Summary of Annual Progression for Research Degree Programmes

In the University’s Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes, the University requires that supervisory teams should formally monitor the progress of all students on doctoral programmes through annual reports. The progress of the student should be reviewed annually by a School Progress Panel using evidence from a variety of sources. These School Panels should determine whether the student's progress is satisfactory and whether the research project will meet the standards for the award in the time available. The final decision with respect to any recommendation by the School Progress Panel is taken by the Dean of Postgraduate Studies. The Graduate School Office shall communicate the formal progress decision to the student with copies to the Supervisory Team, however, schools can inform students and supervisors of the provisional outcome.

Diagram of Annual Progression In Brief

- Student Report
- Supervisor/s Report
- Evidence of Student Progress; - Student Work, - Interview, - Presentation
- Information from Research Training Portfolio. Student Self Assess /PDP & List of Training Attended
- School Progress Panel Consider Progression
- Formal Approval of School Progression Decision by PG Dean
- Student Informed of Formal Progression Decision
- Optional – Provisional feedback by School.
Procedures for Annual Progression
This process can be carried out electronically via the ePortfolio for Research Degree Students - https://pf-postgrad.ncl.ac.uk/eportfolio

Students
Students should be given the opportunity to give their views to the Progress Panel via a written report. Schools need to consider what their research students need to submit or present as evidence of their progression on the research programme. Student work could involve one or more of the following; a written progress report; a project presentation; a piece of academic writing or a viva by the panel. Students (at least 1st & 2nd years) should also provide copies of their ‘Self Assessment and Personal Development Plan’ (E) and List of ‘Training Courses Attended’ (G) from their Research Training Portfolio/ ePortfolio. Schools need to inform students of the exact arrangements for progression as early as possible in the year to enable them to prepare for the progress assessment.

Supervisor/s
Schools need to ask the supervisor/ supervisory team to make an annual written report on the progress of their student prior to the School Progress Panel taking place. Although this does not need to be shown to the student or signed by the student, staff should note that a student may ask to see the report under the rules for Data Protection.

School Panels
Schools need to organise Progress Panels, consisting of at least 2 academic staff eligible to supervise research students, who are not themselves part of the student’s supervisory team.

The Panel must complete the University’s Progress Report Form after they have considered the evidence provided. The Panel needs to determine whether the student has progressed satisfactorily and whether the research project will meet the standards for the award in the time available. The Panel may make any general comments they have in the comment boxes available that will be helpful and informative to the student and supervisor/s. In addition, the School should indicate the actions it intends to take following the comments made by the Progress Panel. Schools can give students and supervisors provisional feedback, this will not be formal until approved by the Dean of Postgraduate Studies.

Report on Annual Progress
Once the Annual Report Form has been completed by the School Progress Panel and signed it needs to be forwarded to the Head of School or nominee for signature. The Annual Report Form should be sent to the relevant Faculty Graduate School Office where the recommendation is considered by the Dean of Postgraduate Studies. Following approval, the Graduate School will write formally to each research student and their supervisor/s enclosing a copy of the report, outlining the decision of the Progress Panel

Reassessment of Progress
If the Progress Panel recommends that the candidate’s performance is unsatisfactory and that a further assessment should be held, arrangements need to be made for another School Progress Panel meeting within two months of the original meeting. The Panel will need to establish the reasons why progress has been insufficient to meet the standards for progression on the programme, and indicate what the student and (where appropriate) the supervisory team must do to resolve the difficulties identified.