

GRADUATE RESEARCH CENTRE

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – PROGRESS REPORTS

1. WHY DO I NEED TO COMPLETE A PROGRESS REPORT?

The Progress Report is designed to provide a structure for planning and reflection on your progress. It gives you and your supervisor(s) an opportunity to review and plan your work and should assist you in tracking your progress against your agreed schedule.

A second, very important function of the Progress Report is to give you an opportunity to document any issues or problems you are having with your research so that your supervisor(s) and the University are alerted to and can take action on these. This is especially important if you have a scholarship, and there are circumstances beyond your control impacting on your progress (e.g. an equipment failure). In the event that you need to apply for an extension to candidature at a later date, the Progress Report will be invaluable as it will provide you with documented evidence of problems at the time they occurred.

2. WHAT IF I DO NOT COMPLETE AND SUBMIT A PROGRESS REPORT?

As submitting a Progress Report is a University requirement, failure to comply will mean that your standing as a candidate will be reviewed. If progress is unsatisfactory, your candidature may be discontinued.

3. ARE THERE ANY EXEMPTIONS FROM SUBMISSION OF A PROGRESS REPORT?

You are not required to submit a progress report, if you:

- have submitted your thesis for examination;
- have a lapsed enrolment status;
- are in the coursework phase of a professional doctorate.

You may be eligible for an exemption if:

- you are on a period of approved intermission;
- there are extenuating circumstances which may hinder submission of the progress report.

The Graduate Research Centre will review your request for an exemption and inform you of the outcome.

4. WHAT IF MY PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR IS UNAVAILABLE TO COMPLETE THE REPORT?

If your Principal Supervisor is unavailable for a substantial period of time, you should have completed a "Change in Supervision" form to appoint someone to act in this capacity until your Principal Supervisor returns. If you encounter any problems with the completion of your Progress Report, please contact the Graduate Research Centre immediately.

NB: Please note that external supervisors are unable to access online progress reports. You and your principal supervisor may, therefore, wish to liaise with the external supervisor with regard to the content of your Progress Report.

5. WHAT IF I WANT TO SAY SOMETHING IN MY PROGRESS REPORT WHICH MY PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR MAY NOT LIKE?

Students are sometimes wary of making negative statements about how their work is progressing, or about their Supervisors, or College. This is understandable, as your Supervisor and College will see the Progress Report. Nonetheless, if there is something you are concerned about, you should take action. There are several options available to you. You could contact your Associate Supervisor, the College Director, Research and Research Training or the Dean, Graduate Research. Please contact the Graduate Research Centre, if further advice is required.

6. WHAT IF THE PRE-POPULATED DETAILS IN MY PROGRESS REPORT ARE INCORRECT?

If the pre-populated information contained in the Progress Report is incorrect, please indicate the correct information in your submitted report. These amendments will be considered when your Progress Report is reviewed by the Graduate Research Centre. If further information is required regarding your amendments, you will be contacted.

If the supervision details listed in the Progress Report are incorrect, you should contact the Graduate Research Centre immediately. Do not proceed with completing the report until this information has been updated.

7. WHO VIEWS MY PROGRESS REPORT ONCE IT HAS BEEN FORMALLY SUBMITTED?

The Graduate Research Centre and College Directors, Research and Research Training or their delegates review Progress Reports for their respective Colleges. Common themes for discussion/improvement will be identified and discussed at the end of year Student Forum.

8. WHAT IS STANDARD AND MAXIMUM DURATION FOR MY RESEARCH DEGREE?

Doctoral Candidates

- 36 months standard duration equivalent full time (EFT);
- You may apply for two, six month extensions (EFT);
- Maximum duration is 48 months (EFT).

Masters By Research Candidates

- 24 months standard duration equivalent full time (EFT);
- Standard duration also equals maximum duration, i.e. 24 months (EFT);
- No extensions possible.

9. WHEN SHOULD I APPLY FOR AN EXTENSION TO CANDIDATURE OR AN APPROVED LATE SUBMISSION DATE?

You are able to apply for an extension to candidature or an approved late submission date through your progress report.

The first step is to determine whether you are eligible to apply for an extension to candidature. If you are unable to submit your thesis for examination prior to your current expected completion date, you will need to apply for an extension to candidature in line with the instructions in the online form. If you are at maximum duration for your degree, you will need to apply for approval of a late submission date.

Please ensure that you provide the following in your submission:

- A letter explaining in detail the specific circumstances leading to this request for an extension or approval of a late submission date;
- Supporting documentation, if relevant. Medical certificates may be attached where appropriate;
- A revised timeline to thesis completion in the form of a Gantt chart.

Applications without a revised timeline will **not** be considered.

Please note: International students applying to extend their candidature or for approval of a late submission date may also be required to extend their electronic Confirmation of Enrolment using the "Request for an Electronic Confirmation of Enrolment" form. For further information, please contact VUI Compliance (vucompliance@vu.edu.au)

If you require further assistance or additional information regarding your current expected completion date, please contact the Graduate Research Centre. Scholarship enquiries may be directed to the Senior Coordinator, Admissions and Scholarships. (researchscholarships@vu.edu.au).

10. WHAT TRAINING AND PROCEDURES SHOULD I FOLLOW WHILE CONDUCTING MY RESEARCH?

Occupational Health and Safety

Graduate researchers with their supervisors are responsible for ensuring that research is being conducted in a safe environment and in accord with government health and safety legislation and procedures. Occupational health and safety includes ergonomics, working safely with hazardous materials (e.g. blood, chemicals), plant and machinery, electrical and other equipment, working at height, alone or in the field.

Please confirm that you have identified hazards and risks associated with the conduct of your research, and have participated in required induction and ongoing training for laboratories and all equipment that you are using. Also, please comment on any concerns you have about health and safety in your research and/or identify additional training and support needs you have to support you with the safe conduct of your research. Further information is available on the Graduate Research Centre website: <http://www.vu.edu.au/research/research-students/managing-your-candidature> and on the OH&S intranet site: <http://intranet.vu.edu.au/hr/OHS/Default.asp>

Human Research Ethics

Victoria University requires researchers to obtain clearance for any research in which humans are involved. Ethics approval must be granted by the VU Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) before the research can proceed.

Please indicate whether your research project involves humans. You should also comment on the current status of ethics approval for your project (e.g. application 1) under preparation, 2) submitted and under consideration by the committee, 3) approval granted, 4) approval granted and data collection currently taking place, 5) approval granted and data collection completed), and on any issues being experienced with data collection and/or identify training/skill development needs associated with the ethical conduct of the research. Further information is available at the following link: <http://www.vu.edu.au/research/ethical-conduct-biosafety/human-research-ethics>.

Animal Research Ethics

Any person at Victoria University who wishes to use animals in research must first obtain approval from the VU Animal Ethics Committee (AEC). Please indicate whether your research project involves animals. You should also comment on the current status of ethics approval for your project (e.g. application 1) under preparation, 2) submitted and under consideration by the committee, 3) approval granted, 4) approval granted and research currently taking place, 5) approval granted and research with animals completed), and on any issues being experienced with the research with animals and/or identify training/skill development needs associated with the ethical conduct of the research. Further information is available at the following link: <http://www.vu.edu.au/research/ethical-conduct-biosafety/animal-ethics>.

Institutional Biosafety

All research conducted by Victoria University staff and students involving genetic manipulation experimentation requires clearance from the VU Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC). Please indicate if your research project involves such experimentation, and, if it does, indicate the status of your clearance and comment on any issues being experienced with the safe conduct of the research and/or identify training/skill development needs associated with the safe conduct of the research. Further information is available at the following link: <http://www.vu.edu.au/research/ethical-conduct-biosafety/biosafety>.

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