

Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health
School Postgraduate Research Student Progress Committees

1. Purpose

The function of the Committee is to consider matters of student progress whilst registered on a degree leading to the award of MPhil, PhD or MD. The purpose of the Committee is to provide a fair and transparent mechanism for considering such matters, and to reach a decision based upon the evidence presented to it. The Progress Committee is not empowered to consider appeals against judgments taken in accordance with University Ordinances and Regulations.

2. Matters for consideration

The Committee will:

- i) receive reports of students whose progress has been identified as being unsatisfactory, and who have provided no evidence of having effected remedial action within an appropriate time period;
- ii) receive reports of students whose progress into the next phase of the PGR programme has not been recommended by the assessors of the continuation/transfer report. The Committee will determine the consequences for the students concerned;
- iii) receive accounts of students who may be of concern to the School with respect to attendance, conduct and/or wellbeing. The Committee will determine a course of action for the student concerned in accordance with '[Regulation XX Monitoring Attendance and Wellbeing of Students](#)';
- iv) receive accounts of student concerns regarding supervision. Such cases would be brought to the Committee by a PGR Tutor or the Postgraduate Director, who would have first given due consideration and effort to resolve the difficulties at School/Division level.

3. Mitigation

Students are invited to present to the Committee information in respect of mitigation, which may have influenced his/her performance. Areas of mitigation that may be considered by the Committee are:

- i) health matters which may have affected the student's performance
- ii) personal circumstances which may have affected the student's performance
- iii) changes that may have occurred to the direction, circumstances or structure of the research programme and/or evidence that the level of supervision does not comply with the University [Supervision Policy for Postgraduate Research Degrees](#)
- iv) any requests for mitigation that mention disability support, lack of disability support or the impact of a disability should be referred to the Disability Advisory and Support Service (DASS) for confirmation of the individual circumstances and veracity of information provided before consideration by the panel. This should apply regardless of whether or not the student is registered with the DASS, as legislative duties may still apply.

Where matters of health are provided as mitigation by the student, the Committee would require submission of supporting information by a registered health care professional. This information should be provided at least one week before the meeting of the Committee.

The Committee normally makes decisions and communicates these to students and supervisors at the time of the meeting. However, should the Committee require further evidence, it may defer its decision and recommendations to the Faculty until such time as it deems fit.

The Committee will normally write to all concerned with the details of its decision and recommendations within five working days of the meeting.

4. Membership of the Committee

- School Postgraduate Research Director
- Division Senior PGR Tutor (from alternative Division to the student under review)
- Division PGR Tutor (from alternative Division to the student under review)

The Committee has the power to co-opt members as it sees fit however no more than five persons will serve at any one committee meeting.

5. Frequency of Meetings

Meetings will be held as necessary, with the aim of holding a formal committee within 3-4 weeks of a case being agreed as requiring committee review.

6. Procedure

- i) Progress Committees are organised through the School PGR Student Support administrators.
- ii) Referrals to the Committee made by the relevant School PGR Director and Division Senior PGR Tutor through application to the School PGR Student Support administrator.
- iii) The student and his/her supervisor will be informed in writing as to the reason(s) for the referral as well as the date and time of the Progress Committee and any copies of documentation which will be supplied to the Committee members.
- iv) Documentation in support of a student case referred to the Committee may include reports held on eProg, from assessors, the supervisory team and/or student. The nature of documentation required will be determined by each individual case.
- v) A referred student/supervisor should indicate to the School PGR Student Support administrator in writing his/her intention to attend.
- vi) It is expected that a referred student should attend the relevant Committee. Should they fail to do so, the Committee will consider the reasons for referral and make a decision *in absentia*. If a student/supervisor chooses not to attend, or is not able to attend, written evidence of mitigating circumstances will be considered as supplied by the student/supervisor. The Committee will generally not consider supporting statements from family or friends but will consider documentary evidence from general practitioners and other recognised bodies. *NB: In accordance with GMC recommendations, the School does NOT accept GP certification where the GP is a relative of the student concerned.*

- vii) Students/supervisors referred to the Committee should provide via the School PGR Student Support administrator *at least one week in advance of the meeting* documentary evidence of mitigating circumstances to support their case. This may include a report of their understanding of the situation, history and current position, alongside evidence of mitigation as appropriate.
- viii) All documentation considered by the Committee will be made available to all parties prior to the meeting.
- ix) The student and his/her supervisor will both be invited to join the members of the Committee at the same time. At no point will the supervisor or the student be asked to present information in private to the Committee without the other party being present.
- x) The student may be accompanied by a friend for moral support, if desired. That person must be a current member of the University of Manchester, either a student or member of staff, including a sabbatical member of the University Students' Union. He/she may speak on the students' behalf if the student feels unable to do so. Any person attending with the student does so with the Committee's permission. Such permission may be withdrawn if their conduct is considered inappropriate.
- xi) Legal representation will not be permitted.
- xii) The student/supervisor is normally asked to leave while the Committee considers the information presented.
- xiii) The Committee, having carefully considered the circumstances will reach a decision. In a small number of cases the Committee will discuss its recommendations with the Faculty Doctoral Academy Research Degrees Panel prior to finalising its decision.
- xiv) The student and supervisor will be informed of this decision by a member of the Committee, which will be confirmed in writing within five working days of the meeting.
- xv) The Committee will inform the relevant sponsor as appropriate regarding the outcome of the meeting.

The student has the right of appeal under University General [Regulation XIX Academic Appeals](#) against any decision reached by the School Progress Committee affecting the academic progress. This appeal must be made in writing via the appropriate form: <http://www.regulations.manchester.ac.uk/basic-guide-academic-appeals/> and submitted to the Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health Head of Faculty Student Experience within twenty working days of the date of notification of result or decision.

7. Internal Communication

- i) Copies of all letters to students resulting from the Progress Committee meeting will be forwarded to relevant members of the Committee and will be held on file by the Faculty Doctoral Academy office. A record of Progress Committee cases will be provided to Faculty Research Degrees Panel for information only.