

ARCHIVED (do not use) Policy on PGR Progression

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This policy forms part of and should be read alongside the Policy on Research Degrees (PoRD). Where there is any inconsistency between the PoRD and this Policy in relation to formal reviews of progress, this Policy applies.

Formal reviews of progress: purpose

- 1.1 A PGR is admitted to a PhD, EngD or MPhil programme on the basis of an assessment of their potential at the admissions stage. Remaining on the PhD, EngD or MPhil programme is conditional on the PGR making satisfactory progress with respect to their research project and the other elements of their programme.
- 1.2 The purpose of formal reviews of progress is to ensure that PGRs on PhD, EngD and MPhil programmes are making satisfactory progress. A formal review of progress should give a PhD, EngD or MPhil PGR a clear sense of the progress they are making, providing reassurance for those who are performing to or beyond expectations and providing a means by which those who are underperforming can be identified in a timely manner and given the advice and support they need to address the situation.
- 1.3 The University's approach to progression (which is aligned with national expectations and sector norms), aims to ensure that PGRs are treated fairly and equitably, whilst respecting disciplinary differences.

Formal reviews of progress: key elements

- 1.4 Formal reviews of progress take place on an annual basis for full-time PhD, EngD and MPhil PGRs (towards the end of a PGR's academic year) and on a biennial basis for part-time PhD and MPhil PGRs.
- 1.5 Formal reviews of progress are not required for entry into a continuation period, where this is permitted. This means that a PGR on a three-year PhD programme (and part-time equivalent) will

have two formal reviews of progress, a PGR on a four-year PhD or EngD programme (and part-time equivalent) will have three formal reviews of progress, and a PGR on an MPhil programme will have a single formal review of progress.

- 1.6 In a formal review of progress, a PhD, EngD or MPhil PGR is assessed against the relevant University progression criteria by a progression panel. The progression panel is independent of the PGR's supervisor(s) to gain an external perspective on the progress that a PGR is making, and to ensure that the supervisor's relationship with the PGR is developmental, rather than judgemental.
- 1.7 PGRs are permitted a maximum of two opportunities to meet the relevant University progression criteria at each formal review of progress. If a PGR has not met the relevant University progression criteria after two attempts they will be deemed to have failed the progression point and they will be transferred to an alternative programme or their enrolment will be terminated.
- 1.8 Whilst the framework for formal reviews of progress is set out by the University, many of the details (including the exact timing, the evidence requested, and the composition and operation of panels) are determined departmentally within the parameters set by the University. A department must obtain YGRS approval for its approach to formal reviews of progress (i.e. including in relation to the timing, evidence and panels) and any major changes to that approach.

Overview of the process

- 1.9 The timing of formal reviews of progress is determined by departments, within parameters set by the University.
- 1.10 Departments determine (subject to YGRS approval) what evidence (written and oral) PhD, EngD and MPhil PGRs should provide to demonstrate that they have met the relevant University progression criteria. Evidence from the PGR is considered alongside the supervisor's report on the PGR's progress and, where required by a department, agreed TAP reports.
- 1.11 The progression panel will consider the evidence from the PGR and the supervisor's report (and the agreed TAP reports if applicable) at a progress review meeting. Based on these elements, the progression panel will make a decision as to whether the PGR has met, exceeded or not met the relevant University progression criteria and also make a recommendation regarding PGR progression. Note that departments are not required to use the 'exceeded' category if they do not wish to.
- 1.12 If the progression panel decides that the PGR has met or exceeded the relevant University progression criteria, it should recommend:
 - (i) that the PGR be progressed;

if, however, the progression panel decides that the PGR has *not yet* met the relevant University progression criteria, it may recommend:

 - (ii) that the PGR be given a second opportunity to meet the relevant University progression criteria); *or*
 - (iii) that the PGR be invited to transfer to an MPhil programme (for PGRs enrolled on a PhD programme only); *or*
 - (iv) that the PGR be invited to transfer to a MA/MSc (by research) programme; *or*
 - (v) that the PGR be invited to withdraw from the University.
- 1.13 Recommendations from progression panels are considered by the relevant departmental Graduate School Board (GSB). The role of the GSB is to oversee the process within the department, ensuring that formal reviews of progress have been carried out in accordance with

University and departmental policy and identifying and resolving any issues arising from the process. In addition, the GSB is responsible for ensuring that consistent standards are being applied across progression panels (see below). The GSB is not expected to question the academic judgement of a progression panel.

- 1.14 Progression decisions (i.e. for progression or, after a second attempt at meeting the relevant University progression criteria, for programme transfer or withdrawal) are approved by the SCA, on behalf of Senate. The SCA will not question the academic judgement of a progression panel. SCA has delegated its authority with respect to the approval of progression decisions to the SEE (which manages this process in SkillsForge) but SEE will refer any difficult cases to SCA.
- 1.15 PGRs are reminded that the decision of a progression panel does not serve as a prediction for the outcome of the final examination.

University progression criteria

- 1.16 The University's progression criteria for PhD, EngD and MPhil programmes set out the *threshold* requirements for progression to the next stage. They should be understood by reference to what a conscientious PGR might reasonably expect to have achieved in the time available.

Progression criteria for a first formal review of progress

1.17

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

- have completed any required training (as set in their PGR handbook);
- are in good standing in terms of responsible research (this includes having completed the Research Integrity Tutorial, obtaining any required ethical approval, and having a data management plan (if relevant));
- have planned in a realistic fashion the second year (or equivalent) of their research, indicating any risks and how these will be mitigated;
- have begun to articulate the direction their research is taking and the research questions it addresses;
- have sufficient acquaintance with the relevant field of knowledge to place their research into context;
- have sufficient proficiency in the relevant research methods, techniques and theoretical approaches to move their research to the next stage;
- have started to develop the ability to write in an appropriate academic format, commensurate with the discipline.

For progression into year 2 of a full-time PhD programme (or equivalent stage of a part-time PhD) with an integrated taught award, a PGR must demonstrate that they:

- have achieved the integrated taught award (subject to any provisions made for extenuating circumstances). The University's standard assessment rules apply to the integrated taught awards;
- are in good standing in terms of responsible research (this includes having completed the Research Integrity Tutorial, obtaining any required ethical approval, and having a data management plan (if relevant));
- have planned (proportionate to the time available) the second year (or equivalent) of the research, indicating any risks and how these will be mitigated;
- have identified (proportionate to the time available) the relevant research methods, techniques and theoretical approaches needed to move their research to the next stage.

For progression into year 2 of a full-time PhD programme (or equivalent stage of a part-time PhD) with a significant training component (equivalent to at least 60 credits but that does not constitute an integrated taught award), a PGR must demonstrate that they:

- have completed the training component to the required standard (as set out in their PGR handbook);
- are in good standing in terms of responsible research (this includes having completed the Research Integrity Tutorial, obtaining any required ethical approval, and having a data management plan (if relevant)).
- have planned (proportionate to the time available) the second year (or equivalent) of their programme, indicating any risks and how these will be mitigated;
- have identified (proportionate to the time available) the relevant research methods, techniques and theoretical approaches needed to move their research to the next stage.

Progression criteria for a second formal review of progress

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

- have completed any required training (as set in their PGR handbook);
- are in good standing in terms of responsible research (this includes having obtained any required ethical approval, and having a data management plan (if relevant));
- 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;
- can articulate the direction their research is taking and the research questions it addresses and how this will lead to an original contribution to knowledge or understanding;
- have acquired some of the wider background knowledge of their research field;
- can apply the relevant research methods, techniques and theoretical approaches in order to make an original contribution to knowledge or understanding;
- have demonstrated the ability to write up their research in an appropriate academic format for it to be critically assessed in the thesis.

Progression criteria for a third formal review of progress

1.19 For progression into year 4 of a full-time four-year PhD/EngD programme (or equivalent stage of a part-time four-year PhD programme), a PGR must demonstrate that they:

- have completed any required training (as set in their PGR handbook);
- are in good standing in terms of responsible research (this includes having obtained any required ethical approval, and having a data management plan (if relevant));
- have planned in a realistic fashion the final 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;
- 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
- have acquired much of the wider background knowledge of their research field;
- can apply the relevant research methods, techniques and theoretical approaches in order to make an original contribution to knowledge or understanding;
- have started to write up their research in an appropriate academic format for it to be critically assessed in the thesis.

Progression panels

1.20 The progression panel for a PhD/EngD or MPhil PGR should comprise at least two academics from the University and be independent of the PGR's supervisor(s). The progression panel should be chaired by

a senior academic member of the same or cognate department who has experience of successful PGR supervision in the broad disciplinary area within which the PGR is based. A member of a progression panel may serve as an internal examiner subject to certain conditions. Emeritus professors can be appointed to chair progression panels where this is academically justified and where at least one other panel member is a non-emeritus member of staff at the University, and support can be provided to ensure that the progression process is conducted in accordance with current University rules. If more than three years have elapsed since the proposed progression chair retired, the decision must be referred to the PGR Faculty Lead for approval.

- 1.21 Progression panels are not expected to make detailed judgements about a PGR's research project, nor to direct the PGR's future work, rather they are required to determine, on the basis of the evidence from the PGR and the supervisor's report, if the PGR meets the relevant University criteria for progression (which are threshold requirements).
- 1.22 The PGR should be informed of the membership of their progression panel at the start of the academic year, but with the understanding that, in some circumstances, it may become necessary to change the panel membership.

Alternative models for progression panels

- 1.23 Some departments may choose to convene progression panels for each PGR on an individual basis. In this case, the primary non-supervisory member of the PGR's TAP (the independent panel member) will often be part of the progression panel. This approach has the advantage of allowing the progression panel to be tailored to the PGR's research project but the department must have a means of ensuring consistent decision making (e.g. by the Graduate Chair and/or Deputy Graduate Chair being a member of all the progression panels, or the Chair and/or Deputy reviewing the recommendations of individual progression panels).
- 1.24 Other departments may choose instead to convene a small number of progression panels, each with a pool of suitably qualified individuals (to enable supervisors to stand aside when their own PGR is under consideration), to deal with all the progress review meetings for a cohort of PGRs. This approach has the advantage of helping to improve efficiency and consistency of decision-making.

Timing of the review process

- 1.25 Formal reviews of progress take place within the University timeframe (this refers to submission of progression panel recommendations in SkillsForge) as follows:

Maximum period of enrolment prior to progression reviews

Which progression point?	FT PGR First Attempt Timing	FT PGR Second Attempt Timing	PT PGR First Attempt Timing	PT PGR Second Attempt Timing
PhD/EngD and MPhil First Formal Review of Progress	9-12 months	No more than 3 months after the date of the first progress review meeting	17-24 months	No more than 6 months after the date of the first progress review meeting
PhD/EngD Second Formal Review of	21-24 months	No more than 3 months after the date of the first	41-48 months	No more than 6 months after the date of the first

Progress		progress review meeting		progress review meeting
4 Year PhD/EngD Third Formal Review of Progress	33-36 months	No more than 3 months after the date of the first progress review meeting	65-72 months	No more than 6 months after the date of the first progress review meeting

- 1.26 Working within the University timeframe, a department must specify for their standard cohort entry point (i.e. September) and any additional cohort entry points (e.g. January) and for each progression point:
- key dates (including the submission date for written evidence (a single date for each cohort), and the timing of presentations, if applicable);
 - a six-week window within which progress review meetings will be held;
 - key dates applicable to PGRs making a second attempt.
- 1.27 Where a PGR commences a PhD, EngD or MPhil programme outside a cohort entry point or when a PGR's journey goes out of sync with the rest of their cohort (e.g. due to a leave of absence) the dates specified above will need to be calculated for that individual.

Guidance for PGRs

- 1.28 Every department should provide its PhD/EngD and MPhil PGRs with a comprehensive briefing on the department's requirements for formal reviews of progress as part of induction and, ideally, also at a later date e.g. after their first TAP meeting, in addition to this information being included in the department's PGR handbook. Information should include the composition of the progression panel, the evidence requirements, and key dates.

Evidence from the PGR

- 1.29 Departments are responsible for specifying, for each formal review of progress, how PhD, EngD and MPhil PGRs should demonstrate to the progression panel that they have met the relevant University progression criteria. This approach enables disciplinary differences within and between departments to be catered for. A department's requirements in terms of the evidence that its PGRs should provide must, however, be carefully calibrated against the University progression criteria and, for this reason, are subject to University approval.
- 1.30 The department's requirements in terms of the oral and/or written evidence that its PGRs must provide should be clearly communicated to PGRs in the department's PGR handbook and as part of the departmental induction process. The requirements should be presented alongside any formal requirements for TAP meetings so that all the key milestones for a PGR's programme are available in a single location. When some variation in evidence requirements is permitted within a *single* named PhD/EngD/MPhil programme, the department must have a robust process for ensuring that there is clarity for individual PGRs.
- 1.31 A department's requirements in terms of the evidence that its PGRs must provide should include:
- **written evidence**, for example:
 - (some of the following) a progress report, research plans, a bibliography, a literature review, preliminary results, draft chapters or parts thereof, and draft or published academic papers

- details of training completed and ethical approval obtained

and will often include (see below):

- **oral evidence**, for example from:
 - discussion between the PGR and their progression panel at the progress review meeting
 - a presentation from the PGR followed by a question and answer session.

Notes on evidence from PGRs

- 1.32 Written evidence of substantive length must contribute directly to the thesis (e.g. an introductory or substantive chapter) or an academic paper or similar: this is to ensure that production of the written submission does not distract from the research project itself.
- 1.33 Oral evidence from discussion between the PGR and their progression panel at the progress review meeting is recommended as an effective and efficient means for a progression panel to determine if a PGR has met the relevant University progression criteria and because it provides the PGR with a valuable opportunity to practise explaining and justifying their work to informed academics (as required for the final oral examination).
- 1.34 Oral evidence from a presentation from the PGR followed by a question and answer session may form part of the progress review meeting. Alternatively, a presentation may take place in advance of the progress review meeting, as long as all members of the progression panel are present. If the presentation is separate from the progress review meeting, it may be open to the wider department, including the supervisor.
- 1.35 Where a department expects PGRs to audit or pass taught modules (e.g. research methods) or other courses, this should be built into the evidence requirements. With respect to taught modules, departments should specify how many credits and at what level, the pass mark required (and whether for individual modules or an average) and reassessment opportunities.

Variation in departmental evidence requirements

- 1.36 Where departments have four-year PhD/EngD programmes and/or specific DTP/CDT PhD programmes it is expected that these programmes will have different evidence requirements from the standard three-year PhD programmes because of the increased focus on taught elements, particularly in the first year.
- 1.37 Within a single named PhD/EngD/MPhil programme, a department may also permit some variation in evidence to accommodate different styles of research project. For example, a social science department might permit some variation in evidence requirements within their standard three-year PhD programme to cater for research projects with a scientific focus vis-à-vis those with a humanities focus, and a science department might permit some variation in evidence requirements within their standard three-year PhD programme to cater for research projects based on field work vis-à-vis those based on laboratory work or to cater for research projects using existing scientific apparatus vis-à-vis those which involve building scientific apparatus.

Supervisor's report

- 1.38 Prior to a progress review meeting, the PGR's supervisor will be asked to give their opinion (on a standard University pro forma) as to whether the PhD, EngD or MPhil PGR meets the relevant University progression criteria. This will be shared with the PGR, who will be asked if they agree or disagree with their supervisor's report. Where there is more than one supervisor, all supervisors should contribute to a single report. The supervisor(s) should have access to their PGR's written

evidence prior to writing the report, and the supervisor may also have to be present at their PGR's presentation (if applicable) unless this forms part of the progress review meeting.

Progress review meetings

- 1.39 At a progress review meeting, a progression panel considers the evidence from the PhD, EngD or MPhil PGR (see above), alongside the supervisor's report and, where required by a department, agreed TAP reports. Based on these elements, the progression panel will make a decision as to whether the PGR has met, exceeded or not met the relevant University progression criteria, and also make a recommendation regarding PGR progression.
- 1.40 Progress review meetings are held in person to facilitate full discussion of a PGR's case. If, for good reason, a member of the progression panel has to participate remotely this should be by means of video-conferencing and this should be indicated on the progression panel decision/recommendation form. A supervisor may only attend a progress review meeting as an observer if their presence is requested by the PGR. Online progress review meetings should be avoided as per the guidance for online oral examinations (section 12 of the PoRD).

PGR attendance at progress review meetings

- 1.41 If a department's evidence requirements include oral evidence obtained at the progress review meeting, then a PGR will, as a matter of course, be present at their progress review meeting. This ensures that a PGR has every opportunity to demonstrate to their progression panel that they have met the relevant University progression criteria and it enables the panel to address, with the PGR, any issues arising from their supervisor's report and/or agreed TAP reports (where required by the department). Where a PGR's presence in a progress review meeting is required, the PGR may be present throughout the meeting, or the panel may have private deliberations before and/or after their discussion with the PGR. If, for good reason, a PGR needs to participate remotely in a progress review meeting, permission must be sought in advance from SEE (decision taken by the Deputy Head of Student Administration or their designated alternate).
- 1.42 If a department's evidence requirements (see above) do *not* include oral evidence obtained at the progress review meeting, then a PGR will not, as a matter of course, be present at their progress review meeting. **If, however, a progression panel does not feel able, on the basis of the evidence provided by a PGR and/or the supervisor's report and/or the agreed TAP reports (if applicable), to recommend that an individual PGR be progressed, then a progress review meeting at which the PGR in question *is present*, along with at least two members of the progression panel (normally including the Chair), must be scheduled as soon as possible (and within department's specified window for progress review meetings). The purpose of requiring the progression panel (or part thereof) to meet with the PGR in this instance is to give the PGR (who is at risk of not progressing at the first attempt) every opportunity to demonstrate that they have met the relevant University progression criteria.** If, for good reason, a PGR needs to participate remotely in such a meeting, permission must be sought in advance from SEE (decision taken by the Deputy Head of Student Administration or their designated alternate).

Full or partial integration of TAP and progression meetings

- 1.43 Where a department requires its PGRs to be present at their progress review meetings as a matter of course (as above, i.e. the department's evidence requirements include oral evidence obtained at the progress review meeting), the second TAP meeting of each year (full-time PGRs) may be fully integrated within the review meeting (i.e. in addition to making a formal decision about the PGR's progress, the progress review panel (in the absence of the supervisor) works with the PGR to deliver the developmental aspect of the TAP meeting and to complete the TAP form). In this scenario, it is recommended that the progress review element is completed prior to the TAP element.

- 1.44 Alternatively, some departments may wish to schedule progress review and TAP meetings consecutively. It is recommended that the progress review meeting is scheduled first and the meeting reconvenes as a TAP meeting once the supervisor has joined.

Notification of progression decisions

- 1.45 Departments are responsible for notifying PGRs of the outcome of the first attempt at progression and for arranging the second attempt at progression where required.

Second attempt

- 1.46 If, at a PGR's first attempt a progression panel decides that a PGR on a PhD, EngD or MPhil programme has *not yet* met the relevant University progression criteria (including on the grounds of non-submission of evidence and/or non-attendance at a progress review meeting), it must recommend a second attempt at meeting the relevant University progression criteria, programme transfer or withdrawal (see above).
- 1.47 If a PGR has not met the relevant University progression criteria at the first attempt, in determining what recommendation to make, the progression panel should consider what would be in the best interests of the PGR concerned. If the PGR's performance at the first attempt is such that the progression panel thinks it is unlikely that the PGR will meet the progression criteria at the second attempt, or the panel believes that preparing for a second attempt would seriously compromise a PGR's likelihood of completion on time, then the progression panel should recommend programme transfer or withdrawal. To recommend programme transfer, the progression panel should agree that there is a realistic possibility of the PGR successfully completing the programme to which they would be transferred within a reasonable time period (taking into account the normal period of enrolment for the degree in question and the need for any extensions, if required, to be approved).
- 1.48 The progression panel will provide the PGR with clear written feedback about why the progression criteria were not met and its reasons for recommending a second attempt, programme transfer or withdrawal. The progression panel will specify, in broad terms, what the PGR would need to do to meet the relevant University progression criteria at the second attempt.
- 1.49 In the case of a recommendation for programme transfer or withdrawal, the PGR may choose to accept the recommendation or, alternatively, decide to make a second attempt at meeting the relevant University progression criteria against the advice of the progression panel. The PGR must inform their department of their intention (i.e. second attempt, transfer or withdrawal) within two weeks of being informed of the panel's recommendation (if a PGR does not respond within this timeframe it will be treated as an assumed withdrawal).
- 1.50 If the PGR accepts a recommendation for withdrawal this will be undertaken with immediate effect. If the PGR accepts a recommendation for transfer to an alternative programme, the PGR's enrolment will be transferred immediately, subject to the following considerations:

Where the PGR is being transferred from an MPhil/PhD/EngD to a MA/MSc (by research):

- if they have not yet exceeded the normal period of enrolment for the MA/MSc (by research), they will have the remaining normal period of enrolment for that degree plus the standard three-month continuation period to submit their thesis
- if they have already exceeded the normal period of enrolment for the MA/MSc (by research), they will have a three-month MA/MSc (by research) continuation period added from the date of transfer to give them time to reframe their research and submit for the lower award.

Where the PGR is being transferred from a PhD/EngD to an MPhil:

- if they have not yet exceeded the normal period of enrolment for the MPhil, they will have the remaining normal period of enrolment for that degree plus the standard 12-month continuation period to submit their thesis;
- if they have already exceeded the normal period of enrolment for the MPhil, they will have a 12-month MPhil continuation period added from the date of transfer to give them time to reframe their research and submit for the lower award.

Making a second attempt at meeting the progression criteria

- 1.51 If a PGR has a second attempt at meeting the relevant University progression criteria they will continue on their programme pending a decision regarding the second attempt.
- 1.52 Where a PGR makes a second attempt at meeting the relevant University progression criteria, the final recommendation from the progression panel must be submitted via SkillsForge by the deadline specified above (i.e. for full-time PGRs no later than three months after the date of the first attempt at progression, calculated from the date of the first progress review meeting). The department must ensure that the timetable for making a second attempt (including provision for a second and final review meeting, if required) enables this deadline to be met.
- 1.53 The relevant departmental GSB will supply the PGR with the date by which they must present new and/or revised written evidence (see above). The progression panel will also state whether the supervisor(s) will be required to submit a new supervisor's report in the light of the new and/or revised written submission from the PGR.
- 1.54 The PGR will need to work with the supervisor(s) to draw up an action plan and identify any support needs to cover the period leading up to the second attempt. The PGR is, however, ultimately responsible for ensuring that they address the points raised by the progression panel at the first attempt.
- 1.55 If the new and/or revised written evidence presented by the PGR - plus the new supervisor's report if required - is sufficient to satisfy the progression panel that the PGR has now met or exceeded the relevant University progression criteria, then a second progress review meeting is not required.
- 1.56 If the new and/or revised written evidence presented by the PGR - plus the new supervisor's report if required - is not sufficient to satisfy the progression panel that the PGR has met or exceeded the relevant University progression criteria, then a second and final progress review meeting is required in which the progression panel (or at least two members of the panel, normally including the Chair) must meet with the PGR, normally face-to-face. If, for good reason, a PGR needs to participate remotely, permission must be sought in advance from SEE (decision taken by the Deputy Head of Student Administration or their designated alternate). Each department is responsible for ensuring that a recording is made of all second progress review meetings, in accordance with the University's Policy on the recording of second progress review meetings and oral examinations for research degrees (Appendix 1).
- 1.57 If – based on the new and/or revised evidence, the new supervisor's report (if applicable) and discussion with the PGR in a second progress review meeting (if applicable) – the progression panel decides that the PGR has met or exceeded the relevant University progression criteria at the second attempt, it should recommend:

- (i) that the PGR be progressed;

if, however, the progression panel decides that the PGR has *not* met the relevant University progression criteria at the second attempt (including on the grounds of the non-submission of evidence and/or non-attendance at a progress review meeting), the PGR will be deemed to have failed the progression

point and the progression panel must recommend:

- (ii) that the PGR be transferred to an MPhil programme (for PGRs enrolled on a PhD programme only); *or*
- (iii) that the PGR be transferred to a MA/MSc (by research) programme; *or*
- (iv) that the PGR's enrolment with the University be terminated.

The progression panel should provide reasons for its choice of (ii)-(iv).

- 1.58 If a PGR progresses as a consequence of meeting or exceeding the University's progression criteria at the second attempt this does not alter the timing of the next formal review of progression (if applicable), nor change the period of enrolment, nor alter the deadline for submission of the thesis.
- 1.59 If a PGR has not met the relevant University progression criteria at the second attempt, in determining whether to make a recommendation for transfer or termination, the progression panel should consider what would be in the best interests of the PGR concerned. To recommend transfer, the progression panel should agree that there is a realistic possibility of the PGR completing the programme to which they would be transferred within a reasonable period (taking into account the normal period of enrolment for the degree in question).
- 1.60 Departments should notify the PGR if they will be recommending withdrawal or transfer at the second attempt so the formal notification is not a surprise for the PGR.
- 1.61 If the SCA approves a recommendation for termination of enrolment, the PGR's enrolment will be terminated immediately. If the SCA approves a recommendation for transfer, the PGR's enrolment will be transferred immediately, subject to the following considerations:

Where the PGR is being transferred from an MPhil/PhD/EngD to a MA/MSc (by research):

- if they have not yet exceeded the normal period of enrolment for the MA/MSc (by research), they will have the remaining normal period of enrolment for that degree plus the standard three-month continuation period to submit their thesis;
- if they have already exceeded the normal period of enrolment for the MA/MSc (by research), they will have a three-month MA/MSc (by research) continuation period added from the date of transfer to give them time to reframe their research and submit for the lower award.

Where the PGR is being transferred from a PhD/EngD to an MPhil:

- if they have not yet exceeded the normal period of enrolment for the MPhil, they will have the remaining normal period of enrolment for that degree plus the standard 12-month continuation period to submit their thesis;
- if they have already exceeded the normal period of enrolment for the MPhil, they will have a 12-month MPhil continuation period added from the date of transfer to give them time to reframe their research and submit for the lower award.

- 1.62 A PGR retains the right of appeal against a failure to progress if they can establish grounds for doing so, as outlined in University Regulation 2.8.

Entry into a continuation period

- 1.63 There is no formal review of progress for PGRs entering into a continuation period, where this is permitted, because the expectation is that these PGRs should be near to submitting their theses.
- 1.64 Departments are, however, asked to ensure that PGRs who wish to enter a continuation period are asked to provide evidence to their TAP, in a form specified by their department, that they have started to write up their research in an appropriate academic format for it to be critically assessed by peer

reviewers and examiners, and have planned in a realistic fashion how the thesis will be completed to the required standard within the specified time limit.

- 1.65 This evidence should be scrutinised at the final TAP prior to the PGR entering the continuation period. Where the TAP has concerns about the evidence presented, the PGR should be advised to seek additional advice and support from their supervisor(s) and the GSB alerted so that they can monitor the situation.

Extension of progression deadlines

- 1.66 A request for an extension to a University deadline for a formal review of progress due to exceptional circumstances relating to staff involved in the process (e.g. the absence of the supervisor) will not normally be considered as departments should make alternative arrangements in such circumstances so as not to disadvantage the PGRs concerned.
- 1.67 A department may grant an extension to a PGR for an internal (ie departmental) deadline for a formal review of progress (eg relating to the date for submission of written evidence or the timing of the progress review meetings) if the PGR has exceptional circumstance as long as the University deadlines relating to formal reviews of progress (as set out above) can still be met.
- 1.68 A department may seek an extension to a University deadline for a formal review of progress (see above) only in the case of exceptional circumstances relating to an individual PGR (namely where a PGR's ability to complete the formal review of progress has been hampered by documented medical or personal reasons or, more rarely, extraordinary and unexpected academic circumstances which can be addressed without affecting the ability of the PGR to submit their thesis on time). The magnitude of the research task, or failure on the part of the PGR to perceive or act on the magnitude of the research task, is not a reason for an extension.
- 1.69 A request for an extension to a University deadline for a formal review of progress will not normally be considered until the PGR in question is within two months of the deadline. An extension will normally be limited to two months and the total period of extension that may normally be approved will be four months.
- 1.70 Requests for extensions to University progression deadlines (or any other variation to the progression process related due to exceptional circumstances) should be submitted to SEE. Requests will be considered by PGR Special Cases.
- 1.71 Any extension to the deadline for a formal review of progress will not alter the timing of the next formal review of progress (if applicable), nor change the period of enrolment, nor alter the date for submission of the thesis.

Failure to submit evidence and/or attend a progression meeting

- 1.72 If a PhD or MPhil PGR does not produce the evidence required by their department for a formal review of progress and/or does not attend a progression-related meeting where applicable *and* there are no exceptional circumstances then the PGR's progress review panel will deem the PGR not to have met the relevant progression criteria and should normally recommend that the PGR be withdrawn (first attempt at progression) or their enrolment terminated (second attempt at progression), with the option for the department or PGR to make a case to PGR Special Cases for transfer to a lower award.
- 1.73 If a PhD or MPhil PGR does not produce the evidence required by their department for a formal review of progress and/or does not attend a progression-related meeting where applicable *and there are* exceptional circumstances, then the Policy on exceptional circumstances in PGR assessment

should be consulted.

Document control			
<i>Date</i>	<i>Change</i>	<i>Approved</i>	<i>Material impact on PGRs</i>
20/10/25	From 1.66 re-ordering of the content for clarity and to signpost to the Policy on PGR extenuating circumstances for PGR assessment	By Chair's action 10/11/2025	No

END