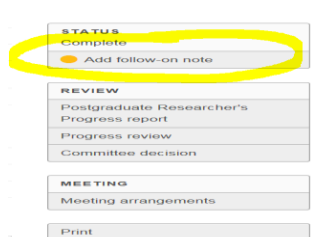
(3) Annual Progress Review Completion

PGR Administrator (PGRA) can edit the APR completion date in GRAD using the 'Project Dates' edit functionality. The completion "Deadline for decision on APR" date is automatically populated in GRAD for the first APR only (so end of year 2 for a FT PhD). Once the first APR is complete, PGRAs will need to edit this date to move the APR on by 12 months to the next deadline decision date (end of year 3 for a FT PhD).

3. Concerns Recorded by the PGR and/or Supervisor

When concerns are raised in the APR (by either the PGR and/or supervisor) this triggers an email alert to the PGRT and PGRA. This ensures that any concerns raised are flagged with the PGRT and can, where necessary, be addressed as soon as possible.

The PGRT should review the report made by the PGR or supervisor to view the concerns raised. Any action required will depend on the individual circumstances. In some cases this may involve meeting with the PGR and/or their supervisor. There is the option for the PGRT or PGRA to add a follow on note to the APR to record any action taken. The follow on note is visible to all including the PGR and their supervisors:



If the Administrative Note check box is ticked then the follow on note will be seen only by staff reviewing this application and not seen by the PGR. The notes are not intended to be used for recording academic or progression comments. These should be recorded in the supervision meeting notes and progression reports which are visible to all parties. Please note that whilst text will not be visible on GRAD to the PGR these notes are accessible by the PGR on request.

4. **Dashboards**

PGRAs will receive notifications from GRAD throughout the process as and when certain steps are completed. PGRAs and PGRTs should also note that they have access to a number of dashboards form the Graduate School menu in GRAD:

'APR Progress' dashboard	Allows you to monitor the current APR progress in your Faculty/School. This dashboard provides an overview summary of the APRs underway in the Faculty/School including the numbers at each stage in the process. Selecting the number will take you through to the individual PGRs at that stage in the process and who the task is currently awaiting action from.
'APR Overview' dashboard	This dashboard provides a list of PGRs in your Faculty/School with the interview (meeting) date for the APR (when it is entered by the supervisor), the current 'status' (e.g. what stage in the process the workflow has reached) and, where concerns are raised, these are flagged.
'APR Assessor' dashboard	This dashboard provides a list of PGRs in your Faculty/School with details of the supervisor and the name of the individual appointed as assessor (relevant for those Schools adopting Model A only)

5. **Mandatory APR Questions**

Within GRAD is an on-line University-wide form to support the APR process. There are a series of mandatory questions for completion as follows:

For PGRs to complete:

- (a) Please provide a review of your progress, including details of any completed research and/or writing up of your thesis to date. Please concentrate on the progress made since the transfer stage or last annual progress review
- (b) Are there issues that have adversely affected your progress and need to be taken into consideration? This might include academic, personal or support issues
- (c) Compulsory upload of documentation for APR (dependent on individual Faculty requirements)

For the Independent Assessor (Model A) or Supervisor(s) (Model B) to complete:

- (a) Summary of progress made to date including the quality of submitted written work (Excellent, Very Good, Good, Satisfactory, Insufficient) and a text box to provide a summary of progress
- (b) Comment on the PGR's understanding of the project and literature (for example the aims and objectives of the research, background literature and current/future direction in their research field) (Excellent, Very Good, Good, Satisfactory, Insufficient) and a text box for comments

- (c) Do you consider the plan for completion/future research to be achievable by the PGR within the standard period of study? Yes/No and text box to provide reasons for choice
- (d) Please provide details on the status of ethical review.
- (e) Is the University's policy for 'Safeguarding Data - Storage, Backup and Encryption' being appropriately addressed?
- (f) Is progress with the agreed training plan satisfactory? YES/No. If no, please indicate the steps the PGR has been asked to take.
- (g) Are there any other comments or concerns with the PGR's progress which need to be brought to the attention of the PGRT?
- (h) Optional upload facility for any additional information

6. Faculty Optional Questions

Within GRAD there is a set of optional questions which can be switched 'on' or 'off' for individual Faculties.

Switching an optional question "ON" will make that question appear on the web-based form in GRAD visible for all PGRs within the Faculty and as such will be a compulsory question for completion within that Faculty.

Faculties may decide to require completion of the mandatory University level questions only. Completion of the mandatory questions is considered sufficient to complete the Annual Progress Review.

Set out below is a list of the additional questions currently available in GRAD which can be selected by Faculties on an optional basis. An indication of which optional questions have been selected by individual Faculties is given:

A	Are the PGR's English language written and communication skills satisfactory?	Arts*, Environment, MaPS, M & H
B	Is the PGR's attendance satisfactory? This will include at supervision meetings, training events, seminars.	Arts*, Environment, MaPS, M & H
C	Is written work presented to an agreed timescale?	Arts,* M & H
D	Potential Publications	FBS, Environment, MaPS, M & H
E	Has the Postgraduate Researcher gained 20 points (days) of training? YES/NO. If no please indicate what plans have been put in place to meet the minimum of 20 points.	FBS
F	Please rate and comment on the PGR's understanding of the project and literature (for example the aims and objectives of the research, background literature and current/future direction in their research field) (Excellent, Very Good, Good, Satisfactory, Insufficient)	FBS, M & H
G	Are all health and safety issues or risk assessments adequately covered?	MaPS, M & H
H	Future Employment Plans: Has the PGR formed ideas about their career? Has the PGR taken steps, or do they intend to take steps, toward their career goal? Does the PGR need advice on fellowships etc?	FBS, Environment, MaPS, M & H

* For those Schools which comprised the former Faculty of Arts – Schools of English, History, LCS and PRHS

For further queries about the optional questions and functionality in GRAD please contact Sarah Throp (s.throp@adm.leeds.ac.uk)