

Research Degrees: Guidance notes series

**#6.** ANNUAL MONITORING

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Key words: Annual monitoring, progress review, independent review

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### Related documents

Policy 2R: Regulations for Postgraduate Research Students  
<http://portal.solent.ac.uk/documents/academic-services/academic-handbook/section-2/2r---regulations-for-pgr-students.pdf?t=1534525946909>

Progress review and independent review forms available from [research.degree@solent.ac.uk](mailto:research.degree@solent.ac.uk)

### Further reading

Solent Researchers library guide on Reference Management  
<https://libguides.solent.ac.uk/c.php?g=657980&p=4665038>

## INTRODUCTION

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1. In addition to the research degree milestones of project approval, transfer and viva, the University formally monitors the experience and academic progress of research students once a year in May/June. This is referred to as Annual Monitoring and involves a two part process, a Progress Review and an Independent Review. The Progress Review entails students submitting a progress report and the Independent Review entails students attending a meeting with an academic independent of their programme of study who will also submit a report. Both reports will be considered by the relevant Hub Scrutiny Panel.
2. Students must complete both parts of the review. Failing to do so may jeopardise their continued registration as a student.

### General principles of Annual Monitoring

3. Monitoring in these two ways ensures that all students are receiving timely and constructive feedback about their progress and that they are able to access all appropriate support available to them. The University seeks to ensure through this monitoring that the whole student experience is reviewed at regular intervals without placing an undue burden upon candidates.
4. Both reviews are mandatory (excepting certain conditions - see below). A student not completing either review will not be eligible to continue their studies and their registration as a student can be withdrawn.
5. There are no exceptions to the requirement to undertake an Independent Review.
6. There are no exceptions to parts A.1 and A.2 of the Progress Review
7. Exceptions to the requirement to submit part A.3 of the Progress Review are as follows:
  - a) New starters where the first year's Annual Monitoring cycle is less than 6 months from initial registration (January entry point only), may have their project approval take the place of the Progress Review part A.3, except where the Director of Studies recommends that the Progress Review part A.3 be completed (*see Guidance notes #4*).
  - b) If a Project Approval or Transfer panel is scheduled to take place within 3 months of the Annual Monitoring point (*see Guidance notes #4 and #5*).
  - c) If a Progress Review is scheduled within 3 months before a Project Approval or Transfer panel are due, but the Director of Studies is not confident that the student will submit for these reviews in that timeframe, then the Progress Review part A.3 should be submitted.
  - d) When students have withdrawn, suspended, submitted their thesis (pending viva within the period of review), completed their viva, or been awarded.

## THE ANNUAL MONITORING PROCESS

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### Independent review

8. The Independent Review is a one-to-one meeting with an academic member of staff who is an experienced researcher and is independent of the candidate's supervisory team. This review focuses on the candidate's personal student experience. It is an opportunity to discuss any barriers or challenges they feel are affecting them personally or their research environment. The aim of the review is to ascertain if there are any issues affecting the student personally or academically which the University can address through its various support services. Issues arising from the independent reviews may be escalated to the Doctoral Hub Coordinator.
9. The Doctoral Hub Coordinator will arrange the one-to-one meetings.
10. The meeting will take place in May with sufficient advance notice to reserve this time within respective diaries.
11. At the meeting, the independent reviewer and student will jointly complete the independent review form. This should include any additional concerns highlighted and discussed in the meeting.
12. The form must be returned to [research.degree@solent.ac.uk](mailto:research.degree@solent.ac.uk) and will be forwarded to the relevant Doctoral Hub Coordinator to follow up any individual actions.
13. Any issues raised will also be reviewed by the Hub Scrutiny Panel who will consider any common factors or improvements to practice that can be identified, and where appropriate these will be escalated to the Research Degrees Committee.
14. Students should indicate to on the Independent Review form if they wish for part or the whole of their Independent Review responses to be kept confidential from the Scrutiny Panel.
15. In cases where a student has requested confidentiality and the relevant Doctoral Hub Coordinator is also a member of the student's supervision team, the Independent Reviewer may elect for the action to be forwarded to an alternative Doctoral Hub Coordinator to mitigate the student's desire for confidentiality. This should be discussed between the student and independent reviewer and the student's preference clearly indicated on the Independent Review form.

## Progress review

16. The Progress Review is a formal review of students' academic progress for the annual cycle (April previous year to April current year). The aim of the review is to confirm whether the student is actively engaging with their programme of study, training and supervisory provision.
17. The Progress Review form is in 3 parts and is issued by Doctoral Student Administration in February/March each year. Part A must be completed by the student and returned by the student to their Director of Studies:
  - a) **Part A.1** is the record of the students meetings with their supervisory team. The student will fill in this section and attach the student/supervisor meeting record in the form of a copy of the formal meeting minutes for the year under review. The meeting record must comprise:
    - i. dates
    - ii. supervisors present at each meeting
    - iii. agenda for each meeting

- iv. targets/objectives agreed as outcome of each meeting

(see *Guidance note #2*)

- b) **Part A.2** reviews the candidate's engagement with training and the wider research community within their field and at Solent University.
  - c) **Part A.3** is a progress report, submitted with supplementary material as appropriate to the variation of academic disciplines and candidates' stage of study. The progress report should normally comprise c.2,000 words and include:
    - i. a write-up of the student's recent work
    - ii. a review of the student's progress against their plan of work in the last 12 months and a plan of work for the next academic cycle
    - iii. reference to their methodology and ongoing critical literature review
    - iv. if appropriate, supplementary material, such as a draft chapter or other substantial piece of work, may be submitted which contributes to the thesis objectives
18. **Part B** must be completed by the Director of Studies and returned with Part A to [research.degree@solent.ac.uk](mailto:research.degree@solent.ac.uk). Part B addresses the student's overall quality and performance, any actions or changes to the health & safety arrangements with the student, any changes or issues in respect of the ethical aspects of the project, and makes a recommendation to the Scrutiny Panel assessors regarding the progression of the student's registration.
19. Both part A and B must be submitted by the deadline given on the form.
20. **Part C** is completed by the relevant Scrutiny Panel and will indicate a formal decision regarding the student's continued registration on the award.

## Scrutiny panel

21. The Doctoral Hub Coordinator will convene the Hub Scrutiny Panel, or sub-panels representative of the Scrutiny Panel with relevant expertise to consider the Independent Review and Progress Review forms. The outcome of the Annual Monitoring Scrutiny Panel will confirm student progression on their award and highlight issues requiring attention.
22. In order to progress, each student must satisfy the Annual Monitoring Scrutiny Panel in the following:
- a) They have completed an Independent Review meeting with an independent reviewer,
  - b) Their Progress Review provides evidence of satisfactory progress during the preceding academic cycle and an appropriate plan for the forthcoming academic year (where appropriate the panel will accept project approval or transfer report outcomes in place of Part A.3, see above).
23. The Scrutiny Panel may decide the following Annual Monitoring outcomes:
- a) The panel is satisfied by the student's engagement and academic progress.
  - b) The panel requires the student be placed on a 3 month probation period to complete an agreed plan outlined in Part B and / or taking into account any comments entered

by the panel in part C. The Scrutiny Panel, or a sub-panel will reconvene after 3 months to review whether the student has satisfied the criteria and will continue on the award.

- c) Where evidence is such that the Scrutiny Panel are not satisfied that a probationary period is warranted, they may recommend termination of the registration.
24. At an appropriate phase of the programme of study, the panel should consider if a student's progress is such that the candidate may be in a position to make an application for 'writing-up' status at the next annual registration point for their award. This should be stated in the panel report.
25. Students who have been granted a probationary period will be notified in writing of an agreed programme of remedial work. They must submit their revisions or evidence of additional work (as stipulated in the agreed plan) within 3 months. The Doctoral Hub Coordinator will arrange for these to be reviewed. Failure to submit required work may result in withdrawal of the student's registration.
26. If there is no improvement in the student's performance after a period of probation and serious concerns remain about their progress and/or there is a significant probability that the student will not be able to submit a thesis within the permitted registration period, a recommendation to withdraw the student's registration should be made to the Chair/Deputy Chair of the Research Degrees. Where appropriate the student may be required to re-register for the MPhil award in lieu of termination.

### Appealing a recommendation not to renew registration

27. A student who is unsuccessful in their progress review may make a formal appeal to the Head of Compliance under the appeals process in the Regulations for Postgraduate Research Students (*see Related documents above*) to request reconsideration of the decision.