

DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICAL SCIENCE

PROCEDURE FOR MONITORING THE PROGRESS OF RESEARCH STUDENTS

Background

The Departmental Research Committee (DRC) is charged with the task of monitoring the progress of the Department's research students. It considers the progress of full-time students every six months, in April and October, and part-time students once per year, in October. Beginning with the April 2010 round, the paper-based system of reports used for this purpose will be changed to integrate more closely with the [Graduate School Log Book](#), which students are required to maintain. The timetable below is based, with some modifications to reflect Departmental practice, on that in the Graduate School's [Code of Practice for Graduate Research Degrees](#). All students and staff should be familiar with, and abide by, this Code of Practice.

Timetable for a typical PhD

Before one month

General research area agreed. Supervisors assigned. Timetable for supervisory meetings agreed. Office accommodation and any necessary equipment provided. Initial training needs identified and attendance at appropriate courses agreed, both for generic skills development and further training in Statistical Science.

Six months

Detailed specification of research topic. Completion of initial literature review. Preliminary thesis work plan and proposed timetable. Student to meet with both supervisors to review progress so far.

One year

Between now and eighteen months students should expect to reach the first milestone (M1): transfer from MPhil to PhD. This will require the preparation of a substantial upgrade report describing the existing work in the area of investigation, giving details of the original work performed by the student so far, and setting out a plan for the remaining period of the research. It will also involve a viva. Supervisors should be aware that the upgrade procedure changed in March 2009, and should consult <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/current-students/services/studyinformation/mphiltransfer> for more details. Training needs for year two to be agreed.

Eighteen months

The transfer to PhD should have been achieved by now.

Two years

Agreement of thesis structure and a timetable for thesis writing. Around now, students should expect to reach the second milestone (M2): a public seminar, reporting to the Department on a substantial part of the work accomplished. Training needs for year three to be agreed.

Two years and six months

Milestone M3: entry for examination and nomination of examiners.

Three years

Milestone M4: submission of thesis. Transfer to Completing Research Student status for a maximum of one year if the thesis has not been submitted.

Reporting requirements

The Graduate School requires that the electronic log be completed initially, at three months, at six months, and then at six-monthly intervals thereafter. The six-monthly reports will be used by the DRC for monitoring purposes, so it is important that they are completed by the student by the end of March and September and that supervisors add their comments on the student's progress in the slots provided. Reminders will be sent out.

It is recommended that the student should meet with both supervisors to discuss the six-monthly progress reports. A formal meeting of student and both supervisors must be held after the first six months, should be held at any reporting point at which progress appears to be falling behind schedule, and may be useful even if progress is good.

There is no special format for the reports, which need not be very long or very detailed. They should describe progress, comparing it with the timetable above and noting any milestones achieved, and briefly outline plans for the next six-month period. The Log provides boxes in which reports can be pasted as well as the facility to upload documents. Either method of submission is acceptable. The eighteen-months slot in the Log is labelled as being for upgrade purposes. Ignore this label and use it for the eighteen-months report.

The clock starts with registration, so for a student first registering in January the six-monthly reports will fall due in January and July. To avoid unacceptably long delays in monitoring, students whose reports would under this rule be due in either April or October should report at the ends of March and September. For part-time students the intervals between reports are doubled so that, for example, the six-month report should be filed (in the six-month slot) after one year.

The Statistical Science Departmental Office maintains a list of research students, along with details of their current status, e.g. MPhil, PhD, CRS. In order that this can be kept up to date, principal supervisors should inform the Office immediately of any change of student status, or of any other important event such as entry for the examination.

Monitoring by the DRC

The DRC will monitor the six-monthly reports for all students. If there is evidence of unsatisfactory progress the DRC may impose a timetable for specific tasks to be completed, and in extreme cases may require the suspension or termination of registration. The failure of the student to submit reports will be regarded as evidence of unsatisfactory progress.

TF, November 2009