

## PART D: SUPPORTING PROGRESS

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### Academic Support for Research Students

All research students are registered to an academic department and will have a suitably qualified supervisor. In addition, they are supported by the Departmental Research Student Progress Committee, the Head of Department and the Dean of Graduate Studies.

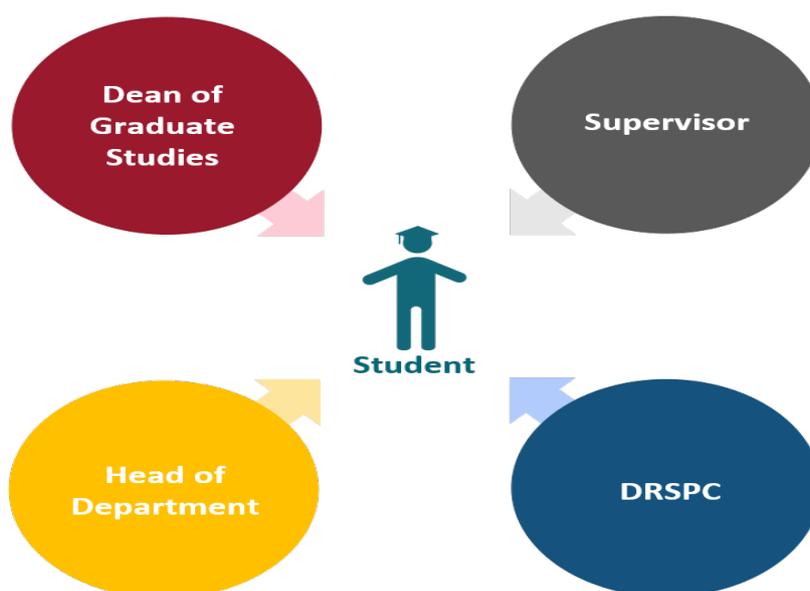


Figure 4: Academic support for research students

Where there is a felt grievance in relation to supervision or supervisory support, or where there is a dispute between student and supervisor, the student should approach their head of department. However, where a satisfactory resolution has not been reached with the head of department, the dispute should be referred to the Dean of Graduate Studies for consideration.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### *The Student*

Research students' rights and responsibilities are governed by MU policies. Specific responsibilities of research students include the following:

- To advance the progress of and complete their research;
- To maintain a professional relationship at all times with the supervising academic members and other university staff;
- To follow the plan of study and research as agreed with their supervisor, and to maintain regular contact with their supervisor;
- To document the progress of work as agreed with the supervisor and present written or other material as requested and on time;
- To inform the supervisor of any proposal to publish or make a presentation in connection with the work;
- To inform the supervisor promptly of any impediment to their work;
- To notify the supervisor of their intention to submit at least three months prior to the proposed date of submission; and
- To take the initiative in identifying problems and seeking solutions to them.

### *The Supervisor*

Each research student should have a suitably qualified lead supervisor whose responsibility will be to supervise the student on a regular and frequent basis. The supervisor should be familiar with and seek to ensure that the student is familiar with the relevant university policies.

Supervisory arrangements with a department include:

- Sole supervisor;
- Co-supervision;
- Supervision by a primary and secondary supervisor;
- Supervision by a supervisory team;
- Joint supervision across departments in Maynooth University;
- External supervisors.

Supervision should be available to students during normal office hours.

Through the course of the research, the supervisor should:

- Maintain contact through regular supervisory meetings with the student; request regular written work or results of research to date and provide constructive evaluation and feedback in a reasonable time;
- Ensure that progress of the student is formally evaluated as applicable;
- Seek to ensure that the work reported in the dissertation is the student's own;
- Bring to the student's attention perceived lack of progress and any issues without delay and encourage the student to rectify deficiencies/solve issues in a timely manner. If the supervisor feels obliged to recommend a student's studies be discontinued because of unsatisfactory progress, they must make this recommendation to the head of department/DRSPC who will inform the student accordingly;

- Encourage the publication of the results of the research where appropriate, provided that any relevant published work is coherently incorporated into the thesis;
- Assist and advise on career path and professional opportunities;
- Facilitate the student in meeting other researchers and encourage attendance at research seminars, meetings and/or conferences as appropriate;
- Seek to ensure that the student is aware of all relevant funding opportunities open to them and actively encourage the student to apply;
- Complete the annual progress review and participate in formal annual progression reviews undertaken by the Departmental Research Student Progress Committee;
- At the beginning of each academic year, ensure that the student has either registered for the current academic year, has submitted their thesis for examination, has agreed suspension of registration, or has formally withdrawn from studies.

Where a change in research direction occurs during the course of the programme, the supervisor should recommend appropriate research supervisory adjustments to the head of department and Departmental Research Student Progress Committee.

The supervisor should ensure that accurate information regarding their own research and professional/administrative leave, any retirement plans and contract duration throughout the period of the student's study is given to the student. If a supervisor plans to be on leave for a period greater than one month, the supervisor, in consultation with the head of department, should seek to ensure that adequate supervisory arrangements are made, and that the student is given advanced notice.

### *The Departmental Research Student Progress Committee*

The objectives of the Departmental Research Student Progress Committee (DRSPC) are to monitor the student's academic progress and to provide a mechanism for identification and resolution of any problems. The DRSPC's decisions regarding progression of research students are ratified by the relevant examination board.

A DRSPC will normally comprise three members of academic staff of the university. Where a research programme spans multiple departments and/or institutions, the DRSPC may include academic staff from participating departments/institutions. In the case of larger/smaller departments, alternative arrangements may be made. Departments may choose to adopt the same committee membership for all students within the department or to individualise the committee for each student. Any member of the committee whose student(s) are under consideration, should not take part in the progress discussions involving the student, except to provide the formal input requested of supervisors within the Annual Progress Review Form.

### *The Head of Department*

The head of department has overall responsibility for the supervision of research, from student acceptance, to supervisory arrangements and confirmation of thesis for examination.

### *Induction*

The purpose of induction is to welcome new research students and to equip them with the tools they need to commence their programme. They are informed about systems of support at MU as well as students' rights and responsibilities, rights and responsibilities of supervisors, performance monitoring, research integrity, plagiarism, ethical considerations, potential intellectual property issues. Research students are required to attend the induction programme in the first year of their registration.

Postgraduate Research Induction is compulsory for all new research students. Induction will comprise of two parts:

Part A: Research Induction will take place on 29th September: [Education Lecture Theatre - ELT, Education House, North Campus.](#)

- Join the Dean of Graduate Studies, Dr John Cullen and the research student support team. Students who cannot present on campus can join us through moodle

Part B: Series of online presentations through moodle. The presentations will include:

- Important Information about Health & Safety on campus, and how you can play your part in keeping yourself and your classmates safe this year. It is important that you maintain procedures consistently. We are asking you to take responsibility for your actions. Please pay particular attention to this part of the induction information.
- Presentations from core University services about the many supports that are available to you, such as the Library, IT Services, Maynooth University Writing Centre, and several others.

For further information, please contact: [marie.murphy@mu.ie](mailto:marie.murphy@mu.ie)

## Initial Meeting Record

[The Initial Meeting Record](#) (IMR) formally outlines the student's individual research programme. As soon as possible after registration, the student should hold the initial meeting with his/her supervisor(s)/supervisory team.

The purpose of the initial meeting is to:

- Provide an opportunity to design a unique, individual programme;
- Identify modules that will enhance the student's research programme;
- Identify modules that students will take in year one;
- Agree a calendar of meetings;
- Ensure the student has attended the induction programme;
- Ensure that the student is aware of and agrees to the University regulations and policies.

Details of the agreed programme are recorded in the IMR and signed by the student and the supervisor and then approved by the DRSPC. A copy should be kept by the student and supervisor and stored in the department. The IMR is forwarded by the DRSPC/department to the GS by the end of October/February, or within four weeks after first registration for students registering outside of standard registration times, for inclusion in the student record system. The IMR informs the Annual Progress Review subsequently carried out by the student's DRSPC.

## Annual Progress Reviews

### *Annual Progress Review*

The purpose of the Annual Progress Review (APR) is to:

- Provide feedback to the student on their progress, in synergy and conjunction with the supervisor;
- Grant permission to the student to progress to the next year of study based on an overall assessment of the quality of research output to date in light of the supervisor's recommendations;
- Give the student the opportunity to provide feedback on their supervisory arrangements;
- Discuss and record any changes to the student's individualised programmes;

- Ensure that the student has passed their required modules before thesis submission and, where appropriate, that waivers have been ratified by the DRSPC.

### Substantive Review for PhD Students

(Compulsory for students who commenced their programme from 2019/2020)

- Transfer from the initial phase of the PhD programme to the latter phase takes place following the substantive review.
- The substantive review is ordinarily conducted by the DRSPC and normally takes place by the end of Year Two for full-time students, and by the end of Year Three for part-time students. It is also possible to delay the substantive review once for a further year.
- Following this further year, the student should progress to the latter stages of the PhD programme, transfer to a research masters degree or exit the programme.
- Prior to the substantive review, the result code “Progress on PhD Track” is used by the DRSPC at the annual review to indicate the successful progression of the student
- The award of the result code “Progress on PhD” following the substantive review marks the transfer of the student to the latter phase of the PhD programme, and indicates that the DRSPC deems that the project is of sufficient quality and scope for continuation on the PhD programme. The result code of ‘Progress on PhD’ is used following all subsequent substantive reviews where the student is deemed to have progressed satisfactorily to the next year of the programme.

### *Annual Progress Review Form*

The Annual Progress Review form comprises of Part A and Part B.

Part A deals with the student’s research activities, outputs, and progress, as well as supervisor’s comments. The student should complete this part of the form in consultation with their supervisor. The supervisor completes their part and submits Part A of the form to the DRSPC.

Part B of the form requests feedback from the student on supervisory and departmental support and should be completed separately and submitted directly by the student to the DRSPC.

### *Mode of assessment*

The mode of assessment for the annual and substantive review will be determined at departmental level to ensure that academic diversity and different types of research undertaken within doctoral programmes are accommodated as appropriate. At the same time, it is essential that a standard of quality be maintained to ensure that the student is making satisfactory progress in pursuit of the aims and objectives of their research as agreed in the IMR.

### *Assessment for PhD students*

Best practice advises that departments clearly communicate appropriate milestones to PhD students in advance of annual progression meetings.

#### **First Year Annual Progress Review**

The first-year annual progress review (which takes place approximately nine months after initial registration) allows the DRSPC to monitor the student’s initial progress and provides a mechanism for identifying and resolving problems early in the process.

#### **Second Year Annual Progress Review**

The second-year annual review allows the DRSPC to conduct a substantive review and assess the viability of the research project. Progression to the PhD register is contingent on the student demonstrating progress according to disciplinary and departmental norms.

### Third Year and Subsequent Annual Progress Review(s)

The third year and subsequent annual review(s) afford the DRSPC further opportunities to support and monitor the progress of the PhD student.

The fourth-year progress review provides an opportunity to confirm that the student is on track to submit and that department actions have been taken to facilitate submission and examination.

The following will form the basis of the decision of the DRSPC:

- Annual progress review form Part A
- Annual progress review form Part B
- Interview (optional), which can be requested by the DRSPC or the student.

### Assessment outcomes for PhD students

There are clear set of potential outcomes of the annual student progression review, with associated result codes. Not all result codes can be used at every stage of the PhD.

Result	Meaning
<b>Progress on PhD Track</b> <i>[Can only be awarded in Year 1 and Year 2 (FT), and in Years 1,2, and 3 (PT)]</i>	The university believes adequate progress is being made for this point in the research degree (early years).
<b>Progress on PhD</b> <i>[Can be awarded in Years 2, 3, 4 and subsequent years up to 6 (FT) or Years 3, 4, 5, 6 (PT)] and subsequent years up to 9. This result is not available in Year 1.]</i>	The university believes adequate progress is being made for this point in the research degree, having completed the substantive review process.
<b>Progress with conditions</b>	<p>The progress made to date is not what is expected for this stage in the degree.</p> <p>The student may register and continue, but a change in performance is needed. Normally, the conditions set will be revisited by the DRSPC at the subsequent year's annual progression review.</p>
<b>Not progress</b>	The University will not permit further registration as (a) the work produced is not of the required standard; and/or (b) the project is no longer viable.
<b>Transfer to research masters degree</b>	The student can complete the thesis and have it assessed as a research masters degree.

## *Assessment outcomes for Research Masters Students*

Research Masters outcomes are:

- Progress
- Not Progress.

## *Recording of DRSPC's Recommendations*

The DRSPC's recommendations are recorded in the Annual Progress Review Form and a report is returned to the Graduate School.

All students and their supervisors will be informed of recommendations of the DRSPC before the June Research Student Progression Board. Students and supervisors may discuss the case with the DRSPC at that point, and submit any further evidence that might impact on the recommendation.

The June Research Student Progression Board assesses the progress made by each research student, and communicates to the student if any supplemental work is required prior to assessment of the full year's work by the Autumn Examination Board.

Where a student has been requested to submit supplemental work, the DRSPC must evaluate the progress of the student and submit recommendations to the August Research Progression Board.

The August Research Student Progression Board assesses the progress made by students who have been requested to submit supplemental work and it communicates to the student the results prior to ratification by the Autumn Examination Board.

Following the Autumn Research Progression Board, departments commit their results to the student record system for ratification at the Autumn Examination Board.

## Overview of Thesis Submission & Awarding of Research Degrees

Due to Covid-19, MU has prepared

### Guidelines for submission of a Research Thesis and conducting a Viva Voce Examination during the COVID-19 restrictions

#### Submission and Examination of a PhD Thesis at a Glance

PhD Submission & Examination	
1	<u>Final Annual Progression</u> The DRSPC approve completion of the programme and confirms required credits have been obtained.
2	<u>Establishment of Examination Board</u> In consultation with the supervisor, the HOD forwards name of internal/external examiner to Faculty for approval. The Registrar nominates the independent chair.
3	<u>Approval to Submit</u> The HOD and supervisor confirm approval of the final draft of the PhD thesis.
4	<u>Thesis Submission</u> Student should submit three copies of the soft-bound thesis. Each copy of the thesis must be accompanied by an abstract, not exceeding 300 words. In addition, the student should submit the following forms: <u>Thesis Submission Form A:</u> Confirmation of approval from the HOD and supervisor of the final draft of the PhD thesis. In addition, the Records Office needs to confirm that student is currently registered and the Fees & Grants Office confirm that fees are paid. <u>Thesis Submission Form B:</u> Certification of Student's Own Work There are two fee deadlines for submission without the student incurring additional fees: September registration: 31 October and January registration: 28 February.
5	<u>Report of Examiners</u> Prior to the Viva Voce, each examiner must separately complete an individual pre-report on the thesis. Further to the Viva Voce, the chair submits the <i>Report on the Recommendation of the Examiners</i> to the Examinations Office, Head of Department & Supervisor. Where Category 2 is awarded, the internal examiner confirms to Examinations Office that the recommended corrections have been completed satisfactorily. Where Category 3 is awarded, both the internal and external examiners must confirm this in writing to the Examinations Office.
6	<u>Approval by Faculty</u> The thesis result will not be considered by Faculty until three hardbound copies of the thesis, the <i>Report on the Recommendation of the Examiners</i> and sign off on corrections by internal (external) examiners have been submitted to the Examinations Office. An electronic copy mirroring the hardbound copy must also be submitted on either on CD, DVD or USB memory stick. <u>Form C: Thesis Depositor Declaration Form</u> must be submitted with the hardbound copies. If a student intends to withhold access from the Library Institutional Repository ( <a href="#">MURAL</a> ), support of the supervisor must also be submitted with <i>Form C: Thesis Depositor Declaration Form</i> and both are sent to Graduate Studies for the Dean's signature.
7	<u>Conferring</u> Following Faculty approval, the award is ratified by Academic Council and the Conferring Office informs the National University of Ireland.

Figure 5: Thesis submission and awarding of a PhD degree

#### PhD Thesis Submission Kit

- PhD Theses Submission Forms
- PhD Thesis Layout Recommendations
- Appointment of Examiners for PhD Thesis

## Submission and Examination of a Research Masters at a Glance

Research Masters Submission & Examination	
1	<p><u>Final Annual Progression</u></p> <p>The DRSPC approve completion of the programme and confirms required credits have been obtained.</p>
2	<p><u>Establishment of Examination Board</u></p> <p>In consultation with the supervisor, the HOD forwards name of the internal/external to Faculty for approval.</p>
3	<p><u>Approval to Submit</u></p> <p>The HOD and supervisor confirm approval of the final draft of the Research Masters thesis.</p>
4	<p><u>Thesis Submission</u></p> <p>Student should submit two copies of the soft-bound thesis to the Examinations Office. Each copy of the thesis must be accompanied by an abstract, not exceeding 300 words. In addition, the student should submit the following forms:</p> <p><u>Thesis Submission Form A</u>: Confirmation of approval from the HOD and supervisor of the final draft of the thesis</p> <p><u>Thesis Submission Form B</u>: Certification of Student's Own Work</p> <p>There are two fee deadlines for submission without the student incurring additional fees: September registration: 31 October and January registration: 28 February.</p>
5	<p><u>Report of Examiners</u></p> <p>Further to the examination of the thesis by the internal and external examiner, the internal examiners submits the <i>Report on the Recommendations of the Examiners</i> to the Examinations Office. Where Category 2 is awarded, the internal examiner confirms to Examinations Office that the recommended corrections have been completed satisfactorily. Where Category 3 is awarded, both the internal and external examiners must confirm this in writing to the Examinations Office.</p>
6	<p><u>Approval by Faculty</u></p> <p>The thesis result will be not be considered by Faculty until two hard-bound copies of the thesis, the <i>Report on the Recommendation of the Examiners</i> and sign off on corrections by the internal (external) examiner have been submitted to the Examinations Office. An electronic copy mirroring the hardbound copy must also be submitted on either on CD, DVD or USB memory stick.</p> <p><u>Form C: Thesis Depositor Form</u> must be submitted with the hard-bound copies. If a student intends to withhold access from the E-thesis archive, support of the supervisor must also be submitted with the Thesis Depositor Form and both are sent to Graduate Studies for the Dean's signature.</p>
7	<p><u>Conferring</u></p> <p>Following Faculty approval, the award is ratified by Academic Council and the Conferring Office informs the National University of Ireland.</p>

Figure 6: Normal, minimum and maximum credits required for a Research Masters degree

### Research Masters Thesis Submission Kit

- Theses Submission Forms
- Appointment of Examiner for Research Masters

All details relating to Examinations Thesis Submission and Viva Voce are available on <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/university-policies/academic-policies-procedures> and the *Thesis Submission and Viva Voce Examination Handbook*.