

# HIGHER DEGREE BY RESEARCH GUIDELINES FOR PROGRESS EVALUATION PANEL MEMBERS 2020

Issued by: Director, Graduate Research  
Dated: 15 September 2020, commencing 1 January 2021  
Last amended:  
Signature:  
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## 1 Introduction

- (1) These guidelines provide a framework for the conduct of progress evaluation meetings.
- (2) All progress evaluation panel members should use these guidelines.
- (3) The guidelines should be read in conjunction with:
  - (a) Part 3 of the [Progress Planning and Review for Higher Degree by Research Students Policy 2015](#) (“the policy”); and
  - (b) clause 6 of the [Progress Planning and Review for Higher Degree by Research Students Procedures 2020](#) (“the procedures”).
- (4) The guidelines cover:
  - (a) the progress evaluation meeting (PEM) panel;
  - (b) progress evaluation meeting outline;
  - (c) before the progress evaluation meeting;
  - (d) the progress evaluation meeting;
  - (e) progress evaluation meeting outcomes.

## 2 The progress evaluation meeting (PEM) panel

- (1) The school must appoint two panel members for progress evaluation meetings (PEMs).
  - (a) Ideally, at least one of these panel members should be assigned to a student’s panel for the duration of a student’s candidature, accepting that with staff deployments and workloads this may not be possible.
  - (b) The panel members are expected to be colleagues with sufficient expertise in the general subject area that they will be able to have a meaningful conversation with the student about their progression and research activities in the context of discipline and faculty expectations.

- (2) One of the panel members will be designated 'panel chair' and will have responsibility for:
  - (a) guiding the progress evaluation meeting; and
  - (b) ensuring that the panel's report is uploaded to the Research Education Candidature System (RECS) following the evaluation.

### **3 Progress evaluation meeting outline**

- (1) Progress evaluation meetings must be completed within twelve months of each year of study.
- (2) The progress evaluation meeting should take place on or before the tenth month of each year of the student's studies, regardless of mode of attendance.
  - (a) The meeting should not be scheduled later than month ten in a candidature year in case a second progress evaluation meeting is required.
- (3) All progress evaluation meetings must take the form of a formal meeting between the panel and the student.
  - (a) Meetings may be face-to-face, online or by phone.
- (4) The progress evaluation meeting will be scheduled in RECS unless last minute changes mean that a new venue, time or date are needed.
- (5) Panel members, supervisors and students must familiarise themselves with the relevant [policy](#) and [procedures](#) before:
  - (a) completing the form in RECS; and
  - (b) participating in a progress evaluation meeting.

### **4 Before the progress evaluation meeting**

- (1) Both panel members should familiarise themselves with the required faculty and University milestones for each stage of the candidature.
  - (a) These are maintained in RECS.
  - (b) Current versions are available at [Research Progress](#) section of the University website for current HDR students.
- (2) The progress evaluation meeting process begins when the student submits a report through RECS.
- (3) Supervisors will also be prompted to submit their own report on the student's progress.
- (4) RECS will automatically notify panel members when both reports are available.
  - (a) Panel members can access the reports in RECS.
- (5) If any panel member:
  - (a) has difficulty accessing the report in RECS; or
  - (b) has not received the notification by two days prior to the meeting;they should contact the [HDR Administration Centre](#) as soon as possible.

- (6) The panel members are expected to have:
  - (a) read the full submission;
  - (b) if necessary, met prior to the meeting to discuss points of concern; and
  - (c) agreed their approach.
- (7) The panel members will have access to any previous PEM reports.

**Note:** For students who commenced before 2021, Annual Progress Review (APR) reports are available on request.

## 5 The progress evaluation meeting

- (1) The progress evaluation meeting is intended to:
  - (a) be a thorough assessment of the student's work and progress towards an examinable thesis, based on:
    - (i) the student's understanding of research activities done and how these relate to the over-arching thesis question; and
    - (ii) the student's understanding of their research plan and how this may be achieved;and
  - (b) enable the student to benefit from the advice of two knowledgeable members of academic staff.
- (2) Members of the student's supervisory team may be invited to attend for part of the meeting but must leave during the main discussion with the student.
  - (a) The progress evaluation meeting panel may invite one or more of the student's supervisors to attend discussions without the student.
- (3) The progress evaluation meeting is expected to be a rigorous and constructive evaluation of the student's progression against milestones and goals, leading to timely submission of a high-quality thesis.
- (4) Importantly, the progress evaluation meeting is an opportunity to discern if the student is receiving sufficient support and guidance to enable success.

**Note:** See [Higher Degree by Research Supervision Policy 2020](#)
- (5) The progress evaluation meeting is not:
  - (a) an examination of research hypotheses, approaches or philosophy; or
  - (b) an opportunity to conduct an alternative supervision exercise; or
  - (c) an examination of supervision.
- (6) The panel should attempt to:
  - (a) discern the quality of the student's work as measured by the achievement of research goals;
  - (b) understand the student's perception of the successes and challenges of candidature; and
  - (c) consider this perception against the reality of goals achieved and milestones met.

- (7) The panel is also expected to
- (a) consider whether the student currently has sufficient resources and or training to complete the project as proposed; and
  - (b) make recommendations accordingly.
- Note:** See Schedule 1: [Higher Degree by Research Supervision Policy 2020](#)
- (8) It is important to confirm with all present that the student may speak freely about successes and challenges.
- (a) This may include criticism of their supervision, research context or working environment.
  - (b) Information collected in progress evaluation meetings must only be used for the purpose of addressing or investigating any issues raised by the student and not shared with any other person for any other reason.
    - (i) The panel must assure the student that information provided in confidence will be protected and only used where necessary to resolve issues identified by them.
  - (c) The panel is not obliged to document every comment from a student and may exercise discretion in recording information that the student discloses in confidence.
  - (d) The student must also be informed that the panel is required to act on information that indicates possible breaches of:
    - (i) University policies, including codes of conduct;
    - (ii) regulatory requirements; or
    - (iii) legislative requirements.
- (9) The progress evaluation panel is not expected to provide pastoral care for students, unless a member of the panel holds a professional registration under which they have additional obligations.
- (a) Panel members should be prepared to refer students in need of extra assistance to the appropriate support services.
- Note:** See [Student Support Services](#) for a list of available services. Students can seek professional advice through the [University Health Service](#), [Disability Support Services](#), [Counselling and Psychological Services](#), [Mana Yura](#), and [SUPRA](#).
- (10) If, in the opinion of the panel, the success of the student would be enhanced by a variation in candidature, the panel should refer the student to the lead supervisor and or postgraduate coordinator to discuss suitable options.
- (a) This recommendation may be noted in the progress evaluation meeting report.

## 6 Progress evaluation meeting outcomes

- (1) The panel are asked to assess whether, based on the evidence, the student has made sufficient progress to assure them that they are on course to produce a thesis of the required standard for their degree, within their enrolment period.
  - (a) Quality and timeframe should each be considered
- (2) In considering their recommendation the panel must consider compliance with student responsibilities as set out in the relevant policies and procedures.

**Note:** All University policies are available on the [University Policy Register](#).

- (3) At the end of the progress evaluation meeting, the panel may discuss their decision and rationale for that decision with the student.
- (4) There are three possible outcomes. The student is rated as having:
  - (a) made satisfactory or excellent progress;
  - (b) made marginal progress; or
  - (c) made unsatisfactory progress.

**Note:** See clauses 17 – 19 of the [Progress Planning and Review of Higher Degrees by Research Students Policy 2015](#)

- (5) In the event of a recommendation other than the student having made satisfactory or excellent progress, the panel must make a recommendation to the Associate Dean (Research Education) about further action that should be considered.
  - (a) Panel members may also refer a progress evaluation meeting report to the Associate Dean (Research Education) if they wish to:
    - (i) note outstanding success; or
    - (ii) record concerns about progress that do not warrant a rating of marginal or unsatisfactory progress.

**Note:** See the [Progress Planning and Review of Higher Degrees by Research Students Policy 2015](#) and the [Progress Planning and Review of Higher Degrees by Research Students Procedures 2020](#)

## NOTES

### Higher Degree by Research Guidelines for Progress Evaluation Meeting Panel Members 2020

Date adopted: 15 September 2020  
Date commenced: 1 January 2021  
Administrator: Director, Graduate Research  
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Rescinded documents:  
Related documents:

*Progress Planning and Review of Higher Degree by Research Students Policy 2015*

*Progress Planning and Review of Higher Degree by Research Students Procedures 2020*

*Higher Degree by Research Supervision Policy 2020*

## AMENDMENT HISTORY

**Provision**    **Amendment**

**Commencing**