



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Annual Progress Reviews Guidance for Directors of PGR Studies and Graduate Schools

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Introduction and Background

1. The Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidatures sets out the following:

A PGR's progress will be monitored formally at regular intervals during the candidature. As a minimum there must be a report by the supervisor at the mid-point of the first year of the candidature (see note 12) and at the transfer stage. Annually, thereafter, there must be a meeting to review progress and a report of the meeting submitted. There are two models for the annual review meeting. Model A which involves a meeting between the PGR, supervisor and an individual independent of the supervisory team and Model B which involves a meeting between the PGR and their supervisor with independent oversight of the report arising from the meeting by a committee or equivalent body. Whichever model is adopted by the Faculty a summary of annual review reports must be considered by the Faculty Graduate School Committee.

Where progress is deemed to be unsatisfactory the [Progress Support procedure](#) should be instigated. Under the procedure the PGR will be interviewed, normally by the Director of PGR Studies and the supervisor, and specific instructions and objectives given. The PGR must be advised that failure to meet those requirements may lead to a recommendation for the termination of the candidature.

2. With effect from session 2015/16 all Schools 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)

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3. 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.

4. 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.

5. Benefits include:

- Maximising the likelihood of PGRs completing successfully and on time
- Parity of experience for PGRs
- Ensures concerns are raised and addressed

6. Result: Improved submission and completion rates, improved standard and quality of support and feedback for PGRs and compliance with [QAA Quality Code for Research Degrees](#).

Annual Progress Review Models – Overview

Models for APR

7. 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 independent individual of the supervisory team, with oversight by the Research Degrees Sub Committee, or equivalent body

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.

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.

8. Leeds Trinity University will follow Model B.

Model A: independent Assessor

Independent Assessor / Internal Examiner

9. 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

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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.

10. 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 examination³. 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. 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	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	x
End of Year 2 APR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	x
End of Year 3 APR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internal Examiner for the Viva	x	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	x

It is the responsibility of the Supervisors/DoPGR 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. The Doctoral College Operations will NOT undertake such checks as a matter of routine on receipt of the examination entry form and, therefore, for Schools adopting Model A the School must do this before forwarding the examination entry form to Doctoral College Operations.

Model B Supervisor

Definition and Faculties

11. Model B includes 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).

Research Degrees Committee (or equivalent body)

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

- Maintain oversight of the Annual Review process within the Faculty/School
- 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

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Monitor the progress of individual PGRs

Ensure parity of experience for PGRs

Where progress is not satisfactory or significant issues have been raised to ensure that appropriate remedial action has been/will be taken promptly

Identify any general themes emerging from the reports and to refer these to the relevant University/Faculty/School body

Timelines for annual progress review (APR)

13. 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. For example:

Full-time Provisional PhD candidate commencing study on 01 October 2020

Date (by no later than)	Milestone
01 October 2020	Commencement of studies
31 December 2020	Training plan agreed
31 March 2021	First Formal Progress Report (by end of 6 months)
30 September 2021	Transfer assessment
30 September 2022	Annual Progress Review (End of Year 2)
30 September 2023	APR (End of Year 3 – if thesis not ready for submission and annually thereafter until submission or out of time)

Part-time Provisional PhD candidate commencing study on 01 October 2020

Date (by no later than)	Milestone
01 October 2020	Commencement of studies
31 December 2020	Training plan agreed
30 June 2021	First Formal Progress Report (by end of 9 months)
30 September 2022	Transfer assessment
30 September 2023	Annual Progress Review (End of Year 3)
30 September 2024	Annual Progress Review (End of Year 4)

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30 September 2025	APR (End of Year 5 – if thesis not ready for submission and annually thereafter until submission or out of time)
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Full-time M Phil candidate commencing study on 01 October 2020

Date (by no later than)	Milestone
01 October 2020	Commencement of studies
31 December 2020	Training plan agreed
31 March 2021	First Formal Progress Report (by end of 6 months)
30 September 2021	Annual Progress Review (End of Year 1)
30 September 2022	Annual Progress Review (End of Year 2)
30 September 2023	Annual Progress Review (End of Year 3 – if thesis not ready for submission and annually thereafter until submission or out of time)

Part-time M Phil candidate commencing study on 01 October 2020

Date (by no later than)	Milestone
01 October 2020	Commencement of studies
31 December 2020	Training plan agreed
30 June 2021	First Formal Progress Report (by end of 9 months)
30 September 2024	Annual Progress Review (End of Year 3)
30 September 2025	Annual Progress Review (End of Year 4 – if thesis not ready for submission and annually thereafter until submission or out of time)

Full-time Mastership by Research candidate commencing study on 01 October 2020

Date (by no later than)	Milestone
01 October 2020	Commencement of studies
31 December 2020	Training plan agreed
30 March 2021	First Formal Progress Report (by end of 6 months)

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30 September 2020	Annual Progress Review (End of Year 1 – if thesis not ready for submission and annually thereafter until submission or out of time)
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Part-time Mastership by Research candidate commencing study on 01 October 2020

Date (by no later than)	Milestone
01 October 2020	Commencement of studies
31 December 2020	Training plan agreed
30 June 2021	First Formal Progress Report (by end of 9 month)
30 September 2020	Annual Progress Review (End of Year 1)
30 September 2021	Annual Progress Review (End of Year 2 – if thesis not ready for submission and annually thereafter until submission or out of time)

14. For 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).

Suspensions of Study

15. For 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. The requirements for submission of work for the APR should be adjusted accordingly to take account of any study time lost during the suspension. 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.

Extensions of Study

16. 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.

17. For PGRs who are not in Leeds at the point the review meeting is due (e.g. on placement, fieldwork) consideration can be given to arranging the meeting to be held by

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video streaming or delay for a month or two and organise on the PGR's return. If this is not possible case to be made to P&Q.

Submission and Report

Information to be submitted by the PGR

18. In advance of the Annual Progress Review meeting the PGR will be required to submit the following via research@leedstrinity.ac.uk;

- 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))

APR Report

19. After the APR meeting, the Independent Assessor (Model A) or Supervisor (Model B) is required to complete the report and return to research@leedstrinity.ac.uk. The questions they will be asked to report on are set out in Annex A.

20. For Model A, the process is complete when the report is submitted by the Independent Assessor. For Model B, the Graduate School must arrange for the report to be considered by the Research Degrees Committee, as set out above.

Concerns Recorded by the PGR and/or Supervisor

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

22. The Director of PGR Studies 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, or possibly instigation of the PGR Progress Support Process (PSP). There is the option for the Director of PGR Studies or Graduate School 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:

Unsatisfactory Academic Progress

23. 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 UoL Progress support procedure \(PSP\)](#) should be initiated in those exceptional cases where lack of progress is causing significant concern.

Re-Registration

24. 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.

Attendance Monitoring/Formal Supervision Meetings

25. 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.

Further Questions

26. Further questions about the process can be directed to the Director of Postgraduate Research via research@leedstrinity.ac.uk

Appendix I Questions in the APR report

Mandatory APR Questions

There are a series of mandatory questions for completion as follows:

For PGRs to complete:

- 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
- Are there issues that have adversely affected your progress and need to be taken into consideration? This might include academic, personal or support issues
- Compulsory upload of documentation for APR (dependent on individual Faculty requirements)

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

- 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
- 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
- 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
- Please provide details on the status of ethical review.
- Is the University's policy for 'Safeguarding Data - Storage, Backup and Encryption' being appropriately addressed?
- Is progress with the agreed training plan satisfactory? YES/No. If no, please indicate the steps the PGR has been asked to take.
- Are there any other comments or concerns with the PGR's progress which need to be brought to the attention of the PGRT?
- Optional upload facility for any additional information
-

Leeds Trinity University Annual Review (Post-Transfer)

Guidance for Postgraduate Researchers & Supervisors

Annual Progress Reviews (APRs) must be conducted for the following Postgraduate Researchers (PGRs):

- Full-time PhD candidates (post-transfer)
- Part-time PhD candidates (post-transfer)
- Part-time Masters by Research (MbR) candidates (from end of year 1)

APRs should take place each year following transfer (except MbR) on or just before the anniversary of the commencement of study, up until submission of the thesis.

Intended benefits

APRs are intended to be developmental and supportive, so enabling a reflection on progress to date and forward planning for completion of the thesis. However, the process is intended to be 'light touch' and not to be so onerous that it might distract the PGR from progressing their research and thesis writing.

Other benefits include:

- Maximising the likelihood of PGRs submitting and completing successfully and within time
- Ensuring parity/consistency of progress monitoring experience for PGRs
- Improved standard and quality of support and feedback for PGRs and compliance with QAA Quality Code .
- Ensuring that any concerns are raised and addressed.

Process

Leeds Trinity have adopted the Model B approved by University of Leeds Graduate Board, i.e.:

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).

In LTU's case the reviewing body will be the Research Degrees Sub-Committee (RDSC) of RKEC.

RDSC will maintain oversight of the process by:

- Considering the content of each Annual Review report to ensure that it is clear and unambiguous and addresses the points required by the University. When RDSC considers that this is not the case, reports will be referred back to the supervisor(s) for clarification

- Monitoring the progress of individual PGRs

- Ensure parity/consistency of the process
- Recommending and ensuring that appropriate remedial action will be taken promptly where progress is not satisfactory or significant issues have been raised
- Identifying any general themes emerging from the reports and referring these to the relevant University/School body.

Documentation required for the APR meeting

In advance of the Review Meeting with the supervisor(s), the following should be prepared and submitted by the PGR:

- A report on progress (including an opportunity to identify any issues affecting progress). This should be completed by the PGR on the 1st page of the APR Form.
- A plan for completion of the research and thesis submission (e.g. Gantt chart)
- Any further written work as required by the supervisor(s) (e.g. sample thesis chapter)
- An outline plan of the thesis.

The remainder of the APR Form is then completed by the supervisor after the APR meeting.

Timeline

APR meetings should take place each year (Post Transfer) on or before the anniversary of the commencement of study, until submission of the thesis.

For example, for a full-time Provisional PhD candidate commencing study on 01 October 2014 the following timeline is expected:

Date (by no later than)	Milestone
01 October 2014	Commencement of studies
30 October 2014	Training plan agreed
31 March 2015	Six month progress report
30 September 2015	Transfer assessment
30 September 2016	Annual Progress Review (End of Year Two)
30 September 2017	Annual Progress Review (End of Year Three – if thesis not ready for submission)

For example, for a part-time Provisional PhD candidate commencing study on 01 October 2014 the following would be expected:

Date (by no later than)	Milestone
01 October 2014	Commencement of studies
30 October 2014	Training plan agreed

31 March 2015	6 month progress report
30 September 2016	Transfer assessment
30 September 2017	Annual Progress Review (End of Year Three)
30 September 2018	Annual Progress Review (End of Year Four)
30 September 2019	Annual Progress Review (End of Year Five – if thesis not ready for submission)

For any PGRs who are on suspensions of study at the point the review meeting is due, the meeting should take place one or two months after return to study

Those PGRs who are studying for a MbR will not undergo an APR unless they are part-time candidates, in which case the review will take place at the end of year 1.

Annual Review Progress Report

After the meeting the supervisor(s) will complete the relevant sections of the APR Report Form. The completed, signed forms should be forwarded to the Research Office via research@leedstrinity.ac.uk

Unsatisfactory Progress

There is no requirement for a PGR to “pass” an APR in order to proceed to the next year of study. However, the University of Leeds’ [Progress support Process](#) may be initiated in those exceptional cases where lack of progress is causing significant concern. Similarly, re-registration for the next year of study is not dependent on the APR having taken place. PGRs should proceed with registration on the anniversary of their start date as required and without waiting for the completion of the APR.

Attendance Monitoring/Formal Supervision Meetings

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.

Examples of Good Practice and Poor Practice from the APR process

	Good Practice	Poor Practice
PGR	Summary of progress towards completion of the research	General statements and detail of activities not related to research/thesis
	Detail of progress made on writing individual chapters of the thesis	General statements on progress with thesis
	Detailed plan of thesis structure	No plan, or little detail of structure
	Detailed month-by-month timeline (e.g. Gantt chart)	No timeline, or little detail

Supervisor	Specific feedback on progress of the research	Brief and/or general statements on satisfactory or unsatisfactory progress
	Specific/detailed feedback on documents submitted (e.g. draft chapter; thesis plan)	No specific/detailed feedback on documents submitted
	Set/agree deadlines in relation to thesis plan	No information on deadlines