Progression Guide – for Students

What is it?
Progression is a yearly assessment of your progress and your suitability to continue and complete a PhD. It is also a formal opportunity for you to raise any issues that may be hindering your progress and a good opportunity to practise presenting and answering questions on your work (skills you will require in your final PhD viva).

When is it?
- Year 1: 9 months after starting.
- Year 2: 21 months after starting.
- Year 3: 33 months after starting.

What do you need to do beforehand?
- Produce a report. This should include a description of work undertaken, a time plan for the rest of the PhD, and a thesis statement (see RS guide for detailed instructions).
- Fill in the self assessment form and pass to your supervisors for their completion (before the viva).
- Complete the training needs assessment form, documenting the training that you have done throughout the year (before the viva).
- Find out the final date on which you can submit your PhD (i.e. the final weekday before your four year deadline elapses).

What format will it take?
- The viva lasts approximately 1 hour.
- The panel will consist of three academics. It will be chaired by a member of RSC and will include your second supervisor (assuming that they are not involved in day-to-day supervision) and an assessor normally from the same research section.
- You should start by making a short presentation (~10 mins).
- The panel will then ask you academic and more general questions.
- After questions you will be asked to leave the room for the panel to discuss the outcome.
- Finally, you will be brought back in and informed of the outcome.

What are the outcomes?
There are several possible outcomes:
- Progress to the next year (the most common).
- Progress to the next year subject to making some changes to your report / thesis statement / work plan (no additional progression viva required).
- As previous but with an additional progression viva.
- Not progress as a PhD student but move to a Masters programme.
- Not progress.

On the following page is reproduced the relevant text from the College of Science and Engineering Code of Practice.
6. PROGRESSION

All research students, whether full or part-time, must carry out an annual progress review in all years following rst registration until they become ‘thesis pending’ (see section 11 below).

The purpose of the annual progress review – which normally takes place in May/June each year - is to:

1. Determine whether a research student should progress to the following year of research study and gauge the feasibility of completion within the timescale allotted.
2. Provide an opportunity for the research student to present aspects of their work and achievements for the session.
3. Provide an opportunity for the student to raise any issues about their research experience.
4. Provide feedback to the research student on their research, personal development and performance.
5. Set clear goals for the coming year’s study.
6. Support supervisors and students to maintain and develop a dynamic research community.

Students are required to submit a progress form along with written work of up to 4000 words which includes an overview of the field in which the work is being undertaken; a critical survey of related published work; an account of work undertaken during the project; an evaluation of the results of that work, a bibliography and a GANTT chart which details the work to be carried out over the following year. The written submission should be discussed with the supervisory team prior to submission.

A review meeting (or mini viva) is then held with a panel who have not been involved in the formal supervision of your research. This meeting is organised by the student's School. The panel then complete an outcome form and return this to your School Administrator for submission to the Graduate School.

N.B. The student’s training needs assessment should be submitted with the report.