

Research Students Annual Progress Review

Faculty of Medicine

THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEW SOUTH WALES



Taken from
UNSW GUIDELINES FOR POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH
<http://www.unsw.edu.au/currentStudents/postgradResearch/res/GuidSupvPGR.pdf>
and modified for the Faculty of Medicine

Successful Progress and Progress Review

The primary goal of postgraduate research supervision is to ensure the successful progress through, and completion of, the candidate's research program. During the candidature, the candidate should develop a number of generic and discipline-specific skills. The thesis examination process is the method by which the candidate's competencies are assessed at the completion of the research. However, regular review during the candidature should assist satisfactory progress toward completion.

University policy requires annual review of candidature. **The goals** of the progress review are

- to assess progress by the candidate on the research being undertaken,
- to contribute toward a rewarding and productive research environment and
- to identify problem areas in the student's work and implement procedures to resolve these problem areas.

The emphasis must be upon review of the research program, in particular,

- the contributions from both the candidate and the supervisor and
- the adequacy of the support facilities provided by the School.

The review should consider not only progress, but also other issues related to the research such as intellectual property, safety and ethical issues, and resources.

Progress review should:

- facilitate progress by affirming satisfactory progress;
- if necessary, advise how the research program needs to be modified to facilitate completion; and
- provide a 'safety net' when there are problems with progress.

In this latter case, the review process should **identify the factors contributing to lack of progress**. These factors may lie with

- the topic
- the supervisor
- the candidate, or
- in other areas including infrastructure support, access to resources, the research culture within the School, or
- a combination of the above.

Once the relevant factors have been identified, the School should institute appropriate supportive remedial action to maximise the chances of the research program getting 'back on track'.

Good practice guidelines for progress review should ensure that:

1. Review of the candidature is conducted on an annual basis, as required by University policy. The first review is related to the research proposal, and should be undertaken as soon as feasible after enrolment, preferably within the first six months and no later than 12 months after enrolment. Subsequent reviews must occur every 12 months.

Attendance at the review session is compulsory for the candidate and the supervisor **or** co-supervisor. *Non-attendance by either party without good cause will be*

considered as unsatisfactory performance and the candidate's continuing enrolment will be jeopardised.

2. All candidates and supervisors are informed of the progress review procedures through University and School orientation programs and documentation.
3. The criteria and method of application for transfer between Masters and PhD candidature are explicit and documented.
4. The review process is overseen by academic staff members with appropriate expertise in the research area, who are independent of the research program and the student-supervisor relationship. Both candidate and supervisor are afforded the opportunity to nominate individuals for inclusion or exclusion from this role.
5. The review process includes frank appraisals by the candidate and the supervisor of progress, and of the input of both candidate and supervisor(s). Both candidate and supervisor are given the opportunity to present their reports independently and some matters may be reported in confidence.
6. In the event that progress on the research program is deemed unsatisfactory, recommendations for remedial action designed to maximise the chances of completion are specified. Such remedial action, with adequate support and clear expectations concerning outcome, is instituted and monitored by the School's PG Coordinator. Any anticipated delays in completion relating to unsatisfactory progress, for whatever reason, should be reported to the Review Panel in the first instance and raised at Higher Degree Committee (HDC) if problems are unresolved within three months.
7. A written report on progress is prepared, including as appropriate, any submissions made by the candidate or supervisor(s). Bearing in mind confidentiality issues, copies of this report must be given to the candidate, the supervisor, the School and the Scholarships, Loans and Research Student Office.
8. A summary of the annual review of candidates is tabled at the Faculty HDC.
9. The Faculty takes responsibility for
 - a. monitoring the School's compliance with University policy on annual progress reviews (see Appendix), and
 - b. facilitating problem solving in progress by arbitrating and advising on individual cases, providing a forum for Schools to discuss general procedures and problems, and transmitting through the DVC(R) to the Academic Board common School concerns about progress and procedures.
10. The University, Faculty and School develop strategies for supporting candidates during the gap between the end of a 6- or 7-session scholarship and the submission of the thesis, with a view to improving completion rates.