Faculty of Education and Health Sciences
Considerations for the annual progression review process

The UL Research Student Progression is detailed in section 5.6 of the Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures. This short EHS document reinforces the pertinent points of the procedure and provides further guidance on the undertaking of a meaningful and worthwhile progression.

An annual progression review meeting is conducted with all postgraduate researchers (PGRs). The aim of the annual review of all PGRs is to facilitate the support of PGRs, formalise monitoring and management of PGR progress, provide space to reflect on how PGR supervision is going, promote research excellence and generally promote graduate research. This process helps to ensure successful completion of the research degree within the prescribed period.

Therefore, the annual progression review is to assess whether the PGR has:

(i) knowledge and skills appropriate to the stage of his/her research programme;
(ii) completed work of a sufficient quality to justify continuation on the programme and that the research methods are appropriate and practical;
(iii) a realistic plan in place for progression and eventual completion of the research within the expected timeframe.

The PGRs should expect to defend their work and methodological choices when questioned in order that the panel can make their assessment. The panel may also request access to previous years' progression review reports and recommendations.

Timeline

All PGRs registered on EHS sPhD, PhD, MD or MRes programmes will be reviewed by the relevant departmental/school review panel normally between November-December every year. PGRs should be informed about the progression process in November (given this is when a central up-to-date list of PGRs entrants is available) by the department/school contact point and provided with a tentative timeline for the review panel to take place. Wherever possible, EHS staff will endeavour to arrange several 'progression weeks' in which progressions take place in order that the timing of progression is synchronised across the Faculty. Some departments/schools may block book a week while others may want to spread the process out. PGRs should discuss their progress with their supervisory team and work towards completing the suggested documentation that should be submitted to their departmental/school contact point one week prior to the annual progression review meeting.

Annual Progression Review Panel membership

The panel will be constituted as detailed in the Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures (5.6.7.2);

5.6.7.2 The Research Review Panel will consist of the supervisor(s), the Head of Department or his/her nominee, who will act as chairperson, and at least one independent panel member, nominated by the Head of Department, who satisfies the criteria of appointment of supervisor (as per section 5.5). Where the student undertakes a structured PhD programme, the programme director may act as the independent panel member. The supervisor cannot act as chairperson of the Research Review Panel. The chairperson of the Research Review Panel will act as the adviser to all research candidates presenting for review. The chairperson, independent panel member or programme director are not precluded from membership of the Research Confirmation Panel or from acting as an internal examiner at the examination stage.

Role of Panel Members

- **Chairperson:** The Chair will manage the annual progression review panel, ensuring that the PGRs is treated fairly, will ensure that the process is consistent with Academic Regulations, and will communicate the outcome of the review to the PGR. The Chair will **not** engage in the assessment of the progress of the PGR. The Chair will ensure that all the required documentation is completed, including feedback to the PGR, is all passed on to the Head of department/school where relevant, and will communicate the outcome to relevant parties.
- **Independent panel member(s):** The role of the independent panel member(s) is to ensure that the PGRs has demonstrated satisfactory progress in relation to the stage of their research programme.
- **Supervisor(s):** The supervisor(s) should not take the lead in questions but may contribute should it be necessary to do so.

Suggested format of the review panel

- Questions and answers (see Appendix 1 for some suggested questions) based on PGR's pre-circulated documentation (and (pre-recorded) presentation where applicable)
- Opportunity for PGR to speak to panel without supervisor(s) present
- Panel discussion without PGR including input from supervisors
- Panel decision relayed to PGR by the Chair and any necessary feedback by Chair/independent panel member (see Appendix 2)
- Completion of PGR-9 form

Completion of the Progression Forms

The progression form (PGR9) will be completed at the end of each annual progression review meeting and signed by the panel members. All forms will be sent together to Academic Registry with copies kept in student files in the department/school (and by the sPhD administrator, where pertinent).

As per the Handbook of Academic Regulations (Section 5.6.7.5), the recommendations made to the Academic Council Grading Committee following the panel review will be as follows:

5.6.7.5 The Research Review Panel will assess the candidate's performance to date and determine the appropriate recommendation. The Panel's recommendation shall be one of the following:
a. The student's research progress is of a sufficiently high standard to warrant continuation on the masters or PhD register as applicable. (G)
or
b. The student's progress is not satisfactory and the student is required to undertake the Research Confirmation Process. (NG)

PGRs will be informed of the recommendation immediately and a written report should be provided by the panel Chair to the PGR and their supervisor(s) within one week of the panel meeting. Reports should provide the PGR with clear feedback on both the strengths and further considerations of their research programme. Where a Head of department/school is not a panel Chair, the Chair must also provide reports and decisions to the Head within one week of the meeting. Heads of department/school must enter grades to the online system by the University of Limerick's grading deadline in January. Heads of department/school must ensure that the records of annual progression reviews are stored and made available for subsequent panels.

Review Documentation to be submitted by the PGRs one week in advance of the panel meeting:

Departments/schools may wish to use the following documentation in having the PGR prepare for the progression;

PGRs ***registered for a period of less than 4 months*** submit a 1-page document (See Appendix 3) during the progression period.

PGRs ***registered for more than 4 months and not in their final year*** *complete* Appendix 4 and optional (pre-recorded) presentation (no more than 10 mins in length)

PGRs **in their final year** complete Appendix 4 and optional (pre-recorded) presentation (no more than 10 mins in length)

Note: It is the responsibility of the PGR to pre-circulate all documentation to the entire review panel no less than 1 week in advance of the scheduled panel meeting.

Appendix 1: Suggested guiding questions

In assessing progression, panel members will consider the following:

Has your year 1 achieved the following

(1) Is the project clearly defined?
(2) Are the objectives to be achieved within the second 12-month period realistic and achievable within available resources
(3) Does the PhD/MD/MRes as it stands offer adequate research training for the student to PhD level?
(4) Track record of achievement on taught modules
(5) Is the programme of work likely to provide a sufficient foundation for PhD/MD/MRes research?
(6) Does the student show evidence of understanding the research question and its implications, the limitations of the techniques to be employed and the significance of their work within the broader literature?
(7) Is the research sufficiently well-defined to proceed?
(8) Are the proposed supervisor/advisor arrangements satisfactory?
(9) Are there any ethical problems associated with the project?

Year 2

(1) Have the stated objectives been achieved?
(2) Is the proposed programme of work achievable?
(3) Are the defined objectives likely to be achieved with the available resources?
(4) If data collection is not complete what are the obstacles to completion?
(5) Does the student show evidence of ability to critically evaluate the work and place it within the context of related studies?
(6) Track record of achievement on taught modules
(7) Is there any evidence of a publication plan?
(8) Is (are) the supervisor(s) satisfied with the student's progress to date?
(9) Is the student satisfied with the current supervisory arrangements?

Year 3

(1) Is this PhD/MD/MRes research likely to make, a measurable and worthwhile contribution to the field of study?
(2) Is the practical component of the work completed, or almost completed? If not, how can it be completed?
(3) Has an outline of the thesis been decided upon?
(4) Has the sPhD student completed all non-research credits of the sPhD programme?
(5) Has the work been (or will it be in the near future) subject to external review through conference presentation or as full papers?

Year 4 criteria 1-4 of year 3 and in addition:

(1) Are the student and supervisor(s) satisfied that the written thesis will be submitted on time?
(2) What are the supervisor's and student's thoughts on examiners and arrangements for submission and viva voce?
(3) Will another review be required at the end of Year 4?

Appendix 2: EHS Progression Panel Report Template

Student name:

Student ID:

Year of registration:

Date of progression meeting:

Panel members:

The panel noted the following points in relation to your progression panel meeting:

Areas of strength

-
-
-

Areas for development and consideration

-
-
-

As per the Handbook of Academic Regulations (Section 5.6.7.5), the recommendations made to the Academic Council Grading Committee following the panel review will be as follows:

G ☐ NG ☐

You will be notified formally of the outcome by the Graduate School in due course.

Chair signature:

Panel member signature:

Date:

Appendix 3: Faculty of Education & Health Sciences PhD Students Progress Report for those registered for a period of <4months

Please answer the questions below. Type your answers in the boxes and make sure that the total length of the report does not exceed two pages.

Name
Title of PhD: Answer the questions below. Be precise but concise!

Background Give a brief background to your project (100 words)

Aims What are the general aims of your dissertation work? Which questions are you trying to answer?

Skills (Which modules/skills did you acquire (e.g., laboratory, methodological) since beginning postgraduate study that are essential to dissertation work?)

Progress What is your progress to date?

Ethics Did you obtain approval from the ethics committee for your studies to date and do you have a copy of the approval letter?

Goals What is your future planning over the next 12 months of graduate study? List goals and objectives

Have you completed your Research Integrity training **No** ☐ **Yes** ☐

Signature of HoD…….

Signature of Supervisor ……

Would you like progression (Yes or no)……..

To be completed by the HoD

As per the Handbook of Academic Regulations (Section 5.6.7.5), the recommendations made to the Academic Council Grading Committee following the panel review will be as follows:

G ☐ **NG** ☐

You will be notified formally of the outcome by the Graduate School in due course.

Appendix 4: Postgraduate Research Student Achievements Form (to be completed by the student only)
Example

Title
Modelling Damage in Carbon Fibre Composites

Abstract (max. 250 words)
In this project, we aim to develop a state-of-the-art three-dimensional multi-scale composites damage model that can predict failure events that occur over a range of length and time scales. A detailed damaging micromechanics model will be developed and a novel approach to scale-up to the continuum is proposed. Model input data such as individual fibre stiffness and fibre pitch/diameter distribution will be generated using nano-indentation experiments and microscopy, respectively. The model will be integrated within the framework of the ABAQUS finite element code (currently used by at least two major aircraft manufacturers), thus providing a useful design tool to industry and academia.

Short Progress Statement (200 words max.)
Include your progress to date, and state how your research is progressing. Are there any significant roadblocks? Any relationship problems? Mention any significant progress not measured in the forms below. This is your chance to have a say in the progress of your PhD!

Year (please tick)					
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year (n)
		x			

MRes/MD/PhD?		Structured / Traditional?	

Major Outputs, e.g. journal Papers, book chapters, major projects, designs etc. (planned, submitted or published (state which)

- Example: TJ Vaughan, McCarthy, CT, A micromechanical study on the effect of intra-ply properties on transverse shear fracture in fibre reinforced composites, Composites Part A: Applied Science and Manufacturing, Vol. 42, No. 9, pp. 1217-1228 (contribution to paper: directed the study, wrote sections of the paper etc.) (published)
- Example: A. Another, Designed a copper façade for UL's main entrance (in place)

Conference Papers (planned, submitted or published (state which)

- Example; Mortell, D., McCarthy, C.T. and Tanner, D. (2012) 'An Investigation into the Relationship between Intralaminar Crack Growth and Delamination, leading to Compromised Structural and Mechanical Performance', in Marino Q., Proceedings of the 15th European Conference on Composite Materials (ECCM15), Venice, Italy, 24-28 June.(published)

Presentations(internal and/or external)

- **Title:** Predicting Failure in Multi-bolt Composite Joints using Finite Element Analysis and Bearing-bypass Diagrams (external) **Author(s):** Blogs, Joe
  Venue / Date: 6th International Conference on Damage Assessment of Structures (DAMAS), Polish Academy of Sciences, Gdansk, Poland. / 4th-6th July 2005 **Role:**
  Standard Conference Presentation

Technical Reports (planned, submitted, approved, state which)

- **Report:** Synthesis report on validation tests for manufacturing effects (submitted)
  Author(s): XXX,YYY
  Commissioning Agency: European Commission - MAAXIMUS-WP6.5-ULIM-CTDCTD6.5.4_Test_Results_V2.0, 2011, MAAXIMUS - FP7 Work grant number 213371

Skills (300 words max.)

- **Proficient in ABAQUS finite element code • Advanced Excel course taken**
- **Etc.**

Modules (State grade: Pass, Fail, Letter Grade or N/A);
Completion of this section is compulsory for Structured PhD Students

- **ME6032, Advanced Aircraft Structures (grade: N/A)**
- **ME60011, FUNDAMENTALS OF CONTINUUM MECHANICS, (grade: pass)**

Special Achievements

- **Represented the MABE Dept. at Sir Bernard Crosland Symposium**
- **Solved a complex problem for Cook Medical**
- **Etc.**

Ethics Approval	**Yes/No**
Does your research require Ethics Approval?	
Has Ethics Approval been granted?	

Have you completed your Research Integrity training No ☐ Yes ☐