



University of
Chester

Quality and Standards Manual

Annual Progress Monitoring Policy

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Approved by:	
Owner:	Postgraduate Research Studies
Contact:	W.Morris@chester.ac.uk
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SECTION 5: ANNUAL PROGRESS MONITORING

This section covers the progress of research degree students, engagement with their supervisors and the processes by which their academic progress is monitored and assessed. It also provides procedures for dealing with circumstances where students are not demonstrating satisfactory academic progress.

Annual Progress Monitoring (APM) is the overall system operated by the University to assess research degree students' progress. All students registered on research degrees are subject to the formal Annual Progress Monitoring process which includes independent assessment of their academic progress. The formal record for Annual Progress Monitoring is the Annual Progress Report; a template proforma completed by the student, their Principal Supervisor and the nominated Independent Assessor.

Students are more likely to succeed in their research programme if they engage fully with their supervisory team, attend development training and supervisory meetings as required and plan their work carefully to meet deadlines. Failure to engage appropriately usually results in the student not making satisfactory academic progress. Students are expected to take full ownership and responsibility for their research project and the interactions they have with their supervisors. Failure of students to engage appropriately could lead to termination of studies and, for tier 4 visa holders, this will affect their right to remain in the UK. The responsibility for monitoring student engagement falls to the student's supervisory team.

1. General Principles

- 1.1 The formal assessment of student progress must be undertaken independent of the supervisory team by suitably qualified individuals.
- 1.2 The Annual Progress Monitoring process for each student, as a guide, should not normally extend beyond two months in duration unless further stages in the process are required (such as an extraordinary Independent Progress Assessment Panel or referral to the University Progress Panel).
- 1.3 The Annual Progress Report is the formal record of the Annual Progress Monitoring process and must be completed to a high standard in line with the importance of it. Completed Annual Progress Reports will be held by Registry Services. APRs will not be accepted without handwritten signatures or electronic signature stamps.
- 1.4 The expectations and requirements of students at each stage in their programme are laid out within the relevant faculty APR Guidance Notes, available on Portal. The Guidance Notes stipulate what documents students should expect to provide Independent Assessors as part of the review process. Independent Assessors may request additional documentation at their discretion provided reasonable notice is provided to the student. Failure of a student to provide this documentation may result in an unfavourable progress outcome.
- 1.5 Registry Services will be responsible for prompting the relevant Senior Faculty PGR Tutor, Principal Supervisor and the student that a review under these procedures is due.

- 1.6 The earliest opportunity for MPhil students to be considered for upgrade is in line with 4.3 and 4.4, there is no limit on the timeframe for upgrading but a student may not be upgraded after they have submitted their thesis. Where a student was not upgraded from MPhil to PhD following an Independent Progress Assessment Panel, but wishes to be reconsidered at a later date, they may make a request to their Head of Department and Senior Faculty PGR Tutor for an IPAM to be convened to consider the case. In such circumstances the purpose of the IPAM is to establish if there is reason to suggest the quality of work produced would be deemed in line with the FHEQ descriptors for doctoral programmes (see section 1 of this Handbook) and refer the student to be considered for upgrade by an Independent Progress Assessment Panel.
- 1.7 Registry Services will confirm in writing the outcome of all reviews to students following receipt of a compliant Annual Progress Report.
- 1.8 Students whose studies are suspended at the time an Annual Progress Monitoring activity is due are required to engage in that activity on their return from suspension.
- 1.9 Students registered for the award of PhD may request to be transferred to the target award of MPhil up until the point at which they have submitted their thesis.
- 1.10 It is the responsibility of the student and Principal Supervisor to ensure all relevant documentation is prepared and available for review prior to submitting the APR to the Independent Assessor. Supporting documentation for APM should be in line with APM Guidance Notes produced by the Faculty.
- 1.11 Students registered in a period of resubmission or who have received an extension which takes them past the schedule of APM activities laid out in 4.3 and 4.4, are required to complete an Annual Progress Report for each year they are subsequently registered. The APR will be reviewed remotely by an Independent Assessor in line with part 6.
- 1.12 These procedures relate to Professional Doctorates who have transferred to the research stage of their programme. The schedule for Professional Doctorate students, 4.3 and 4.4, relates to the date of the student's transfer to the research stage.
- 1.13 The student is required to make themselves available for the IPAM/ IPAP with reasonable notice. The default position is that the IPAM/IPAP will take place online, but the meeting may take place in-person if this is deemed appropriate, and with the agreement of the student.
- 1.14 Students who fail to adequately engage with the Annual Progress Monitoring process, including non-submission of an Annual Progress Report, or failure to reasonably agree a date for a meeting in relation to an APM activity, may, with due warning, be withdrawn from their programme.

2. Meetings of Students and Supervisors

- 2.1 All full-time research students are required to meet with their supervisors frequently and at least one supervisory meeting should be recorded each month. It is expected the minimum that part-time students would meet with their supervisors and record this meeting would be every two months, although this could be more frequent should the student and the supervisor agree that this is necessary. Meetings should be formally planned and recorded. There should also be at least one formal meeting with the whole supervisory team per term.
- 2.2 It is expected that, in most cases, students and supervisors will meet more frequently than the minimum requirements set out above and will make some informal record of their meetings. The relationship between the student and the supervisor(s) is critically important to support the student in making satisfactory progress with their research project. Students are responsible for maintaining regular contact with their supervisor(s) and supervisors are required to carry out their supervision duties in accordance with Section 4 of this Handbook.
- 2.3 Students who are required to re-submit their thesis following their initial viva examination are expected to maintain contact with their supervisory team during the period of resubmission.
- 2.4 Students studying at the University in Chester under the Tier 4 points-based immigration system are advised that under UK immigration law, the University acts as their immigration sponsor, and, as such, has a statutory responsibility to monitor their engagement with their research programme, which includes interactions with their supervisor. Should any Tier 4 student cease to engage continuously with their supervisory team and be subsequently deemed withdrawn, the University would be required to report their withdrawal to the UK Visas and Immigration department (UKVI). Under such circumstances, the student would be required to leave the UK.
- 2.5 Students who fail to attend or be in contact with the University (via their supervisory team or other staff as appropriate) as expected for a period of four weeks or more for full time students and six weeks for part time students may be deemed to have withdrawn from their programme. In such circumstances, and following due warning, they be withdrawn from their studies.

3. Development of the Project Plan

- 3.1 All students, in consultation with their supervisors, must prepare a project plan that defines the scope of the project and outlines the objectives to be achieved in the first year. This would normally be undertaken no more than three months after initial registration (or for Professional Doctorate students following transfer to research stage) but part time students may take up to six months, by agreement. This plan should be no more than two sides of A4 and should be signed and dated by the supervisors and the student as an indication that there is clarity by all parties about the project aims. The document should provide a brief description of how the supervision will be conducted such as the frequency of meetings, timing of feedback on drafts and the expectations of both the supervisors and the student. Copies of the project plan should be retained by the student and supervisors.

4. Schedule for Annual Progress Monitoring

- 4.1 The Annual Progress Monitoring process differs for each student each year depending on mode of study and what stage of their research they are at. 4.3 and 4.4 below outlines the different types of progress assessment and the stages at which they are employed. APM is tailored to each individual's student's registration date and therefore the University does not have an APM 'season' as progress assessment takes place throughout the year.
- 4.2 Annual Progress Monitoring can be divided into three distinct activities:
- Review of the Annual Progress Report (APR) undertaken remotely by an Independent Assessor
 - Meeting with an Independent Assessor at an Independent Progress Assessment Meeting (IPAM)
 - Meeting with two Independent Assessors at an Independent Progress Assessment Panel (IPAP)
- 4.3 Figure 1: APM schedule for full-time students on a Doctor/Master of Philosophy

Full time	Annual Progress Report reviewed remotely by Independent Assessor	APR & Independent Progress Assessment Meeting	APR & Independent Progress Assessment Panel
9 months	✓	x	x
18 months (upgrade)	x	x	✓
30 months	x	✓	x
42 months	x	✓	x

Figure 2: APM schedule for full-time students on a Professional Doctorate

Full time	Annual Progress Report reviewed remotely by Independent Assessor	APR & Independent Progress Assessment Meeting	APR & Independent Progress Assessment Panel
9 months	✓	x	x
21 months	x	✓	x
33 months	✓	x	x

Figure 2 relates to the date of the student's transfer to the research stage.

4.4 Figure 3: APM schedule for part-time students on the Doctor/Master of Philosophy

Part time	Annual Progress Report reviewed remotely by Independent Assessor	APR & Independent Progress Assessment Meeting	APR & Independent Progress Assessment Panel
9 months	✓	x	x
18 months	✓	x	x
24 months (upgrade)	✓/x	x	✓/x
36 months (upgrade)	✓/x	x	✓/x
48 months	x	✓	x
60 months	✓	x	x
72 months	x	✓	x

Figure 4: APM schedule for part-time students on a Professional Doctorate

Part time	Annual Progress Report reviewed remotely by Independent Assessor	APR & Independent Progress Assessment Meeting	APR & Independent Progress Assessment Panel
9 months	✓	x	x
21 months	x	✓	x
33 months	✓	x	x
45 months	x	✓	x
57 months	✓	x	x
69 months	x	✓	x

Figure 4 relates to the date of the student's transfer to the research stage.

- 4.5 Part time students registered on the Master of Philosophy have a window for their first consideration for upgrade between 24 and 36 months. The decision for when this takes place lies with the Senior Faculty PGR Tutor who will consult with the supervisory team before making a decision. The timing of this decision is at the discretion of the Senior Faculty PGR Tutor who will report the agreed point for upgrade to Registry Services.

5. Independent Assessors

- 5.1 Under these procedures Independent Assessors review the contents of the Annual Progress Report and meet with students either singularly (as part of an IPAM) or with another Independent Assessor (as part of an IPAP).
- 5.2 To undertake the Independent Assessor role, staff must be on the Accredited PGR Supervisor List (maintained by Registry) as a Principal Supervisor, however such inclusion does not entitle an individual to act as an Independent Assessor. Approval of an individual as an Independent Assessor is granted by the Head of Department and individual academic departments may set higher eligibility criteria, such as requiring greater experience, for approval to this role. The eligibility criteria for accredited supervisor status is stated in Section 4 of Handbook G.
- 5.3 At least one Independent Assessor appointed to assess a student should have relevant subject or method expertise and be suitably qualified so that they are able to identify issues with the project.
- 5.4 Independent Assessors are allocated to individual students by their Head of Department, in consultation with the Senior Faculty PGR Tutor. The same individuals may review a student each year or they may change year on year.
- 5.5 Independent Assessors may be from the same department or faculty as the student or elsewhere in the University. When appointing Independent Assessors the Head of Department, in consultation with the Senior Faculty PGR Tutor, should take every reasonable step to avoid potential conflicts of interest between Independent Assessor, student and/or supervisor; for example, a member of staff may feel uncomfortable acting as Independent Assessor to a student supervised by their Head of Department or Dean/Associate Dean of Faculty; if this could potentially be an issue, consideration should be given, where possible, to appointing appropriate Independent Assessors from outside the home department and/or faculty.
- 5.6 IA's are responsible for:
- Ensuring they understand the policy and process.
 - Ensuring supporting documents from the student have been received in advance of an IPAM or IPAP being convened.
 - Asking the student's Principal Supervisor to forward any relevant information in advance of the review.
 - Establishing with the student in advance of an IPAM/ IPAP whether the Principal Supervisor may attend part of the meeting.
 - Completing the APR/ Extraordinary IPAP Report form in good time.

- 5.7 In line with Section 7 of Handbook G an individual may not act as Internal Examiner to a candidate if they have acted as Independent Assessor at the last APM review preceding the submission of thesis.

6. Annual Progress Reports (APR)

- 6.1 The Annual Progress Report is the formal record of Annual Progress Monitoring for each student and is divided into four sections:
- 6.1.1. *Student*- The student details their progress since their last review in their section of the form. Details of supervisory meetings, attendance at conferences or training and any issues that have impeded progress should be noted. The form is then sent to their Principal Supervisor along with any supporting or additional documents that have been stipulated by their Faculty in their 'APR Guidance Notes'.
 - 6.1.2. *Principal Supervisor*- the APR is received by the Principal Supervisor; they complete their section of the report which includes an evaluation of the student's progress to date and a recommendation to the Independent Progress Assessor(s). It also provides the opportunity for supervisors to confirm any areas where the student's progress is satisfactory and provides confirmation of the areas in which the student needs to improve. On completion of their section the form is sent to the Independent Assessor.
 - 6.1.3. *Independent Assessor*- the APR is received by the Independent Assessor (IA).
 - 6.1.3.1. Where the APR is to be reviewed remotely without meeting the student the Independent Assessor should review the Annual Progress Report plus any supporting documentation provided- the IA may wish to request additional documentation from the student as is necessary. The IA should determine if any concerns have been raised or identified; if no concerns exist about the student or their progress they make their recommendation of satisfactory progress. If concerns do exist the IA recommends an IPAP be convened to discuss and explore the concerns.
 - 6.1.3.2. Where an Independent Progress Assessment Meeting is held the IA will make a determination if the student is making satisfactory progress based on the contents of the APR and the discussion with the student. If no concerns exist about the student or their process, they make the recommendation of satisfactory progress. If concerns do exist the IA recommends an IPAP be convened to discuss and explore the concerns. The APR is completed following the meeting with the student.
 - 6.1.3.3. Where an Independent Progress Assessment Panel is convened the two Independent Assessors meet the student and make an assessment of their

progress. The APR is completed following the panel meeting by the Independent Assessors with the subject or method expertise.

6.1.3.4. Once the Independent Assessor has completed their section of the report Tutor who will report the agreed point for upgrade to Registry Services the APR should be forwarded (electronically) to the Student Administration Office in Registry Services.

6.1.4. *Student Administration Office (Registry Services)*- the APR is received and the Student Administration Office is responsible for reviewing the APR to ensure the APM process has been adhered to. If concerns have been raised and another stage in the process is required, the Student Administration Office will ensure the Senior Faculty PGR Tutor is copied into the outcome letter so this can be followed up.

6.2 Registry Services will write to the student to confirm the outcome of the APR/ IPAM/ IPAP.

6.3 Outcomes available to an Independent Assessor reviewing an APR remotely are:

6.3.1. That the student is deemed to be making satisfactory academic progress;

6.3.2. That an IPAP should be convened because concerns exist that the student may be making unsatisfactory progress (see sub section 9)

7. Independent Progress Assessment Meeting (IPAM)

7.1 The Independent Progress Assessment Meeting takes place between the student and the nominated Independent Assessor in line with the schedule of Annual Progress Monitoring as outlined in 4.3 and 4.4.

7.2 The purpose of the Independent Progress Assessment Meeting is to provide the Independent Assessor with the relevant information to determine if the student is making satisfactory progress. The student may also use the meeting to highlight concerns or issues.

7.3 The Independent Progress Assessment Meeting should be held within a reasonable timeframe of the APR being generated so as not to delay the progress assessment of the student.

7.4 The student will be required to produce a written report the specific requirements of which will be determined by the Independent Assessor, in reference to the faculty's APR guidance notes, and communicated to the student in good time of the meeting. The report produced by the student can be an excerpt of a draft chapter of the thesis where appropriate. The student will also be expected to provide an oral account of their progress which will form part of the

assessment.

- 7.5 The Independent Assessor should ask the student's Principal Supervisor to forward any relevant information in advance of the meeting.
- 7.6 The Principal Supervisor may attend the IPAM as an observer but must not play any part in the assessment of the student.
- 7.7 The IPAM provides students with a forum for discussing issues or raising concerns about all aspects of their programme of research. For this reason, students are entitled to request that their supervisor not be present at the meeting and all IPAMs should contain one section where the supervisor is not present.
- 7.8 During the IPAM, details of the number and frequency of supervisory meetings, should be provided. A review of the student's attendance at training and conferences should also be considered.
- 7.9 The student should use the opportunity of the IPAM to highlight any personal, financial, family or health-related issues which they believe have impacted on their ability to undertake research and make good progress.

In the event that the student makes such a disclosure the IPAM should confirm with the student that they give permission for the information to be shared with relevant parties so appropriate action may be taken (the Independent Assessors should seek advice from Registry Services to ensure the information is managed appropriately). Where such permission is not granted and the information is not shared the student may not use this disclosure as grounds for appeal.

- 7.10 The Independent Assessor must complete the appropriate section of the Annual Progress Report, detailing the outcome of the overall APM process (in line with the outcomes in 6) and the reasons the outcome was selected.
- 7.11 It is recognised that the opportunity to discuss progress with an individual independent of the supervisory team is conducive to good progress. Therefore, in the years where the schedule of APM (3.3 and 3.4) states that an IPAM need not be held, the student is entitled to request such a meeting.
- 7.12 Outcomes of the Independent Progress Assessment Meeting (IPAM) are:
 - 7.12.1. That the student is deemed to be making satisfactory academic progress;
 - 7.12.2. That an IPAP should be convened because concerns exist that the student may be making unsatisfactory progress;

7.12.3. That an IPAP should be convened to consider the student for upgrade from MPhil to PhD.

7.13 Following the IPAM meeting the panel members may provide limited supplementary support to the student in the context of matters discussed at the meeting but further support will preclude them from acting as Internal Examiner for the student in line with Section 7 of this Handbook.

8. Independent Progress Assessment Panel (IPAP)

8.1 The Independent Progress Assessment Panel may be held in the following circumstances:

8.1.1. To consider the progress of a student who is eligible for upgrade from MPhil to PhD in line with the schedule outlined in 3.3 and 3.4.

8.1.2. To consider the progress of a student who has previously not been upgraded in line with the schedule outlined in 4.3 and 4.4 (or alternatively upgraded and then subsequently downgraded, except where such a downgrade was recommended by the PGR Academic Malpractice Panel) but whom an IPAM has suggested the quality of work produced may be of the required doctoral standard.

8.1.3. To consider concerns about unsatisfactory progress:

8.1.3.1. Identified through the remote review of the Annual Progress Report by an Independent Assessor or at an Independent Progress Assessment Meeting;

8.1.3.2. Identified by the supervisors who have deemed the student to be making unsatisfactory progress at a time outwith the Annual Progress Monitoring cycle.

8.2 The Panel should consist of two academic members of staff both of whom should be eligible to act as Independent Assessors in line with 5.2. At least one of the panel members should have relevant subject or method expertise. The IPAP is appointed by the Head of Department in consultation with the relevant Senior Faculty PGR Tutor.

8.3 During the IPAP, details of the number and frequency of supervisory meetings, should be provided. A review of the student's attendance at training and conferences should also be considered.

8.4 The student should use the opportunity of the IPAP to highlight any personal, financial, family

or health-related issues which they believe have impacted on their ability to undertake research and make good progress. In the event that the student makes such a disclosure the IPAP should confirm with the student that they give permission for the information to be shared with relevant parties so appropriate action may be taken (the Independent Assessor should seek advice from Registry Services to ensure the information is managed appropriately). Where such permission is not granted and the information is not shared the student may not use this disclosure as grounds for appeal.

- 8.5 The IPAP provides students with a forum for discussing issues or raising concerns about all aspects of their programme of research. For this reason, students are entitled to request that their supervisor not be present at the meeting and all IPAPs should contain one section where the supervisors are not present.
- 8.6 The IA with the subject expertise should complete the appropriate section of the Annual Progress Report, detailing the outcome of the overall APM process and the reasons the outcome was selected.
- 8.7 Where the IPAP convenes to consider whether to upgrade the student from MPhil to PhD:
 - 8.7.1. The student will be required to produce a written report, the specific requirements of which will be determined by the Independent Assessor(s), in line with faculty guidance, and communicated to the student in good time. The report produced by the student can be an excerpt of a draft chapter of the thesis where appropriate. The student will also be expected to provide an oral account of their progress which will form part of the assessment.
 - 8.7.2. At least one of the student's supervisors should be asked to forward any relevant information to the Independent Progress Assessment Panel in advance.
- 8.8 Where the IPAP convenes to consider the progress of a student who has previously not been upgraded in line with the normal timeframe or under where an IPAM has identified potentially poor progress, a further written submission by the student is not normally required and the Panel should refer to the documents made available at the Independent Progress Assessment Meeting.
- 8.9 Following the IPAP meeting the panel members may provide limited supplementary support to the student in the context of matters discussed at the meeting but further support will preclude them from acting as Internal Examiner for the student in line with Section 7 of this Handbook.
- 8.10 The possible outcomes of the Independent Progress Assessment Panel for PhD are:

- 8.10.1. That the student has made satisfactory progress;
 - 8.10.2. That the student has not made sufficient satisfactory academic progress but is permitted a further period of time under review and their academic progress will be assessed again by the Independent Progress Assessment Panel;
 - 8.10.3. That the student is deemed not to have produced work of a doctoral standard and is downgraded to MPhil;
 - 8.10.4. That the student has not made satisfactory academic progress and that he/she will be referred to the University PGR Progress Panel.
- 8.11 The possible outcomes of the Independent Progress Assessment Panel for MPhil are:
- 8.11.1. That the student has made satisfactory progress and is upgraded to PhD;
 - 8.11.2. That the student has made satisfactory progress for continued registration for MPhil [applicable to students continuing on the MPhil programme]
 - 8.11.3. That the student has not made satisfactory academic progress but is permitted a further period of time under review and their academic progress will be assessed again by the Independent Progress Assessment Panel;
 - 8.11.4. That the student has not made satisfactory academic progress and that he/she will be referred to the University PGR Progress Panel.
- 8.12 The possible outcomes of the Independent Progress Assessment Panel for Professional Doctorates:
- 8.12.1. That the student has made satisfactory progress;
 - 8.12.2. That the student has not made sufficient satisfactory academic progress but is permitted a further period of time under review and their academic progress will be assessed again by the Independent Progress Assessment Panel;
 - 8.12.3. That the student has not made satisfactory academic progress and that he/she will be referred to the University PGR Progress Panel.
- 8.13 Where an IPAP determine a student may have a further period of time under review, the period may be no less than two months for full time students and three months for part time students.
- 8.14 When considering downgrading a student from PhD to MPhil the IPAP should consider the quality of the work delivered as it relates to the FHEQ descriptor for doctoral degrees.

- 8.15 Referral to the University PGR Progress Panel will not normally take place without the student first being given a further period of time under review.

9. Managing Unsatisfactory Academic Progress

Identified by the IPAP following an IPAM or during an upgrade IPAP

- 9.1 If an IPAP deem a student to be making unsatisfactory progress but believe there to be opportunity for the student to make good their academic standing and recommend that the student be subject to a further period of time under review, the student will be written to by Registry Services advising them of the outcome of the IPAP. The student will be provided with a copy of the Annual Progress Report which will set out the reasons for concern. The APR should provide clear targets for improving performance and a realistic timescale for achieving the improvements must be set, which should not be less than two months for a full-time student and three months for a part time student. The outcome letter will confirm that the IPAP will be evaluating the student's efforts in achieving the improvements and an extraordinary meeting with the Panel will be required. The outcome letter will state that failure to respond adequately to the concerns raised by the Independent Assessors may lead to the termination of the student's studies.
- 9.2 The Independent Assessors are responsible for scheduling the extraordinary IPAP meeting within a reasonable timeframe of the end of the period given to the student to meet the targets set. The outcomes available to the IPAP at this stage are to permit the student (with or without being downgraded, if PhD) to continue or to refer the student to the University PGR Progress Panel (see part 10).

Identified by the supervisory team outside of the APM cycle

- 9.3 If the supervisory team deem a student not to be making satisfactory academic progress at any point during the academic year the student should be formally warned of the situation, in writing, by the Head of the Department. The supervisory team should not wait for the next Annual Progress Review before taking action.
- 9.4 The written warning should provide clear targets for improving performance and a realistic timescale for achieving the improvements must be set by the supervisory team, which should not be less than two months for a full-time student or three months for a part time student. It should also confirm that the IPAP will be evaluating the student's efforts in achieving the improvements and an extraordinary meeting with the Panel, outside of the ordinary Annual Progress Monitoring schedule, will take place. The student should be informed that the letter constitutes a formal warning and that the consequences of either not responding or not meeting the required targets may lead to termination of studies. The nominated Independent Assessors, are responsible for scheduling the extraordinary meeting.

- 9.5 The IPAP should be convened in line with sub section 8.
- 9.6 Following the IPAP being held, the IA's will complete the Report on Extraordinary IPAP form and forward this to Registry Services who will write to the student confirming the outcome and any consequences, such as being referred to the University Progress Panel.
- 9.7 Where a student responds and demonstrates improvement within the required timescales, the Independent Assessors will complete the Report of Extraordinary IPAP form and forward this to Registry Services who will write to the student confirming the outcome and consequences. Under these circumstances, any further concerns about a student's academic progress would be re-commenced under 9.1 or 9.3 as appropriate.

10. University PGR Progress Panel

- 10.1 Where the IPAP determine that a student has not responded to the written warning or has not satisfactorily met the targets set or otherwise gives continued cause for concern, the student will be invited to a meeting of the University PGR Progress Panel by Registry Services.
- 10.2 The membership of the University PGR Progress Panel will include the Chair of Postgraduate Research Programmes Subcommittee (or nominee), who will act as Chair, and two other members of academic staff based within the same Faculty as the student who are not members of the student's supervisory team. The Panel should have a minimum membership of three. The student's Principal Supervisor will also be asked to attend the meeting but will not be a member of the Panel.
- 10.3 Where the University PGR Progress Panel has been convened a member of Registry Services should be appointed to act as Secretary to the Panel. The Secretary is responsible for setting up the meeting, correspondence with all parties, ensuring that all parties are provided with all relevant documentation in good time and producing minutes of the meeting.
- 10.4 The student should be provided with at least ten working days' notice of the meeting and is entitled to be accompanied by a friend/ supporter. This could be another student, a member of academic staff or a representative from the Students Union. The role of the 'friend' during the Panel is to support the student, they may not answer questions on behalf of the student, but may prompt them, and cannot appear instead of the student. Students are not permitted to bring legal representation to the Panel.
- 10.5 All relevant documentation should be made available by the Secretary to all relevant parties at least two working days prior to the meeting. Under normal circumstances, documentation presented at the meeting will not be considered. Relevant documentation would include any previous warning letters, copies of APRs and reports from previous IPAP meetings. The student should be invited to make a written statement setting out the reasons for continued unsatisfactory progress or failure to respond to the previous warning(s) and this should be sent to the Secretary at least five days before the meeting.

- 10.6 The purpose of the meeting is to explore with the student the reasons for the lack of satisfactory progress and to determine the academic standing of the student. Consideration should be given to any reason provided by the student for the lack of satisfactory progress. Students are advised that they should provide any information about circumstances which they feel may have impacted on their ability to make satisfactory academic progress or engage adequately with University procedures. Any claim to have these circumstances considered should be supported by documentary evidence such as medical certification. Students are advised that, even though their circumstances are of a sensitive, personal or family nature, or it may not be part of their culture to discuss such matters, they should be disclosed to the University PGR Progress Panel.
- 10.7 Should the student not attend the Panel, it shall convene in the student's absence.
- 10.8 The possible outcomes of the University PGR Progress Panel are:
- 10.8.1. That the student is permitted to continue on the research programme;
 - 10.8.2. That the student is permitted to continue on the research programme with a final opportunity to improve his/her performance;
 - 10.8.3. That the student should be deemed not to have made satisfactory academic progress and their studies be terminated with immediate effect.
- 10.9 Under 10.8.2. the University PGR Progress Panel, in consultation with the supervisory team, will provide a set of agreed targets and revised timescales and is responsible for monitoring the student's performance against these targets. It is the responsibility of the Secretary to the Progress Panel to confirm the decision in writing to the student and to include any warnings issued by the Panel, and warn them that the consequences of not meeting the targets set within the timescales may be termination of studies.
- 10.10 Under 10.8.3. the Secretary will write to the student to confirm the decision of the University Progress Panel and provide their right of appeal. A copy of the letter will be included on the student's file.
- 10.11 On completion of the period given to the student to demonstrate improvement (10.8.2.), the University PGR Progress Panel should convene to consider the progress made and the student shall be invited to attend. Where a student has met the targets set by the University PGR Progress Panel and satisfactory academic progress has been made this should be confirmed to the student in writing by the Secretary of the Panel within one week of the Panel convening.
- 10.12 Where a student fails to meet the targets set by the University PGR Progress Panel within the

timescales, the student's studies will be terminated with immediate effect. The Secretary to the Panel will write to the student within one week of the Panel convening, detailing the student's right to appeal.

- 10.13 If the student experiences serious and exceptional circumstances during the review period, which are affecting their ability to work on the targets set by the original panel, they should notify the Secretary to the Panel immediately. If required, a request to extend the review period (with evidence of these circumstances) should be submitted to the Chair of the University Progress Panel, who will decide, normally within seven calendar days of receipt of the request, whether to adjust the review period. The Chair may ask for further evidence to be provided, which will re-set the time permitted for a decision to be made.

11. Changes to the Research Project

- 11.1 The research project shall be that which was agreed at the point of admission however it is recognised that the nature of research can sometimes result in research projects evolving to have a different focus or approach than what was originally intended. Changes to research projects, and the causes of such change, will be taken into consideration as part of the evaluation of satisfactory progress of the student during the Annual Progress Monitoring process.
- 11.2 The University will support students appropriately where unforeseen, external or exceptional demands require a substantial or significant change to the project that may necessitate a change in supervisory team. In these circumstances, where the change to the project is considered to be outside of the capabilities of the student, the University will seek to provide an alternative project.
- 11.3 Where a research project changes, and ethical approval was previously granted, the Principal Supervisor should advise the student of the need to resubmit an ethical approval application. In the event the original project was such that no ethical approval was required, the Principal Supervisor should advise the student whether the changes have necessitated ethical approval being sought.
- 11.4 Substantial or significant changes to the research project at the request of the student will not normally be supported without good cause.

12. Appeals Procedure

- 12.1 Students have a right to appeal against the following decisions made by the Independent Progress Assessment Panel or the University PGR Progress Panel:

- 12.1.1. To downgrade their registration from PhD to MPhil;
 - 12.1.2. To deny upgrade of registration from MPhil to PhD;
 - 12.1.3. To terminate studies on the grounds of unsatisfactory academic performance.
- 12.2 In such cases, the appeal procedure laid out in Section 11 of this Handbook should be followed.