First Year Reports
(and Literature Reviews)

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• PhD

• MD

• MRes/PhD

• Mphil

* Full time/part time
Evidence of student progress:
- interview
- Presentation
- Research training portfolio - courses attended
- conferences
- Publications

The Process: Annual Progress Reviews: E-portfolio

1. Evidence of student progress;
   - interview
   - Presentation
   - Research training portfolio - courses attended
   - conferences
   - Publications

2. Student report

3. Supervisors report

4. School progress panel (assessors)
   - DPGT’s/PGRC (school /nominee)
   - Progression decision by PG Dean/PgR Tutor

Guidelines (online)

Supervisors
- Lab members
- Mentors
- Guidelines (online)
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- **Student and supervisor submitted**
- **Student’s submitted**
- **Complete**
- **Overdue**
Dear XXX
Your progression panel is due in ......
When you log on to your ePortfolio, you will see that the panel deadline is set later – this is to allow a little leeway for setting the date to meet with your panel members, as we appreciate that this is a busy time of year and that people may be away on holiday. You should still aim to get your progression completed as quickly as possible. If you cannot complete the process within this deadline, you should contact me at the Graduate School to apply for an extension.
The eProgression system is explained on the Graduate School web pages at http://www.ncl.ac.uk/fms/postgrad/documentation/ (under Faculty Documentation) and we hope that using this system will make the process simpler for all concerned. You’ll also find the Faculty of Medical Sciences Graduate School Guidelines for the Annual Progression of Research Students on this webpage, and these explain the rationale, timing of assessments and the minimum requirements.
You need to contact your panel members as soon as possible to make arrangements for handing in your reports and set a date to meet with them. If you experience problems either in making contact or arrangements please enlist the help of your supervisors and/or postgraduate tutor. Please let me know when you’ve set the date.
Please note that you need to take responsibility for the timely completion of the process.
If you have any questions please contact me on extension 3847 or Lindsey.James@ncl.ac.uk.
Please note that you may also receive an automated reminder from the progression portal – apologies for the duplication!

Best wishes
Lin James
Progress and Assessment Assistant
Graduate School Office, Faculty of Medical Sciences -Newcastle University The Medical School,
Framlington Place, NE2 4HH Tel. 0191 222 3847 Fax: 0191 222 7038
website: http://medicalfaculty.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate
The Report

• “What should I include”?

• “Can I write as much as I want”?

• “How do I select what is relevant”?

• “I don’t have enough data to show for 8 months work”

• “I haven't enough space to write everything I want”

• “The data doesn’t represent just how much time I have spent optimising experiments”

• “Hardly anything has worked”

The Interview

What if I don’t know everything?

What if I have missed out something key to my project

Worried about not having enough data

Unsure about how data should be analysed

Data just doesn't go with my original hypothesis

What if I don’t pass?
The Report

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• “Can I write as much as I want”?
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“What if I don’t pass?”
Progress review

• Why?
  – To help you work out what your project is about!
  – To encourage you to think of your research aims (and what you have achieved to date).
  – To focus you on the timeline for completion of your work.
    • To help you to decide if you are sufficiently “diligent”...
  – To identify problems at an early stage and to suggest strategies to fix these (see later).
University and Faculty Documentation for Research Students

There are a number of important University and Faculty regulations/policies that Research Students (PhD, MPhil, MD and DDS) need to be aware of - please ensure you have read the necessary documentation.

- University documentation (including research handbook, regulations, research training portfolio, forms for research project approval, annual progression)
- Research Ethics
- Faculty documentation (including Graduate School handbook, Research Student Development Programme)
- Guidelines and Additional Forms (including Travel Fund forms and Guidelines)
- Progression Review Process for postgraduate research students (including advice for preparation of progression reviews by MRes-PhD students)

Alternatively contact the Graduate School for assistance.
Annual Progression

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.

- Guidelines (PDF: 30KB)
- Electronic System for Annual Progression Submission
Annual review guidelines: relevant to 1st year

**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 1\textsuperscript{st} & 2\textsuperscript{nd} 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.

* Add in other courses/activities that you have been involved in
Reports

• What do you need to produce?
  – First meeting

We recommend the following structure for your report:
1. Table of contents
2. A literature review
3. A clear statement of the aims of your project
4. A summary of the methods developed and results obtained to date
5. A discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of your work to date
6. An outline of your future work.

In order to stop students from submitting over-long mini-theses, the Graduate School suggests a maximum word limit for this report (excluding references and figures) of 7,500 words. For ease of handling, we also recommend that the document be soft-bound (available at very modest cost in the Robinson Library). You will need a minimum of 3 copies in order to retain one yourself after submitting one to each of your assessors.
A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.

Lao-tzu, *The Way of Lao-tzu*

Chinese philosopher (604 BC - 531 BC)
Make a plan

• This will become the table of contents!

• You will need:
  – Chapters
    • Headings
      – Subheadings

• This will impose order on your writing and break your journey into many shorter journeys!
  – Much less stressful
Like this?

- Introduction
- Methodology
- Results
- Conclusion
- Bibliography
Or this?

1 Introduction
   1.1 Background of problem
   1.2 First issue
      1.2.1 sub issue 1
      1.2.2 sub issue 2
   1.3 Second issue
      1.3.1 sub issue 1
      1.3.2 sub issue 2
      1.3.3 sub issue 3
      1.3.4 sub issue 4
   1.4 Third issue
      1.4.1 sub issue 1
         1.4.1.a sub sub issue 1
         1.4.1.b sub sub issue 2
      1.4.2 sub issue 2
   1.5 Aims of this study

2 Methodology
   2.1
      etc, etc…
Your report

• Your plan should divide the word limit between the sections
• Often students will have relatively few completed sets of data by 8 months!
• The literature review is most important
  – Often the focused reading you do for this “sets the scene” for your entire project and clarifies your aims.
  – Often the majority of your word limit goes here
What papers to include!

- ‘Seminal’ papers – relevant to YOUR project
- Reviews helpful – BUT use research publications.
- The first discoveries
- Conflicting discoveries
- Controversial papers
- Be selective and don't feel you have to include everything on the topic!
MRes/PhD – First Year Report

- Don’t get hung up on ‘I can’t replicate (self plagiarism)
- Examined in MRes dissertation – can’t be included in PhD
- Let’s clarify -
  - Data = No (but can be used in Introduction – work leading to the PhD)  
  - Literature Review – relevant – will be expanded and updated as you progress (cite MRes thesis for sections)
  - Methods = Yes – in your MRes project you may have
    - developed assays
    - selected patient groups/samples
    - carried out a survey

** Examples at the end
The aims

• It is crucial that you explain your aims at the end of the introduction section.

• Be realistic.
  – Your are unlikely to achieve an aim like “To cure cancer”
  – Aims are not techniques!

• It is reasonable to define what you have already done (possibly not very much) and what you will do in the next two years and 4 months.
Methodology

• Detail any methods you are using or developing and/or optimising

• How are you validating these?
  – Positive and negative controls
  – Statistical tests

• If you wish to present any results, then the method used to derive these should certainly be presented in this section.
Results

- Your panel is realistic and will know that students often have little solid data at this stage.
- However, you should be able to present some representative data showing work in progress.
  - Present results clearly (as in a paper or thesis)
- If you can’t use statistics to analyse anything yet, you should state what tests(s) you will use when you have more data.
Discussion

• This section should refer back to your aims.
  – Have you met any of your objectives yet?
    • If not, how long will it be before you do?

• Are your findings consistent with the literature?

• Detail any strengths and weaknesses of your protocols

• Crucially, add a section on future work showing awareness of the timeline for completion of your thesis.
Tips

• Write what you know/think and then reference a block of text
• Try not to insert graphics within the text
  – Use separate pages
  – MUCH easier to format the final document
• Minimise unnecessary use of colour
  – Cheaper and quicker to print

Backup, Backup, Backup, Backup!
A caution

• You are required to submit an electronic form of your report
  – This file can be easily checked for potential plagiarism
  – 50% of first year reports will be checked

From the Times Higher Education Supplement

Deja vu: Durham dean's thesis and 3 other papers

26 October 2007
Tariq Tahir
The full extent to which a leading business school head lifted material from papers published by his peers has emerged.

Tony Antoniou quit his post as dean of Durham Business School at the beginning of September for what were described as "personal reasons", amid unspecified allegations of plagiarism. He remains a professor of finance at the university.

An investigation by The Times Higher reveals that large quantities of material in Professor Antoniou's 1986 DPhil thesis, and a later journal article, are copied from a number of other sources.
What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism put simply is 'the use of any source, published or unpublished, without proper acknowledgement.'

Most students will be aware that when they copy a chunk of text straight from a book, buy an essay online or copy from another student's work that they are cheating. However there are many students who don't intend to cheat but, because of poor academic practice, end up committing plagiarism.

It is surprisingly easy to commit plagiarism accidentally. Carelessness when it comes to referencing is a key cause, but so are poor note-taking skills and inappropriate use of cut and paste from the internet.

Here are some good reasons not to commit plagiarism Click Here.

http://www.ncl.ac.uk/right-cite/ Please try this program!
Finished?

• Get friends and family to proofread
• If English is not your first language, it can be helpful to use a proof-reader.
  – Lists are available in the Student’s Union.
  – The cost is quite reasonable
  – The proof-reader will (**must**) only alter English and not the concept you are trying to express.

• Remember – your supervisor will hope to focus mainly on your science rather than your English.
The role of your supervisors

• It is your progress that is being reviewed
• Do not expect your supervisor to spend ages helping you to make your report perfect
• Most supervisors will be happy to comment (once or twice) on a completed draft document
Electronic submission

This online portfolio is for registered students and their supervisors.

**General Information**
- Password Help
- Information for staff registered for PhDs or other higher degrees

**ePortfolio**
- Quick Guide for Students
- Quick Guide for Supervisors
- Frequently Asked Questions (ePortfolio)

**eProgression (Annual Progression)**
- Student's Guide to Submitting Online
- Supervisor's Guide to Submitting Online
- Panel Members' Guide to eProgression
- Head of School/Institute's Guide to eProgression
- Deans' Guide to eProgression
- School Administrators' Guide to eProgression
- Graduate School Staff Guide to eProgression
- Frequently Asked Questions (eProgression)
First panel meeting – what else is needed?

- PowerPoint Presentation (~15-20 min)
  - Practice beforehand in front of your group- their questions are often tougher!

- Annual report forms completed on-line by the:
  - Student
  - Supervisor(s)

- Lab books

- Record of PG skills training events you have attended (electronically recorded by Richy’s booking system).
The panel meeting

• **You** should arrange this and provide documents to the assessors in good time

• Ask them about a hard copy or electronic copy

• There is no fixed duration for the interview
  – specific requirements -PowerPoint presentation

• The interview is based on the formal oral exam you will have on completion of your PhD/MD thesis (or *may* have on completion of your MPhil thesis).
• Check out the instructions we give our PhD examiners.
  – Their report has set questions to address
  – This will give you an idea of what you can expect!
2. Are you satisfied that the thesis is the candidate's own work or, if it was done in collaboration, that his or her share in the research is adequate?
   YES/NO ( if no - ..........................................................)

3. Is the mode of presentation of the thesis satisfactory?
   YES/NO ( if no - ..........................................................)

4. Is the thesis an addition to knowledge and worthy of publication either in full or in abridged form (such as a paper or papers in an appropriate journal)?
   YES/NO ( if no - ..........................................................)

5. Does the candidate's work show that the subject of the thesis has been studied with adequate industry and application?
   YES/NO ( if no - ..........................................................)

6. Do you consider the candidate to be adequately acquainted with the field of knowledge within which the subject matter of the thesis falls?
The Interview
• The reviewers will be hoping for a lively *two-way* exchange of knowledge.
  – The more you say the less they can ask!
• You may well find you know better than your reviewers the literature in your area.
• Be prepared to highlight achievements you are particularly proud of
• Don’t be worried if the reviewers suggest additional work – you still have time for this.
  – Make notes so any useful points you discuss are not forgotten
Phew – its all over

• But, you have just written a wonderful literature review!
  – Will it now simply collect dust?
• The review (and its bibliography) will be useful when you write your thesis
• Maybe the literature review can also be converted (with a little extra effort) into a published review
  – Talk to your supervisors about this
  – Listen to Alicia’s advice
  – Attend our “Scientific Writing” session!
SAFB1- and SAFB2-mediated transcriptional repression: relevance to cancer

Elaine A. Yong, Hannah L. Gannay, David J. Elliott and Alison J. Tyson-Capper

DOI: 10.1007/s10555-012-9385-3

NON-THEMATIC REVIEW

The role of FOXP3 in the development and metastatic spread of breast cancer

Stephen Douglass, Simi Atilla

Available online http://breast-cancer-research.com/content/10/3/207

Review
Alternative splicing and the progesterone receptor in breast cancer
David MW Cork, Thomas WJ Lennard and Alison J Tyson-Capper

Hindawi Publishing Corporation
International Journal of Cell Biology
Volume 2013, Article ID 547921, 2 pages
http://dx.doi.org/10.1155/2013/547921

Review Article
Expression of Tra2β in Cancer Cells as a Potential Contributory Factor to Neoplasia and Metastasis
Andrew Best, Caroline Dugies, Ingrid Ehrmann, Mahsa Kheireldin-Kouhestani, Alison Tyson-Capper, and David J. Elliott
Investigating cancer-associated splicing in HER2 in breast cancer

Anna-Lena Dittrich

Supervisor team: Dr Alison Tyson-Capper
Dr Hannah Gautrey
Dr David Browell

Institute of Cellular Medicine
PhD 1st Year report

“it's much more complex!”
“Can’t include all I want to”!
Good luck!

Any questions