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**Research Degrees**

**Managing Unsatisfactory**

**Academic Progress**

1. The registration of all research degree students is subject to satisfactory academic progress. Where progress is not deemed to be satisfactory, it is strongly recommended that the supervision team, and also the ARC Research Degree Coordinator for those based in ARCs, make use of the ‘Procedures for addressing failure to make satisfactory academic progress’. These can be found in Appendix 3 of the [Research Degree Regulations.](https://help.open.ac.uk/documents/policies/research-degree-regulations)

These procedures focus on the responsibilities and entitlements of those involved and the best practice way of managing the situation, with a view to bringing the students studies back on track.

It recommends that frequent meetings are held and that that clear tasks are set with specified deadlines, to allow the student to demonstrate whether satisfactory progress can be made.

The University reserves the right to deny re-registration to students who fail to maintain academic progress.

1. Supervisors and Associate Deans Research (or delegate) or Programme Leaders, and the Affiliated Research Centre Research Degrees Coordinator where applicable, are responsible for monitoring and reporting on research student progress and are accountable to the University’s Research Degrees Committee for these activities.
2. These procedures seek to reconcile the interests of the student and the staff responsible for their studies as well as those of the University whilst ensuring that the wider expectations of fairness are met. They are concerned with both responsibilities and entitlements and are intended to reflect the principles of natural justice, as well as being transparent and timely.
3. Where the academic progress of a student is unsatisfactory, the supervisors are required to arrange a meeting with the student to:
4. Inform the student that their progress is unsatisfactory.
5. Explain clearly why their progress is unsatisfactory and what they must do to address the situation.
6. Explore with the student the reason(s) why they have not made satisfactory progress and suggest strategies for overcoming any problems or difficulties identified by the student.
7. Remind the student that research degree registration is subject to satisfactory academic progress.
8. Set clear tasks for the student to complete by specified deadlines to allow them to demonstrate whether satisfactory progress can be made. The tasks set may be written and/or practical, and should be appropriate to the student’s project and the stage of her/his studies.
9. After the meeting, write to the student to:
10. Confirm the discussion of points a) to e) as outlined above.
11. Encourage the student to seek help and advice from someone else (e.g. the Head of School, third party monitor or Associate Dean Research or delegate, or Programme Leader if they have concerns or difficulties that they do not wish to discuss with the supervisors.
12. Warn the student that if they are unable to make satisfactory academic progress the Head of School will be asked to recommend to the Progress Board that the student’s registration is terminated.
13. Inform the Head of School that the student’s progress is unsatisfactory and the action being taken to address the situation. If the Head of School is also one of the student’s supervisors, the Associate Dean Research should be involved.
14. Where the academic progress of a student is unsatisfactory, the Head of School, or delegate acting on behalf of the Head of School, or the Affiliated Research Centre Research Degrees Coordinator, where applicable, is required to arrange a meeting with the student to:
15. Explore the reason(s) why they have not made satisfactory progress.
16. Suggest strategies and/or take appropriate action to overcome any problems or difficulties identified by the student.
17. Check that the student understands:
18. Why their progress is unsatisfactory.
19. What they have to do to demonstrate whether satisfactory progress can be made by the specified deadlines.
20. Research degree registration is subject to satisfactory progress.
21. If they are unable to make satisfactory progress the termination of their registration will be recommended to the University’s Progress Board.
22. Discuss the situation with the supervisors suggesting strategies and/or taking appropriate action to overcome any problems or difficulties.

If the student declines to attend a meeting with the Head of School, the process outlined in 5 (a) – (c) should be undertaken by correspondence

In the case of an Affiliated Research Centre student, the Affiliated Research Centre Research Degrees Coordinator, should, after this meeting inform the University’s Research Degrees Team that the student’s progress is unsatisfactory and outline the action being taken to address the situation.

1. If, in spite of action being taken as outlined above, a student is unable to demonstrate satisfactory progress, the supervisors and Head of School, or Affiliated Research Centre Research Degrees Coordinator where applicable, should:
2. Inform the student that their progress remains unsatisfactory.
3. Confirm to the student that a formal recommendation for the termination of their registration will be made to the Progress Board.
4. Check whether the student would prefer to withdraw from study.
5. The supervisors are responsible for preparing a written report, working with the Head of School or discipline, or the Affiliated Research Centre Research Degrees Coordinator where applicable, recommending the termination of a student’s registration for failure to make satisfactory progress, to the University’s Progress Board. The report should:
6. Outline why the student’s progress is unsatisfactory
7. Provide details of the action taken to address the situation
8. Confirm that the student has:
9. Received written warnings about their unsatisfactory progress and the implications of not being able to demonstrate satisfactory progress
10. Had an opportunity to discuss the situation with the Head of School, or delegate, or the Affiliated Research Centre Research Degrees Coordinator, where applicable and been encouraged to seek help and advice from other appropriate members of staff
11. Include appropriate documentary evidence. This must include all of the agreed notes from the formal supervision meetings and a complete record of progress reports.

The report must be ratified by the Head of School, or the Affiliated Research Centre Research Degrees Coordinator where applicable,and copied to the student before being sent to the Head of Research Degrees.

1. The report will be referred to the Progress Board, who may:
2. Ratify the recommendation that the student’s registration should be terminated for failure to make academic progress
3. Arrange for the student’s work to be assessed by a suitably qualified external assessor
4. Allow the student to remain registered for a specified period subject to appropriate conditions and requirements.

In the case of (b) a decision about the termination of the student’s registration will be made on receipt of the external assessor’s report.

1. Should the Progress Board ratify the recommendation to terminate the student’s registration (8a above) they will send a formal letter to the student informing them of the decision. The letter will include information on the University appeals/complaints process.