**UCL Ear Institute**

**Thesis Committee Meeting Guidelines**

# Institute Contacts

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Role** | **Contact details** |
| **Martin Abbott** | PGR administrator | [ear.pgradmin@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:ear.pgradmin@ucl.ac.uk) |
| **Donna Pile-Grant** | Senior PGR Administrator | [ear.pgradmin@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:ear.pgradmin@ucl.ac.uk) |
| **Dr Sally Dawson** | Departmental Graduate Tutor | [sally.dawson@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:sally.dawson@ucl.ac.uk) |
| **Dr Jo Barnes** | Faculty Graduate Tutor | j.barnes@ucl.ac.uk |
|  |  |  |

# Contents

**Section 1: Thesis Committee Overview 3**

* Function and role of Thesis Committees **3**
* Summary of the TC Committee meetings **5**

**Section 2: Guidelines for Students 9**

**Section 3: Guidelines for Thesis Committee Members 13**

**Section 4: Form Templates 15**

* TC Panel form (TCPF) **16**
* Preliminary Research Plan Form (TC1-PRP) **17**
* Ethics Evaluation Form (for TC1-EE) **18**
* Personal Development Plan Form (PDP) **21**
* First Thesis Committee Meeting Checklist (TC1-CL) **23**
* Second Thesis Committee Meeting Checklist (TC2-CL) **24**
* Third Thesis Committee Meeting Checklist (TC3-CL) **25**
* Fourth Thesis Committee Meeting Checklist (TC4-CL) **26**
* Fifth Thesis Committee Meeting Checklist (TC5-CL) **27**

**Section 5: Appendix – FAQs** **28**

# Section 1: Thesis Committee Overview

**Function and Role of the Thesis Committee (see Appendix for FAQs)**

All MPhil/PhD students registered in the School of Life and Medical Sciences starting after 1st September 2019 will be required to have a Thesis Committee (TC). The role of the TC is for its members to support the Student throughout the PhD programme.

The TC comprises the Subsidiary Supervisor and at least two additional members with relevant academic experience, but who are not from the same laboratory as the Primary Supervisor. These members may be UCL staff or external to UCL, but at least one should be a member of UCL academic staff. They may include Research Fellows (e.g. postdocs) or Emeritus members of staff. The TC will be chaired by the Subsidiary Supervisor, but could be chaired by one of the other members of the TC, if it was deemed that they had more relevant expertise. Primary Supervisors do not form part of the TC, but can do in exceptional circumstances, as approved by the DGT.

The Primary Supervisor continues to supervise the Student’s research project on a day-to-day basis. The TC acts to support both the Student and Supervisor throughout the PhD programme.

The Departmental Graduate Tutor (DGT) has responsibility for approving the TC members at the beginning of the PhD, taking into account the views of the Student, supervisors, DGT and HoD. The TC members must be approved by the DGT within **one month of registering for a PhD.** \*It is expected that all UCL staff who supervise PhD students will serve on TCs.

Members of the TC cannot act as final PhD examiners.

Formal meetings with the TC are scheduled over the course of the programme (see below for full-time and part-time students), although the Student, Supervisor or TC can request an additional meeting at any time. Students may also approach TC members informally (individually or as a group) for advice and support should the need arise. It is the student’s responsibility to arrange the meetings as per the schedule in Table 1.

The TC Chair prepares a short report of the outcomes of a TC meeting and sends this to the Student and members of the committee. If all agree that this reflects the outcome of the meetings, the Student gives a copy to their Primary Supervisor and the Student uploads the report onto the UCL Research Log. In the event that there are issues that require the attention of the DGT, the report should also be emailed directly to the DGT by the Chair.

The timeline outlined below is for a conventional 3-year PhD studentship and for 1+3 year PhD studentships. In the case of a 1+3 studentship, the timeline starts after the first year rotation period has concluded. Part-time student programmes vary depending on %FTE that is being worked but are usually five years.

In the event that a Student enters Continuing Research Status (CRS), the TC should remain active and continue to meet every six months.

**Table 1. Summary of the schedule, reporting and presentation requirements**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **TC meeting** | **Written report** | **Presentation** | **Timing**  **Full-time** | **Timing\***  **Part time** |
| Submit TC Panel form to [ear.PGRadmin@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:ear.PGRadmin@ucl.ac.uk) | Yes (max 300 words) | No | 1 month | 1 month |
| TC1, Research Plan | Yes (~1,000 words) | Yes | 3 months | 6 months |
| TC2, 9 Months report | Yes (~1,000 words) | Yes | 9 months | 15 months |
| Upgrade | Yes (-7,00 words) | Dept | 12 months | 24 months |
| TC3, Meeting | No | Yes | 18 months | 30 months |
| TC4, Meeting | No | Yes | 24 months | 39 months |
| TC5, Thesis outline | Yes (plan of thesis) | Yes | 30 months | 48 months |

\*The suggested timing of TC committee meetings for part-time students is scheduled for students who would take the maximum time allowed to complete their part-time PhD. However, many part-time students set out to complete in a much shorter timescale. At the beginning of the PhD, the Student, Supervisors and TC should consider what might be a likely time scale for the PhD and then schedule the timing of the TC meetings accordingly.

In most cases, the Student will successfully progress through their PhD programme and submit their thesis on-time.

At the 9 month TC meeting, the TC recommends whether the Student should progress to Upgrade. In most cases, it is expected that the TC will recommend Upgrade and any delay in upgrade beyond 12 months requires the approval of the DGT. Any further delay beyond 15 months requires the approval of both DGT and HoD.

If the TC does not support progression to Upgrade, the TC should recommend set objectives for the Student to achieve and schedule another meeting (usually within 3 months) to review whether the student is ready to proceed to Upgrade. The Student should also be referred to the DGT to discuss the reason for insufficient progression and possible solutions of alternatives as appropriate. The DGT may - in agreement with the Student and Supervisors - impose a Learning Agreement which defines progression milestones, timelines and potential consequences of insufficient progress. If a student fails their Upgrade, they may have a second attempt within the next six months. In this case, the timeline for TC meetings should be adjusted to best support the Student throughout their PhD, or if the second attempt at the upgrade fails, in completing their MPhil.

**Table 2 Summary of TC Committee Meetings**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **TC Panel Meetings** | **Attending** | **Structure of Meeting** | **Purpose** | **Actions Post Meeting** |
| Approval of TC Panel  1 month | Primary Supervisor  Subsidiary Supervisor  Student  DGT (if required) | The Supervisors and Student discuss the project and potential TC committee members. | To ensure that the overall topic of the thesis has been determined and to decide on the membership of the TC. This should be balanced in terms of expertise and stage of career (e.g. would not contain two postdocs) | The DGT approves the TC membership  Student submits a TC Panel Form (TCPF) with a description of the project (300 words max) and the nominated TC members to [ear.pgradmin@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:ear.pgradmin@ucl.ac.uk) (within one month of registering). |
| TC 1  3 months | TC Committee  Student  Primary Supervisor | Student provides TC with the following one week in advance of the meeting.  - Preliminary Research Plan (~ 1000 words)  - Personal Development Plan  - Ethics Evaluation Form  These documents form the basis of the discussion between the Student, the Primary Supervisor and the TC.  The TC1 checklist is completed. | Demonstrate that the Student understands and can explain their project and initial aims.  Recommend to the Student any possible changes or additions to the project plan.  Confirm that the Student has considered and is covered by any required ethical or H&S approvals.  Discuss the Student’s Personal Development Plan | The Chair provides a short report on the TC1-CL form which is sent to the Student, Primary Supervisor & TC.  If all agree this is representative of the meeting, the Student uploads the TC1 checklist (TC1-CL) to the Research Log together with the preliminary research plan (TC1-PRP), ethics evaluation form (TC1-EE) and personal development plan (PDP).  The entry is approved by the Primary and Subsidiary Supervisors. |
| TC2  9 months | TC Committee  Student  Primary Supervisor  (as observer) | Student provides TC with the following two weeks in advance of the meeting:  - a 1,000 word Progress Report describing key findings, plan of future work outline for upgrade report  - a Personal Development Plan  The Student gives a 15-20 minute presentation to the TC that ends with a plan for the Upgrade Report content.  The documents and presentation form the basis for discussion.  A short reserved discussion about supervision takes place at the end of the meeting without the primary supervisor present.  The TC2 checklist is completed. | Provide an independent review of student progress.  Provide formative feedback on progress of project, student’s presentation skills, and the student’s understanding of their data and the broader field.  Suggest recommendations (if needed) regarding the future project plan.  Discuss the Student’s Upgrade plans.  Discuss the Student’s Personal Development Plan | The Chair of the TC provides a short report on the TC2-CL form which is sent to the Student and TC.  If all agree this is representative of the meeting, the TC sends the report to the Primary Supervisor. The Student uploads the TC2 checklist (TC2-CL) to the Research Log together with the Progress Report, presentation and personal development plan (PDP).  The entry is approved by the Primary and Subsidiary Supervisors. |
| Upgrade from MPhil to PhD  9 – 18 months | TC Committee  Student  An external examiner may be invited onto the upgrade panel if the TC and / or Primary Supervisor considered that this would be helpful, but it is not a requirement. | The Student will submit their Upgrade Report (thesis) to the TC (and any additional examiners) two weeks before their scheduled seminar and *viva*.  The Student will present a 30 mins seminar to their Research Department.  A formal Upgrade *viva* will be conducted by the TC (and any additional examiner). The Subsidiary Supervisor, should chair the *viva*. | Assess student’s progress and potential as appropriate for a PhD student at this stage\*.  Suggest (if needed) possible changes to the future project plans, or any particular development needs of the student.  Recommend upgrade of student from MPhil to PhD, or the need for re-assessment within 6 months. | The Chair of the upgrade panel submits the panel report form to the DGT for approval. Student uploads their Thesis and Presentation to the research log. |
|  | \*All TC forms and Upgrade Guidelines can be found within this document or at: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ear/study/phd/resources> | | | |
| TC3  18 months | TC Committee  Student  Optional:  Primary Supervisor  (as observer) | The Student gives a 15-20 minute presentation to the TC on their progress since the Upgrade and their plans for the next six months.  The presentation forms the basis for discussion with the TC.  The personal development plan is reviewed and updated.  A short reserved discussion about supervision takes place at the end of the meeting without the primary supervisor present.  The TC3 checklist is completed. | To ensure that everything is on track, and that it has been possible to take on board any recommendations following the Upgrade.  To determine whether any problems have been encountered and advise the Student accordingly.  Review the objectives.  Review training progress and identify training / personal development needs. | The Chair of the TC provides a short report on the TC3-CL form which is sent to the Student and TC.  If all agree this is representative of the meeting, the TC sends the report to the Primary Supervisor. The Student uploads the TC3 checklist (TC3-CL) to the Research Log together with the presentation and personal development plan (PDP).  The entry is approved by the Primary and Subsidiary Supervisors. |
| TC4  24 months | TC Committee  Student  Optional:  Primary Supervisor  (as observer) | The student gives a 15-20 minute presentation of their progress with clear objectives for the next six months.  The presentation forms the basis for discussion with the TC.  The personal development plan is reviewed and updated.  A short reserved discussion about supervision takes place at the end of the meeting without the primary supervisor present.  The TC4 checklist is completed. | To discuss any areas of the project that may have encountered problems or are falling behind schedule and advise the Student accordingly.  Review the objectives.  Review training progress and identify training / personal development needs. | The Chair of the TC provides a short report on the TC4-CL form which is sent to the Student and TC.  If all agree this is representative of the meeting, the TC sends the report to the Primary Supervisor. The Student uploads the TC4 checklist (TC4-CL) to the Research Log together with the presentation and personal development plan (PDP).  The entry is approved by the Primary and Subsidiary Supervisors. |
| TC5  30 months | TC Committee  Student  Optional:  Primary Supervisor  (as observer) | Student provides TC with the following two weeks in advance of the meeting  - Thesis Outline describing planned detailed structure of the thesis and any final experiments requiring completion.  - an updated Personal Development Plan.  Student gives a 15-20 minute presentation to TC to expand on their report.  The report and presentation form the basis for discussion with the TC  The personal development plan is reviewed and updated.  A short reserved discussion about supervision takes place at the end of the meeting without the primary supervisor present  The TC5 checklist is completed. | Provide an independent review of student progress.  Provide formative feedback on proposed thesis structure, student’s presentation skills, and the student’s understanding of their data and the broader field.  Suggest recommendations (if needed) regarding any outstanding experimental plans leading up to final submission.  Review training progress and identify training / personal development needs. | The Chair of the TC provides a short report on the TC5-CL form which is sent to the Student and TC.  If all agree this is representative of the meeting, the TC sends the report to the Primary Supervisor. The Student uploads the TC5 checklist (TC5-CL) to the Research Log together with the thesis outline, presentation and personal development plan (PDP).  The entry is approved by the Primary and Subsidiary Supervisors. |

# Section 2: Guidelines for Students

It is your responsibility to organise the meetings and it is advisable to set the dates at least one month in advance to ensure you are able to meet with your TC before the deadline.

You should be prepared to discuss your results/data so have them to hand in case your TC wishes to discuss an experiment in detail.

Following the meeting you will receive a report of the TC from the chair, you will need to complete your UCL Research Log of the meeting and attach the relevant documentation (as detailed in Table 2).

**Thesis Committee Nomination meeting (1 month)**

It is your responsibility to meet with your Supervisors in the first month of your PhD to outline your research project and nominate TC Panel members. You must submit the ‘TC Panel’ form to [ear.pgradmin@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:ear.pgradmin@ucl.ac.uk) for approval by the DGT no later than 2 months into your PhD.

**TC1 Thesis Committee meeting 1 – (Preliminary Research Plan) 3 months)**

NOTE: it is advised that you arrange a date for the meeting one month in advance to ensure completion of the meeting before the deadline.

**Prepare Submission**

Your Preliminary Research Plan Form, Ethics Evaluation Form and Personal Development Plan should be completed by you and approved by your Principal Supervisor, and then sent to all members of your Thesis Committee at least one week before your meeting.

**Discussion**

The Preliminary Research Plan, Ethics Evaluation and Personal Development Plan will form the basis of your discussion with the TC.

You should discuss any training requirements required for successful completion of the initial project aims and as proposed in your Personal Development Plan.

**Outcome**

Members of your TC will provide feedback. Following the TC meeting, you should revise your plan, if required, and send it to your Primary Supervisor and TC members to approve.

The TC1 Checklist will be completed by the Chair of your TC at the meeting.

**Student Action**

The Chair of your TC will prepare a report and send it to you and to your Primary Supervisor and TC members for approval. You should upload your Preliminary Research Plan, Ethics Evaluation Form, Personal Development Plan and TC1 Meeting Checklist with Report to the Research Log. You should complete the relevant sections in the Research Log.

**TC2 Thesis Committee meeting 2 (progress toward Upgrade) (9 months)**

NOTE: it is advised that you arrange a date for the meeting one month in advance to ensure completion of the meeting before the deadline.

**Prepare Submission**

Your Progress Report (1,000 words **max**) should contain a written summary of progress to date with representative figures of data obtained, and a plan of future experiments with a timeline. It should be approved by your Primary Supervisor. The Progress Report, together with your Personal Development Plan should be sent to all members of your Thesis Committee at least two weeks before your meeting.

**Discussion**

You should prepare a 15-20 minute presentation to include the project outline, progress to date and a plan of future experiments. You should have a plan for the content and timing of your Upgrade.

The Progress Report and the Oral Presentation will form the basis of your discussion with the TC.

The TC will consider and advise you on your Upgrade plans.

You should also discuss any training requirements for your experimental work and for your personal / career development.

You should set a date for your Upgrade.

**Outcome**

The TC must be satisfied that you have made satisfactory progress during the first 9 months. If this is the case, they will give feedback on your research plans and on the work that you should aim to complete before your Upgrade *viva*.

If the TC considers that satisfactory progress has not been made, your supervisor and DGT will be informed and your Primary Supervisor and TC – in coordination with the DGT– will set objectives that you will be required to meet within a defined period of time (usually 3 months) if you are to continue on the programme.

The TC2 Checklist will be completed by the Chair of your TC at the meeting.

**Student Action**

The Chair of your TC will prepare a report and send it to you and to your TC members for approval. You should upload your Progress Report, Personal Development Plan, powerpoint presentation and TC2 Meeting Checklist with Report to the Research Log. You should complete the relevant sections in the Research Log.

You should set a date for the Upgrade presentation and the *viva*. Details about the upgrade seminar (i.e., title, venue, time) should be emailed to all members of the TC, upgrade panel and DGT *at least* two weeks before the planned Upgrade.

**Upgrade (9 – 18 months)**

**Overview of the Upgrade Procedure**

All UCL students initially register for the MPhil degree. Upgrade to PhD will take place after successful demonstration of the criteria set out below, the primary components of which will be assessed through the Upgrade Report (Thesis) and *viva*. The Upgrade Panel Report and information relating to the Upgrade can be found at: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/status/research-students/upgrade>

The examiners will be looking for:

* Commitment to pursuing research at UCL leading to the PhD degree.
* Satisfactory progress in the work so far.
* Ability to formulate a viable research question that could be completed within the normal time frame of the PhD programme.
* Demonstrated knowledge of the relevant literature and sufficient awareness of the context of the work.
* Satisfactory technical and generic skills development.
* English language proficiency, both written and spoken.

**Prepare Submission**

You need to produce an upgrade report (**5,000 – 7,000 words as a guide, 10,000 max**) summarising your project background and hypothesis, detailing your progress and key findings to date, and outlining your future aims, expectations and timeline for the remainder of your degree. It should be approved by your Primary Supervisor, and then sent to all members of your Thesis Committee and any additional examiners at least two weeks before your meeting seminar and *viva*.

**Discussion**

You will give a formal seminar 20-30 minutes **maximum** to the Institute, after which you should be prepared to answer questions from the audience. Your seminar will be followed by a *viva* examination of your Thesis by your TC and possibly additional examiners.

**Outcome**

If your progress has been satisfactory, your TC will recommend upgrade. If they consider that you are not yet on course to complete a PhD, and you fail your Upgrade, you can have a second attempt within 6 months. An important outcome of the upgrade are recommendations and feedback of the panel on improvements that should be made. You should make an appointment with the DGT in order to discuss this feedback.

**Student Action**

The Chair of your TC will prepare the Upgrade Panel Report and send it to the DGT. You should upload your Thesis, seminar presentation and the Upgrade Panel Report to the Research Log.

**TC3 Thesis Committee meeting 3 (Post Upgrade) (18 months)**

NOTE: it is advised that you arrange a date for the meeting one month in advance to ensure completion of the meeting before the deadline.

**Prepare Submission**

Your Personal Development Report and Plan should be approved by your Principal Supervisor, and then sent to all members of your Thesis Committee at least one week before your meeting. You should prepare a 15-20 minute powerpoint presentation of your research progress and aims for the next 6 months, having taken into account any recommendations at your Upgrade.

**Discussion**

Your presentation and Personal Development Report and Plan will form the basis of your discussion with the TC.

You should also discuss any training requirements for your experimental work and for your personal / career development.

**Outcome**

Members of your TC will provide feedback.

The TC3 Checklist will be completed by the Chair of your TC at the meeting.

**Student Action**

The Chair of your TC will prepare a report and send it to you and to your TC members for approval. You should upload the approved TC report, your presentation, Personal Development Plan and TC3 Meeting Checklist with Report to the Research Log. You should complete the relevant sections in the Research Log.

**TC4 Thesis Committee meeting 4\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (24 months)**

NOTE: it is advised that you arrange a date for the meeting one month in advance to ensure completion of the meeting before the deadline.

**Prepare Submission**

Your Personal Development Report and Plan should be approved by your Principal Supervisor, and then sent to all members of your Thesis Committee at least one week before your meeting. You should prepare a 15-20 minute powerpoint presentation of your research progress and aims for the next 6 months, having taken into account any recommendations at your Upgrade.

**Discussion**

Your presentation and Personal Development Report and Plan will form the basis of your discussion with the TC.

You should also discuss any training requirements for your experimental work and for your personal / career development.

**Outcome**

Members of your TC will provide feedback.

The TC4 Checklist will be completed by the Chair of TC at the meeting.

**Student Action**

The Chair of your TC will prepare a report and send it to you and to your TC members for approval. You should upload your presentation, Personal Development Plan and TC4 Meeting Checklist with Report to the Research Log. You should complete the relevant sections in the Research Log.

**TC5 Thesis Committee meeting 5 (Progress toward Completion) (30 months)**

NOTE: it is advised that you arrange a date for the meeting one month in advance to ensure completion of the meeting before the deadline.

**Prepare Submission**

You should prepare a Thesis Outline containing a detailed breakdown of each chapter into sub-headings, and include figure titles and/or any other relevant notes/comments about the content of each section. You should indicate which sections need further data to complete. There are no limitations on word or page limit but you should aim to be as clear and concise as possible. You should also include a timeline of remaining experiments so that you, your Primary Supervisor and your TC all have a clear idea about what you will be doing over the final months. This document, together with your Personal Development report and Plan should be sent to all members of your TC at least two weeks before your meeting.

**Discussion**

You should present a 15-20 minute oral presentation supported by powerpoint slides, to explain your thesis structure, the key scientific conclusions that you will present, and a timeline for completion of any outstanding experiments and the thesis writing.

The Thesis Outline, oral presentation and Personal Development Plan will form the basis of your discussion with the TC.

You should also discuss any training requirements needed to support your successful completion, or desired for your personal / career development.

**Outcome**

Members of your TC will give feedback on your Thesis Outline and the experiments required to complete your experimental work. Following the TC meeting, any revision to your plan should be approved by your Primary Supervisor and TC members.

The TC5 Checklist will be completed by the Chair of your TC at the TC meeting.

**Student Action**

The Chair of your TC will prepare a report and send it to you and to your TC members for approval. You should upload your presentation, Personal Development Plan and TC5 Meeting Checklist with Report to the Research Log. You should complete the relevant sections in the Research Log. If you intend to submit at 36 months you should complete the examination entry form and discuss the examiner nominations with your supervisor and your supervisor will submit this form.

# Section 3: Guidelines for Thesis Committee Members

**Responsibilities of Thesis Committee Members**

* Meet with the Student at the designated times (minimum five times) throughout the progress of the PhD.
* The Subsidiary Supervisor usually Chairs the Thesis Committee
* Respond to the Student promptly with timetabling requests
* Read Student reports prior to the TC meetings. The Student should typically provide the reports 1-2 weeks in advance of each meeting
* Respond to the student should they request additional meetings with any members of the TC
* The Chair is responsible for the timely preparation of TC committee reports and feedback
* The TC should respond promptly to the Chair in approving the report
* The TC committee examines the Student’s Upgrade from MPhil to PhD
* Raise any concerns regarding the Student’s academic progress and/or supervision with the DGT. Serious concerns as to the Student’s well-being should be raised with the DGT immediately.
* The Primary Supervisor, Subsidiary Supervisor sign off the Research Log. The DGT will have access to the Research Log.

**TC1 Thesis Committee meeting 1 – (Preliminary Research Plan) (3 months)**

* Discuss the Student’s Preliminary Research Plan with the Student and Primary Supervisor and confirm that a suitable PhD project has been proposed and that the initial experimental plan is appropriate. The TC may make suggestions for additions or amendments to the plan.
* Ensure that the Student has considered and is aware of any ethical, legal or H&S issues relating to their project, and, where these exist, that the Student has identified the relevant Research Ethics Committee (REC) approval, risk assessment, GM approval, HO animal licence or other necessary guidance/regulations. If ethics approval is required for research performed in the PhD, the appropriate ethics application *must be submitted* prior to this meeting. It is the responsibility of the *Primary Supervisor* to ensure that these are in place.
* Discuss the Student’s Personal Development Plan and their intended training programme.
* The TC Chair will complete the TC1 Meeting Checklist that includes a short report and distribute this to the Student, Primary Supervisor and TC members for approval.

**TC2 Thesis Committee meeting 2 – (Progress toward Upgrade) (9 months)**

* Discuss and provide feedback on the Student’s Progress Report, oral presentation and research plan. The TC may make suggestions for additions or amendments to the plan.
* Discuss and review the Student’s Upgrade plans and provide feedback on the realistic timing for this.
* Discuss the Student’s Personal Development Plan and their intended training programme.
* The TC Chair will complete the TC2 Meeting Checklist that includes a short report and distribute this to the Student and TC members for approval.
* Should the TC have concerns about the Student’s progress and potential for PhD study, they should inform the DGT and DGT. The TC, together with the Primary Supervisor and DGT/DGT, should prepare a set of progress targets for the Student to achieve over a 3 month period.

**TC3 Thesis Committee meeting 3 – (Post Upgrade) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (15 months)**

* Discuss and provide feedback on the Student’s oral presentation and research plan that have taken into account any issues that were raised at the Upgrade. The TC may make suggestions for additions or amendments to the plan.
* Discuss the Student’s Personal Development Plan and their intended training programme.
* The TC Chair will complete the TC3 Meeting Checklist that includes a short report and distribute this to the Student and TC members for approval.

**TC4 Thesis Committee meeting 4 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (24 months)**

* Discuss and provide feedback on the Student’s oral presentation and research plan. The TC may make suggestions for additions or amendments to the plan.
* Discuss the Student’s Personal Development Plan and their intended training programme.
* The TC Chair will complete the TC4 Meeting Checklist that includes a short report and distribute this to the Student and TC members for approval.

**TC5 Thesis Committee meeting 5 – (Progress toward Completion) (30 months)**

* Discuss and provide feedback on the Student’s oral presentation and Outline Thesis plan. Discuss and make any recommendations on the thesis structure, outstanding experimental / analytical work as appropriate
* Discuss the Student’s Personal Development Plan and their intended training programme.
* The TC Chair will complete the TC5 Meeting Checklist that includes a short report and distribute this to the Student and TC members.

All full time PhD students should submit their thesis within 4 years of registration. In the event that a student enters a Continuing Research Studies (CRS) year, the TC should continue to meet on a 6 month basis to support the Student in the completion of their PhD studies.

# Section 4: Form Templates

Attached are templates for the following forms, required for the TC Meetings and Research Log.

1. TC Panel Appointment form (TCPF)
2. Preliminary Research Plan Form (TC1-PRP)
3. Ethics Evaluation Form (for TC1-EE)
4. Personal Development Plan Form (PDP)
5. First Thesis Committee Meeting Checklist (TC1-CL)
6. Second Thesis Committee Meeting Checklist (TC2-CL)
7. Third Thesis Committee Meeting Checklist (TC3-CL)
8. Fourth Thesis Committee Meeting Checklist (TC4-CL)
9. Fifth Thesis Committee Meeting Checklist (TC5-CL)

All TC forms and Upgrade Guidelines: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ear/study/phd/resources>

**TC Panel Form (TCPF)**

Student Name: Principal Supervisor Name:

Provide the Title of your PhD Project

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Provide an abstract of your proposed research (300 words)

|  |
| --- |
|  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Position** | **Role in TC** | **Contact details** |
|  |  | Subsidiary Supervisor (Chair) |  |
|  |  | TC member 1  (external to EI) |  |
|  |  | TC Member 2  (internal to EI) |  |

Add boxes for additional members if required.

**Research Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Primary Supervisor Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Subsidiary Supervisor Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**DGT approval Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Preliminary Research Plan Form (TC1-PRP)**

Title

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Abstract (200 words)

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Provide a succinct review of the key background literature to contextualise the work

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Hypothesis and aims of your project

|  |
| --- |
|  |

A clear plan of experimental approaches for the next 6-12 months including a graphical timeline

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Bibliography

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Word limit = 1000 words (excluding bibliography)

**Ethics Evaluation Form (TC1-EE)**

**See** <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/research/integrity> for further information

1. **During your project, will you use human tissue or blood? Yes No**

If no, go to question 2. If yes, answer questions 1a-1d.

1. What human materials will you use, and for what purposes?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. How will you obtain this material, and what is the mechanism for ensuring and recording that informed consent is given?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. How is the storage of these materials compliant with the Human Tissue Act 2004?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. Provide details of the relevant Research Ethics Committee approval.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. **Will you be using patient data or details of their clinical management? Yes No**

If no, go to question 3. If yes, answer questions 2a-2d.

1. What information will be used, and what will be done with this information?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. How will this information be collected, and what is the mechanism for ensuring and recording that informed consent is given?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. How will any identifiable or coded data be protected during storage?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. Provide details of the relevant Research Ethics Committee approval.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. **Will you be using any other personal data (e.g. questionnaire results)? Yes No**

If no, go to question 4. If yes, answer questions 3a-3d.

1. What information will be used, and what will be done with this information?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. How will this information be collected, and what is the mechanism for ensuring and recording that informed consent is given?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. How will any identifiable or coded data be protected during storage?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. Provide details of the relevant Research Ethics Committee approval.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. **Will you be working with live animals or animal tissues? Yes No**

If no, go to question 5. If yes, answer questions 4a-4d.

1. What animal or animal tissue related work will be done?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. Provide details of the Home Office project animal licence that covers this work or go to question 4d.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. If you will conduct animal work yourself, provide details of your Home Office personal animal licence that covers this work.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. If no animal licences are required for this work, provide details of why this is the case.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. **Will you be using micro-organisms? Yes No**

If no, go to question 6. If yes, answer questions 5a-5b.

1. Which organisms will be used, and to which Hazard Group do these belong according to the HSE?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. Provide details confirming that the laboratory where the work will be carried out meets the appropriate Containment Level for those organisms.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. **Will you be using mammalian cell lines? Yes No**

If no, go to question 7. If yes, answer questions 6a-6b.

1. Which cell lines will be used?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. Provide details confirming that the laboratory where the work will be carried out meets the appropriate Containment Level for those cell cultures.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. **Will you be using or producing genetically modified cells or organisms? Yes No**

If no, go to question 8. If yes, answer questions 7a-7b.

1. What modifications will be performed on what cell lines or organisms?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. Provide details of the relevant HSE approval for this work.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. **Have you read and confirmed all relevant ethical approval documents, Home Office licences, HSE approvals, HTA licence or biological risk assessments for your project? Yes No**

**Research Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Primary Supervisor Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Subsidiary Supervisor Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Personal Development Plan (PDP)**

Before your TC, consider your current skill set and what areas you think it important to develop. Fill in your PDP form before your TC1 meeting and then updated it ahead of each of your subsequent TC meetings. You may wish to modify your training plan after discussion with your TC.

Suggested courses may come from UCL’s Doctoral Skills Development Programme, external courses, conferences, workshops (internal/external), local training events, etc…

We ask that you consider your skills and development need in each of the below areas, although you needn’t include something under each heading each time.

Skill area: Statistics / Mathematical packages / IT

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Skill required / suggested course** | **Recommended time frame / date** | **Completion date / reason for not pursuing** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

Skill area: Research techniques / analysis / other specialised research training

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Skill required / suggested course** | **Recommended time frame / date** | **Completion date / reason for not pursuing** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

Skill area: Research integrity / ethics –

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Skill required / suggested course** | **Recommended time frame / date** | **Completion date / reason for not pursuing** |
| <https://doctoral-skills.ucl.ac.uk/course-details.pht?course_ID=2797> | must be completed by 12 months |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

Skill area: Presentation / speaking

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Skill required / suggested course** | **Recommended time frame / date** | **Completion date / reason for not pursuing** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

Skill area: Writing

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Skill required / suggested course** | **Recommended time frame / date** | **Completion date / reason for not pursuing** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

Skill area: Teaching

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Skill required / suggested course** | **Recommended time frame / date** | **Completion date / reason for not pursuing** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

Skill area: Personal / professional development

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Skill required / suggested course** | **Recommended time frame / date** | **Completion date / reason for not pursuing** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

Skill area: Careers / employability

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Skill required / suggested course** | **Recommended time frame / date** | **Completion date / reason for not pursuing** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

Skill area: Other

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Skill required / suggested course** | **Recommended time frame / date** | **Completion date / reason for not pursuing** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

**Thesis Committee Meeting #1**

(TC1 should take place between the Thesis Committee, Student and Primary Supervisor)

**Student Status (FT/PT):** Click here to enter text.

**Name of Student:** Click here to enter text.

**Name of Primary Supervisor:** Click here to enter text.

**Chair (Subsidiary Supervisor):** Click here to enter text.

**Name(s) of other Panel Members:** Click here to enter text.

**Date of Meeting:**  Click here to enter text.

**Tick to confirm that the following were received prior to the meeting:**

Student provided completed Preliminary Research Plan form

Student provided completed Ethics Evaluation form

Student provided completed Personal Development Plan

**Tick to confirm that the following occurred at the meeting:**

Student successfully explained the preliminary research plan and initial aims

Feedback (as appropriate) on the research plan has been provided by the TC

Any training needed for these initial aims has been identified

TC confirmed that appropriate ethical and H&S approval exists for this project

TC confirmed that a personal development plan is in place

Student meets/discusses project with Primary Supervisor: **weekly**  **monthly**  **< monthly**  TC confirmed that student progress and development to date is appropriate

Was anything raised requiring the attention of the DGT/DGT? **YES**  **NO**

**The Chair of TC should provide a short summary of the meeting below (expand box as necessary):**

|  |
| --- |
| Click here to enter text. |

**Thesis Committee Meeting #2**

(TC2 should take place between the Thesis Committee and Student)

**Student Status (please tick one box)**

PhD Full-time student (meeting should take place at 9 months)

PhD Part-time student (meeting should take place by 15 months

**Name of Student:** Click here to enter text.

**Name of Primary Supervisor:** Click here to enter text.

**Chair (Subsidiary Supervisor):** Click here to enter text.

**Name(s) of other Panel Members:** Click here to enter text.

**Date of Meeting:**  Click here to enter text.

**Tick to confirm that the following were received prior to the meeting:**

Student provided written Progress Report (1000 words)

Student provided a Personal Development Report and Plan

**Tick to confirm that the following occurred at the meeting:**

Student gave a clear 15-20-minute presentation of their project to date

Student showed understanding of current data and its interpretation

Student has a sound proposal for future work

Feedback (as appropriate) on the research project has been provided by the TC

Any training needed for these project aims has been identified

The Student’s Upgrade plans have been discussed

TC confirmed that the personal development has been discussed

TC confirmed that student progress and development to date is appropriate

Student meets/discusses project with Primary Supervisor: **weekly**  **monthly**  **< monthly**

Student and TC confirmed that the supervision of the Student’s project is appropriate

Was anything raised requiring the attention of the DGT/DGT? **YES**  **NO**

**The Chair of TC should provide a short summary of the meeting below (expand box as necessary):**

|  |
| --- |
| Click here to enter text. |

**Thesis Committee Meeting #3**

(TC3 should take place between the Thesis Committee and Student)

**Student Status (please tick one box)**

PhD Full-time student (meeting should take place at 18 months)

PhD Part-time student (meeting should take place by 30 months)

**Name of Student:** Click here to enter text.

**Name of Primary Supervisor:** Click here to enter text.

**Chair (Subsidiary Supervisor):** Click here to enter text.

**Name(s) of other Panel Members:** Click here to enter text.

**Date of Meeting:**  Click here to enter text.

**Tick to confirm that the following were received prior to the meeting:**

Student provided a Personal Development Report and Plan

**Tick to confirm that the following occurred at the meeting:**

Student gave a clear 15-20-minute presentation of their project to date

Student showed understanding of current data and its interpretation

Student has a sound proposal for future work

Feedback (as appropriate) on the research project has been provided by the TC

Any training needed for these project aims has been identified

TC confirmed that the personal development has been discussed

TC confirmed that student progress and development to date is appropriate

Student meets/discusses project with Primary Supervisor: **weekly**  **monthly**  **< monthly**

Student and TC confirmed that the supervision of the Student’s project is appropriate

Was anything raised requiring the attention of the DGT/DGT? **YES**  **NO**

**The Chair of TC should provide a short summary of the meeting below (expand box as necessary):**

|  |
| --- |
| Click here to enter text. |

**Thesis Committee Meeting #4**

(TC4 should take place between the Thesis Committee and Student)

**Student Status (please tick one box)**

PhD Full-time student (meeting should take place at 24 months)

PhD Part-time student (meeting should take place by 39 months )

**Name of Student:** Click here to enter text.

**Name of Primary Supervisor:** Click here to enter text.

**Chair (Subsidiary Supervisor):** Click here to enter text.

**Name(s) of other Panel Members:** Click here to enter text.

**Date of Meeting:**  Click here to enter text.

**Tick to confirm that the following were received prior to the meeting:**

Student provided a Personal Development Report and Plan

**Tick to confirm that the following occurred at the meeting:**

Student gave a clear 15-20-minute presentation of their project to date

Student showed understanding of current data and its interpretation

Student has a sound proposal for future work

Feedback (as appropriate) on the research project has been provided by the TC

Any training needed for these project aims has been identified

TC confirmed that the personal development has been discussed

TC confirmed that student progress and development to date is appropriate

Student meets/discusses project with Primary Supervisor: **weekly**  **monthly**  **< monthly**

Student and TC confirmed that the supervision of the Student’s project is appropriate

Was anything raised requiring the attention of the DGT/DGT? **YES**  **NO**

**The Chair of TC should provide a short summary of the meeting below (expand box as necessary):**

|  |
| --- |
| Click here to enter text. |

**Thesis Committee Meeting #5**

(TC5 should take place between the Thesis Committee and Student)

**Student Status (please tick one box)**

PhD Full-time student (meeting should take place at 30 months)

PhD Part-time student (meeting should take place by 48 months)

**Name of Student:** Click here to enter text.

**Name of Primary Supervisor:** Click here to enter text.

**Chair (Subsidiary Supervisor):** Click here to enter text.

**Name(s) of other Panel Members:** Click here to enter text.

**Date of Meeting:**  Click here to enter text.

**Tick to confirm that the following were received prior to the meeting:**

Student provided a detailed Thesis Outline

Student provided a Personal Development Report and Plan

**Tick to confirm that the following occurred at the meeting:**

Student gave a clear 15-20-min. presentation of their project & thesis outline

The Student’s Thesis Outline has been discussed

Student showed understanding of current data and its interpretation

Student has a sound proposal for completion of their experimental work

Feedback (as appropriate) on the research project has been provided by the TC

Any training needed for the completion of the project has been identified

TC confirmed that the personal development has been discussed

TC confirmed that student progress and development to date is appropriate

Student meets/discusses project with Primary Supervisor: **weekly**  **monthly**  **< monthly**

Student and TC confirmed that the supervision of the Student’s project is appropriate

Was anything raised requiring the attention of the DGT/DGT? **YES**  **NO**

**The Chair of TC should provide a short summary of the meeting below (expand box as necessary):**

|  |
| --- |
| Click here to enter text. |

**Appendix - FAQs**

**Thesis Committee Guidelines – FAQs**

1. **What is a Thesis Committee?**

A Thesis Committee (TC) supports both the Student and Primary Supervisor during the course of a PhD. They provide the student with a wider intellectual input, access to broader expertise and an overview of the student’s progress at prescribed points during the degree. The TC will provide feedback to students to discuss with their primary supervisors. The TC also has the primary responsibility of monitoring the overall skills training programme of the student. The TC can potentially identify concerns with research progress, supervision or training, and can raise these with the supervisor and/or DGT, as appropriate.

1. **Who has responsibility for supervising the project?**

The Primary Supervisor has responsibility for the overall project strategy and the day-to-day supervision of the project. The TC can report back to the primary supervisor if they feel that there are concerns with the Student’s progress.

1. **When are Thesis Committees going to be introduced?**

All PhD students who registered from September 2019 have a TC. This will not be introduced retrospectively for existing students.

1. **Who appoints the Thesis Committee members?**

The Departmental Graduate Tutor (DGT) has responsibility for approving the members of the TC taking into account the views of the Student and Primary Supervisor.

1. **Who are the members of a Thesis Committee?**

The TC comprises the Subsidiary Supervisor and two other members with relevant academic experience. The Primary Supervisor is not generally a member of the TC but is encouraged to attend meetings but only participate when requested by the TC panel.

1. **Who Chairs the Thesis Committee?**

The TC is chaired by one of the members of the TC who has previous supervisory experience. This could be the Subsidiary Supervisor.

1. **What are the eligibility criteria for being a member of a Thesis Committee?** **Do all Thesis Committee members have to be approved on the UCL Electronic Record of Supervisors (EROS)?**

Only the principal and subsidiary supervisors need to be approved on EROS as the other TC members are not officially supervisors and do not have to fulfil the criteria for supervisors at UCL.

1. **Do Thesis Committee members have to be employed at UCL?**

No, of the two members that are not supervisors, one should be a member of UCL research staff, the other could be external to UCL.

1. **Can junior researchers be a member of a Thesis Committee?**

More junior members of staff, such as post-doctoral researchers, can be members of the TCs, provided they are not from the same team, or supporting the student directly in their research. This is a good opportunity to give postdocs experience of supporting PhD students and exposure to PhD supervision. The circumstances under which a postdoc is a member of a TC, will be determined by the DGT and Head of the Institute / Division.

1. **Can Thesis Committee members change during the course of the PhD?**

Yes, it may make sense to for a new member to join the TC, or replace one of the original members, e.g. if a change in the direction of the research would benefit from additional expertise, or a member leaves and needs to be replaced. Postdoctoral researchers may not be able to commit to TC membership for the entire PhD programme.

1. **What happens in the event that the Primary Supervisor leaves?**

The primary supervisor has responsibility to ensure the continuity of supervision and training of the PhD Student and the project.

1. **Who has responsibility for uploading the Thesis Committee reports on to the Research Log?**

The Chair of the TC as the responsibility for preparing the report, in consultation with the TC members. The report is then sent to the student, and once agreed the student has the responsibility for uploading the report on the Research Log. The primary supervisor still has the responsibility for signing off on key eLog meetings with their students. If there are issues raised in the report that require the attention of the DGT then the report should be emailed directly to the DGT by the Chair.

1. **How does the upgrade fit into this?**

The upgrade will be conducted by the TC, but they may appoint an additional examiner if they see a benefit to the student.

1. **Regulations for TCs and their enforcement.**

The Head of Research Department and the DGT have the responsibility for ensuring that each student has a Thesis Committee, and that the guidelines are followed.

1. **How many Thesis Committees should an academic be part of?**

The expectation is that an academic should sit on one Thesis Committee for every student for whom they are a Primary Supervisor.