POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH HANDBOOK

Chapter 7 – Annual monitoring review: code of good practice

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1. The Purpose and Aims of the Annual Monitoring Review

1.1. All Faculties should have procedures in place to monitor the progress of their research students. On an annual basis the Postgraduate Research Board will ask Faculties to review the monitoring processes they have used over the past year through the TQA QRE Framework, Chapter 3: Quality Review and Enhancement for Postgraduate Research Programmes process.

1.2. The Annual Monitoring Review is primarily a mechanism to allow students and supervisors to voice concern with the student's progress, and for assuring Faculties with regard to the satisfactory progress of individual students. Whilst the aim of the TQA QRE Framework, Chapter 3: Quality Review and Enhancement for Postgraduate Research Programmes process, is for the Faculty and University collectively to provide a secure mechanism with which to assure themselves of the continuing quality and relevance of research degree provision as a whole.

1.3. This procedure does not obviate the need for ongoing monitoring of student progression, e.g. reviewing their progress through MyPGR at other points in the year.

1.4. Students and supervisors should not delay addressing any concerns which might arise about progress until annual monitoring takes place but should address these issues when they arise through the TQA LTS Handbook, Chapter 15: Code of Good Practice –

Unsatisfactory Student Progress, Engagement and Attendance, with the aim of being able to report a satisfactory resolution to any problems through annual monitoring.

1.5.   On an annual basis Faculties should have a formal mechanism in place which aims to assess student progress in order to give feedback to the student, and where problems are identified to ensure that actions are taken to address this through the TQA LTS Handbook, Chapter 15: Code of Good Practice - Unsatisfactory Student Progress, Engagement and Attendance.

2. Procedures

2.1.   On an annual basis Faculties should have a formal mechanism in place which aims to assess student progress in order to give feedback to the student, and where problems are identified to ensure that actions are taken to address this through the TQA LTS Handbook, Chapter 15: Code of Good Practice - Unsatisfactory Student Progress, Engagement and Attendance.

2.2.   Student and Supervisor Reports

2.2.1. A student form that is to be completed by the student independently of the supervisors, allowing the student to comment on the nature of his/her supervision and progress. Faculties should ensure that the information that the student provides in confidence with regard to their supervision be respected with regard to the choice of staff who consider individual student forms.

2.2.2. A supervisor form that is completed separately by each supervisor, if appropriate, in which any problems are identified. Recommendations for further action to be taken should be stated explicitly.

3. Faculty Review of Progression

3.1.   A panel of academic staff, normally chaired by the Faculty Director of PGR should consider the annual monitoring reports.

3.2.   The responsibility of chairing the panel may be delegated to the Department Director of Postgraduate Studies if this process is carried out separately in each department. To maintain confidentiality the panel must be managed in such a way that supervisors are not in receipt of the forms of their own students other than as part of an anonymous overview of responses, in order to review performance more generally.

3.3.   The annual monitoring panel will consider the reports and make decisions in line with the following approved guidelines:

3.3.1. To confirm that appropriate progress of each student is taking place, and that they remain on schedule tin accordance with the specified period of study for their programme.

3.3.2. To ensure that further action is taken, where appropriate, including the issuing of warnings as set out in TQA LTS Handbook, Chapter 15: Code of Good Practice – Unsatisfactory Student Progress, Engagement and Attendance, and the continuation or extension of registration.

3.3.3. To ensure reasonable parity of treatment for students across the Faculty.

3.3.4. To ensure that an appropriate record from supervisors is on file (on MyPGR) and available for subsequent consultation.

3.3.5. In addition, minutes will be taken of the meeting of the panel, which shall include a clear record of decisions made, which should be retained by the Faculty.

4. Further Action

4.1.   The process should focus on ensuring any concerns which have been raised about the progress of a student or the support they have received whether through the annual monitoring forms or through any other means (a student's MyPGR record should also be appraised for indication of any problems) are acted upon.

4.2.   This would normally mean that the annual monitoring review panel interview the student in question, or ask for more information from the student or the supervisor to satisfy themselves that any issues with the student's progression have been addressed.

4.3.   Where the forms identify issues for actions, the panel must ensure that a clear action plan is produced as an outcome of the process, identifying necessary actions, and a lead to ensure that the actions take place with outcomes fed back to the student and supervisor as appropriate, and that a clear record is kept of this. Where the issues that have arisen concern a lack of satisfactory academic progress on the part of the student, the panel should initiate the appropriate step in the TQA LTS Handbook, Chapter 15: Code of Good Practice - Unsatisfactory Student Progress, Engagement and Attendance.

4.4.   Faculties should ensure that students are alerted to the complaints procedure should they have any issues they wish to raise formally.

4.5.   A named member of staff within each Faculty should be designated with responsibility for ensuring that:

4.5.1. The annual monitoring process is completed in a timely fashion to allow feed-in to the TQA QRE Framework, Chapter 3: Quality Review and Enhancement for Postgraduate Research Programmes process.

4.5.2. Decisions on progress are communicated to students and supervisors and recorded in SITS.

4.5.3. Issues of concern, including referrals to the TQA LTS Handbook, Chapter 15: Code of Good Practice - Unsatisfactory Student Progress, Engagement and Attendance process, take place and are communicated appropriately.

4.6.   The exact procedures by which Faculties seek to monitor the progress of their research students are left to the discretion of the Faculties. Faculties are at liberty to design processes that best fit the needs of their discipline(s), as long as they meet the requirements of this Code of Good Practice. When designing appropriate procedures,

it should be borne in mind that the process itself should be instructive and useful for student and supervisor alike.

5. Completion of the Process

5.1.   This process feeds into the TQA QRE Framework, Chapter 3: Quality Review and Enhancement for Postgraduate Research Programmes process, through which Faculties shall evaluate the effectiveness of their procedures.