

## Progression Milestones Guidance: The Zepler Institute

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

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#### **Report length:**

This report should be double spaced, 12 point font, and should contain no more than 15 sides of text (~4000 words)

#### **Report Submission:**

- It does not need to be bound but printed copies are required for the panel members.
- The report may contain diagrams (not part of the page count).
- Include a list of references (not part of the page count) in University of Southampton format.

#### **The report should contain:**

- 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
- a discussion of the approach taken so far that may include a description and interpretation of preliminary results (if appropriate – some areas of research take longer than other 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 ½ page Gantt chart) and an initial overall plan for the research to be undertaken (including the methods that will be used) during the PhD period (this will typically be 2-3 pages long)
- A review of Academic Needs Analysis.

#### **Assessors' expectations:**

- made an appropriate and critical survey of the literature
- defined the preliminary objectives and scope of the research
- displayed an appropriate knowledge and understanding of the research methods
- developed a viable research plan to be completed within the degree period
- begun discussing the ethical implications of their research with their supervisory team and can articulate how these are incorporated into their research plans
- have undertaken mandatory ethics training

In addition to the report, the student should have completed the Data Management Plan and Ethics form, as well as the related mandatory training by the first progression review at the latest. It is the supervisors' responsibility to ensure that this has been completed in time.

### Second Progression Review

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#### **Report length:**

The report should be double spaced, 12 pt font, and should contain no more than 30 pages of text (~10,000 words)

#### **Report Submission:**

- It does not need to be bound but printed copies are required for the panel members.
- 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 analytical data may be included as appendices (not included in the page count)

The report will contain:

- title of report, name of candidate, date of submission and supervisor names;
- abstract of less than 200 words;
- the report should be in the form of a research paper – this paper may have been published, submitted for publication, or should be in an advanced stage of preparation;
- it follows from (3) that you are not expected to include in the report every activity you have undertaken in your project prior to the confirmation meeting;
- a research plan in the form of a Gantt chart (not included in page count).

**Assessors' expectations:**

- the project being undertaken is of sufficient scope, originality and theoretical interest to constitute a genuine contribution to the subject in the form of the understanding of a problem, the advancement of knowledge or the generation of new ideas at level
- a good knowledge of the general research field and specific problems that are the subject of the project, and have made clear progress in the project
- displayed a good understanding of the methods and techniques used in your research and their 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 cases, where progress does not satisfy the criteria for a PhD, students may be offered the option of pursuing an MPhil degree instead (see Section 18 in [Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision 2023-24](#)).

### **Third Progression Review**

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**Report length:**

There is no required minimum word limit, but a maximum guideline of 4,000 words is advised.

**Report Submission:**

The report will contain:

- 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 publications and/or publications submitted.

**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 defensible thesis exists.

### **Interim Progression Review**

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In cases when no progression review has taken place within a 12 month period and the student does not plan to submit their thesis within 3 months, an Interim Progression Review should take place. This should include a review of progress since the last Progression Review, a review of the Academic Needs Analysis and the Data

Management Plan, and, where relevant, details of the research student's plan to submit the thesis. Following the Review, the research student will be given written feedback and any necessary guidance on actions to be taken to support progress in their candidature (see Section 18 in [Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision 2023-24](#)).