

Progression Reports

Students who begin their research in September 2014 must submit their reports on 1st June 2015.

January 2015 starters must submit in November 2015

April 2015 starters must submit in Feb 2016

July starters in March 2016

The reports must be submitted on time unless there are extenuating circumstances.

Please be aware that if you start late, you will still be expected to work to these deadlines.

An electronic copy must be uploaded to Eprog using the relevant link on the progression area. 2 paper copies of the reports must be submitted to the Education Office, Room G.020

The oral examination conducted by your supervisor and an independent internal examiner must be held 2 months before you are due to re-register. You will not be allowed to re-register without the examination process being fully complete and any payments you might receive could be affected.

As indicated in the Graduate Resource Book, all new research students who register for PhD degrees must present a formal written report at the end of their first academic year. The primary purpose of this document is to provide evidence that the extent and quality of the research carried out form a sufficient basis for continuation on the PhD course. Other objectives are to provide training in the written presentation of scientific data in English and to assist in the preparation of your PhD thesis at the end of your full period of research.

After three years of demanding practical work, the task of writing a PhD thesis from scratch often seems formidable, and far too many research students fail to complete their thesis before the termination of their grant. You should be aware that all PhD theses must be submitted within 4 years of registration.

If you exceed the 4 year limit you could fail to graduate. Extensions will not be granted except in exceptional cases. In order to help you to avoid this situation, the following format for your first year report is recommended.

1. The title of your report should be the same as that which you expect to use for your PhD thesis.
2. The first section of the report should take the form expected of the introduction to your PhD thesis. It should consist ideally of a description of the work to be attempted, the motivation for it, and the methods to be adopted. An appropriate critical review of the relevant literature should be provided; this would normally be expected to be about 5000 words in length and should consist of an appraisal of the state of knowledge, not a catalogue of references of doubtful relevance. Your aim should be to produce a concise account which can be used with little modification in your final thesis. An original piece of writing is required, and copies of other reviews or literature surveys will certainly not suffice. Make sure that you fully understand everything you present, since any lack of understanding of the work you have reviewed is sure to be exposed at your oral examination.
3. The literature survey should be followed by a full report of your own work (approximately 2000 words), written in a form and at a level of detail appropriate to a thesis. Its length will depend on the volume of experimental results which you have accumulated, and you are advised to consult previously submitted theses in related areas to obtain an idea of the desirable format. It is expected that supervisors will have asked their students to provide written reports of their work at regular intervals during the year, and if these have been written in an appropriate style you should be able to use them with little modification to compile your complete account. Both detailed experimental description and relevant discussion of the results should be included.

4. The final section of the report should consist of an outline (300-500 words) of the work planned for the second year of research.

All students are advised to consult their supervisors regularly during preparation of their reports, three copies of which should be prepared. These should be typed and enclosed in a folder or hard cover. Two copies are used by examiners and one by the candidate at the oral examination; afterwards, one copy must be deposited in the School's education office.

Please note that the literature survey and report should normally be no longer than 7000-8000 words, and it should not be necessary to spend a long time away from your research work to prepare the report if you organise your time efficiently. In most cases it may be sensible to complete the literature survey in the first few months of your research programme so that you are more aware of the background literature.

Reports in year 2 should follow the same format as Yr 1 progression reports. Students registered on the 4yr PhD programme will be required to write a 3rd year continuation report.