Progression Milestones Guidance: **Engineering**

Each progression milestone requires you to submit a written report in advance of the review meeting summarising your progress to date. The guidance below outlines the submission requirements as per your academic discipline for each progression milestone.

First Progression Review

Report length
This report should be double spaced, 12 point font. As a general guidance, the report should contain no more than 15 sides of text (~5000 words), although this should be discussed explicitly with your supervisor as different projects will require a variety of report lengths. The report can include figures and tables (not part of the page count). A full bibliography should be included (not included in the page count).

Report Contents
The report should include:
· the motivation for the research, the aim and objectives of the project;
· a substantive and critical literature review – i.e. not simply a history of published papers, but a discussion of disputed areas, and the gaps that need to be filled – this will typically be the longest part of the report;
· a definition of the main research problem – this will typically be 1-2 pages long, but can vary for each project;
· a discussion of the methodological approach taken so far, including a description and interpretation of preliminary results (if appropriate – some areas of research take longer than others to generate results);
· a clear plan for the period leading up to the second progression review (this will typically be in the form of a Gantt chart) and an initial overall plan for the research to be undertaken (including the methods that will be used) during the PhD period.

Assessors' expectations
At this stage, assessors expect students to have:
· made an appropriate and critical investigation of the literature;
· defined the preliminary aim and objectives and scope of the research;
· displayed an appropriate knowledge and understanding of the research methods;
· developed a viable research plan to be completed until the second progression review and a general plan for the completion of the research degree.

The Review (*viva*)
- The Review Panel: a member of the supervisory team plus one or two independent internal assessors.
- You should submit the First Progression Review Report online, via PGRmanager. You should also check whether the Review Panel would like to be provided with a paper copy of your report.
- Your Co-ordinating Supervisor should arrange the date, time and location of the Review meeting. Please discuss the arrangements for your review with your supervisor. Your First Progression Review should take place within one month of the submission of your Report.
- At the start of the Review Panel meeting, you will typically be expected to give a short presentation (approximately 15-20 minutes) of your work. You should ask whether the panel would you like to deliver such introductory presentation.
- During the Review Panel meeting, you will be asked technical questions about your work. Use this as an opportunity to practice defending your work in readiness for your PhD *viva*.
- It is better to have a tough internal viva, rather than an unexpectedly tough PhD *viva.*
- You are expected to have a good grounding in your field, so read around your basics before a *viva*.

- The Review Panel is allowed to ask you about topics that you have not covered. They are seeing how well you think during the Review.
- Be prepared to defend yourself and your approach (saying "because my supervisor told me to" is not sufficient…)
- If the Review Panel makes a good point, acknowledge it – they may be giving you some good ideas.

Most academics are annoyed by typographical errors, mis-labels, bad referencing, etc.

Other requirements

You are expected to have:
- Completed all mandatory training before your examination.
- Completed the Data Management and Ethics mandatory training. For projects where ethical considerations are relevant, you should discuss any ethical implications of the research in the report.

Second Progression Review (Confirmation)

Report length
The report should be double spaced, 12 pt font, and should contain no more than 30 pages of text (~10,000 words), although this should be discussed explicitly with your supervisor as different projects will require a variety of report lengths. The report will include figures and tables (not included in the page count). A full bibliography should be included (not included in the page count). Relevant data may be included as appendices (not included in the page count).

Report Contents
The report should include:
- title of report, name of candidate, date of submission and supervisor names;
- abstract of less than 200 words;
- a statement acknowledging the originality of the work submitted;
- clearly defined aim and objectives, research question(s) and scope of the research;

- the report could be in the form of a research paper – this paper may have been published, submitted for publication, or in an advanced stage of preparation. Alternatively, the report may be formatted as an interim thesis, i.e., a document that follows the general format of a PhD thesis, although the contents of which would be appropriate to the current stage of the project;
- a research plan for the remainder of the project in the form of a Gantt chart (not included in the page count).
- A list of published and/or submitted research papers.

Assessors' expectations
At this stage, assessors expect students to have:
- a very good knowledge of the general research field and specific problems that are the subject of the project;
- A very good knowledge and understanding of the specific topic that is being researched;
- made clear progress which indicates that they are on track to complete successful research;
- displayed a good understanding of the methods and techniques used in their research and the limitations (e.g. analytical errors, assumptions, etc.);
- the ability to write in clear scientific English;
- developed a well thought-out plan for the remainder of the project.

In general, assessors will expect that the project is a viable research that will lead to an original work that has sufficient scope and interest to be considered a scientific contribution which meets the standards of a

PhD (as explained in the [University of Southampton's the Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision 2023-24), and will also satisfy the standards of peer review and merit publication.](#)

The Review (*viva*)
- The Review Panel: at least 2 independent assessors.
- You should submit the Second Progression Review Report online, via PGRmanager. You should also check whether the Review Panel would like to be provided with a paper copy of your Report.
- Your co-ordinating supervisor will arrange the date, time and location of the Review meeting. Please discuss the arrangements for your review with your supervisor. Your Second Progression Review should take place within one month of the submission of your Report.
- At the start of the Review Panel meeting, you will typically be asked to give a short presentation of your work (approximately 15 minutes). You should ask the members of the panel whether they would like you to deliver such presentation, and prepare accordingly.
- During the Review Panel meeting, you will be asked technical questions on your work. Use this as an opportunity to practice defending your work in readiness for your PhD *viva*.
- Your supervisor may can be present at the Review Panel meeting, but they are not permitted to play an active role in the examination.

Third Progression Review

Report length
There is no required length, but a maximum of 4,000 words is advised as a guideline.

Report Contents
The report should include:
- An outline of thesis structure.
- A summary of any research work not yet completed and an estimated completion date for each section of remaining work.
- A projected thesis submission date.
- A list of published and/or submitted research papers.

Assessors' expectations
You will be expected to evidence that your research project has made clear progress and a credible plan for the submission of a defendable thesis exists.

The Review
You will be expected to evidence that your research project has made clear progress and demonstrate that a credible plan for the submission of a defendable thesis exists. The Third Progression Review does not take the form of a *viva*, and is usually a discussion between the student and their supervisors that results in an agreement of a timeline to final submission. You and your supervisory team must discuss if/when you will enter nominal registration, and this date should also be agreed at the Third Progression Review
- The Review Panel: your supervisory team.
- You should submit the Third Progression Review Report online, via PGRmanager. You should also check whether your supervisors would like to be provided with a paper copy of your Report.

Your co-ordinating supervisor will arrange the date, time and location of the Review meeting. Please discuss the arrangements for your review with your supervisor. Your Third Progression Review should take place within one month of the submission of your Report.