**School of Pharmacy**

**Research & Graduate Studies Committee (RGSC)**

**Annual Progress Review Guidelines for Registered research students**

* Each registered research student (i.e. PhD, MSc research) in the School of Pharmacy will be assigned an Academic supervisor(s) and/or advisor. Where the student is co-supervised by two or more supervisors no advisor is required.
* All registered research students will undergo a formal annual progress review. The purpose of progress reviews is to support both student and supervisor(s) by providing an opportunity to reflect and report on progress and achievements over the previous 12 months.
* Progress reviews also provide an opportunity to get constructive feedback and advice, identify problems with the progress of research/training, and implement local steps to resolve such problems.
* A Progress review reporting form will be completed by the student, supervisor and/or independent assessors. The signed form will be presented to the RSGC for review & approval (via the Chair of the RSGC in the School). Following a review by the RGSC, a decision on whether the student progress is considered ‘satisfactory’ or ‘not satisfactory’ will be made. In the case of a ‘not satisfactory’ recommendation, students/supervisors are referred to UCC guidelines on Review Policy for Research Students <https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/studyatucc/postgraduate-gsomedialibrary/3policydocuments/ProgressReviewPolicyforResearchStudents.pdf>
* A log of progress achievements and training activities completed as part of the progress review will be maintained for each student in the School e.g. training courses, completed papers published (etc.)
* Progress review forms must be completed for each postgraduate student at the end of each year (1st, 2nd and 3rd year). Students should indicate which progress milestones (see below) have been achieved in the previous 12 months (with supporting evidence) and also record any PG training modules completed, or any conference/seminars/training events attended during the last year. Progress review forms must be signed by the student and supervisor and will be sent to the sent to the RSGC for review and approval by the Chair of RSGC (as appropriate).
* An annual progress review should ordinarily demonstrate one of the following progression milestones:
  1. Oral viva assessment by two independent academic staff
  2. Publication of a critically reviewed scientific article
  3. Oral presentation at a local, national, or international conference

**Progress Review Milestone 1: Oral viva assessment by two independent academic staff.**

* This assessment should ideally be conducted at the end of Year 1 by two members of academic staff (one of which must be a staff member in the School), nominated by the supervisor.
* The principal objective of the assessment exercise is to give the students experience at preparing a report for critical review and an oral assessment which will help in organizing work in later years, to facilitate efficient completion of the thesis.
* The student must prepare a written report for critical review by two independent academic staff. This is followed by an oral viva assessment of the report and a general discussion between the student and the independent academic staff on progress over the previous 12 months. Typically, the meeting will be held at a time agreed by the staff and student and will run for no longer than 1 hour.
* At the conclusion of the discussion, a written report will be prepared by the examiners highlighting any areas requiring attention and recommendations in relation to progression. Feedback to the student should be given jointly by the examiners, ideally on the same day as the assessment.
* For MSc students wishing to transfer to PhD, this assessment will form the basis of a recommendation to transfer to a PhD.
* Students are required to submit an electronic version of the research report. They may also be requested by the examiners to provide a print copy (please consult with your supervisor) a research report, including an introduction, results and discussion and experimental section (please see detailed guidelines in Appendix 1 below). Students should allow at least one month for the report to be reviewed, Oral viva to be completed and Progress review form to be signed off. Ordinarily this means that the student should submit the report after 11 months of research, so that the oral viva is completed within the 12 month progress reporting period.
* The process of progress reviews is clearly intended to be a constructive and positive experience for the student and should recognise and acknowledge good progress made. However, such reviews may occasionally result in negative conclusions by the assessors, i.e., there are major concerns about the lack of progress.
* Following the assessment, the academic staff will make a recommendation on progression to the RGSC on whether the student progress is considered ‘satisfactory’ or not satisfactory’. In the case of a ‘not satisfactory’ recommendation, students/supervisors are referred to UCC guidelines on Review Policy for Research Students <https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/studyatucc/postgraduate-gsomedialibrary/3policydocuments/ProgressReviewPolicyforResearchStudents.pdf> . Typically, this would involve the students being offered the opportunity to resubmit a revised report and repeat the oral assessment (at the discretion of panel). Following discussion between the student/supervisor, consideration may also be given to applying to change to MSc registration or exiting at this stage.
* While the progress review at the end of Year 1 should normally be the oral viva assessment, in exceptional circumstances the supervisor may deem it appropriate to delay the oral viva assessment to year 2. However in such circumstances the student/supervisor must still submit an annual progress review at the end of year 1, and provide evidence of having completed one of the other progress review milestones (detailed below) within Year 1.

**Progress Milestone 2: Publication of a critically reviewed scientific article.**

* Evidence of this progress milestone should ideally be provided at the end of Year 2. The principal objective of this progress milestone is to demonstrate the student’s ability to publish a research publication that has undergone external critical review.
* Ideally the student should be first, joint first or corresponding author on the article.
* The type of ‘publication’ may include:
  1. A poster presentation that was accepted for presentation at a national/international conference
  2. A review article accepted for publication in a PEER reviewed journal
  3. A research manuscript that has been accepted for publication in a PEER reviewed journal
* To demonstrate the achievement of this progress review milestone, the student should provide details of the publication and ideally a link to an electronic copy of the publication when submitting the Annual progress review from to the RGSC.

**Progress Milestone 3: Oral presentation at a local, national, or international conference**

* This review, which should ideally be conducted at the end of Year 3. The principal objective of this progress milestone is to demonstrate the student’s ability to present their research to a scientific audience.
* To demonstrate the achievement of this progress review milestone, the student should provide evidence of scientific presentation skills e.g. a record of an oral presentation at either a School, College, national or international conference. Ideally a link to an electronic copy of the presentation should be included in the Annual progress review from to the RGSC.

**APPENDIX**

**First Year Written Report Guidelines**

The following are guidelines on the format of the report. The format of the report may differ from subject area to subject area. Students should discuss with their supervisors the most appropriate format. Ideally the report should be between 10-30 pages of text (excluding bibliography and appendices) - and sufficient in detail to outline the progress made to date– this should be sufficient to outline your progress to date.

*Cover Page*

This should contain the project title, course title, date, supervisor name and your name.

*Abstract (approximately 300 words)*

A one-page summary of the project. The abstract should indicate the rationale for the study and outline the main findings to date.

*Acknowledgements*

For any assistance received.

*Introduction*

Provide a brief (1-2 page) introduction to the background to your work indicating the key developments in the field that have preceded your project.

*Aims and Objectives*

Provide a simple outline of the aims and objectives of your work

*Ethical considerations (if relevant)*

This short section should describe ethical issues encountered and how you dealt with them in your particular research piece. (Including details of human clinical ethics permissions or animal ethics/licencing issues).

*Experimental/Methodology*

Provide a very brief overview of the techniques used. Detailed Materials and Methods are not required.

*Results/Discussion*

This section should contain a discussion and interpretation of your results. This should be the main focus of the report where you can indicate progress and discuss results in the context of the literature. Insert figures/graphs outlining your results.

*Conclusion and Future Directions*

Your conclusion should summarise the results and discuss the outcome in the context of the original objectives. You should also use this section to outline future work planned for your thesis.

*Bibliography*

All references used in the thesis must be included in the bibliography.

*Appendices (if relevant)*

**Format of the Report**

Reports must be typed using packages such as Microsoft Word, Excel and ChemDraw. 1.5 line spacing is recommended. Your left margin should be 1.5 inches and your right margin 1 inch. Top and bottom margins should also be one inch. Pages must be numbered. As a *guideline*, the project should be *approximately* 10-30 pages (excluding figures and bibliography).

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