

# SCHOOL OF LIFE SCIENCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

## Department of Biological Sciences:

### Annual Review Information:

#### Timeline of review meetings:

Students in the Department of Biological Sciences will have their first review meeting at around

- **4 months** of full-time study (8 months for part-time students)
- **9 months** review of full-time study.

Subsequent reviews then take place each 12 months from this date,

- **21 months**
- **33 months**
- **A review meeting will also take place during the writing-up year** (Year 4 if full time, years 7-8 for part time students) with the supervisory team if a student has not submitted by this point.

#### Additional assessments (see relevant sections for more details):

- **MPhil to PhD update review** (can take place at the 9 months or 21 months review meeting (at the very latest). More information to be found at [Upgrade process - Royal Holloway Doctoral School](#)).
- **Pre-submission interview meeting** should take place **6 to 3 months before the submission deadline**.

The aim of these regular annual reviews is to ensure stable progress towards the successful and timely completion of your research project and the PhD programme.

#### Composition of the Annual Review Panel:

- For the 4 months meeting: Your supervisory team, consisting of at least two people (At least one supervisor, and your pastoral advisor).
- **For any other annual reviews and MPhil to PhD transfer meeting**, your annual review panel **MUST** consist of **at least one** member of your supervisory team, **as well as** an independent member of staff from the Department/School.
- **Pre-submission interview meeting**, to be conducted departmental post-graduate lead or co-lead.

#### Annual Review Documentation:

As part of the Annual Review Process, you are expected to submit a written report showing your progress to date. The exact structure and format of this report should be discussed with your supervisor. The information provided below is a rough indication of what will be expected for each progression review meeting. In addition to the written report, you will be required to submit the following documents **at least two weeks prior** to your meeting taking place:

- [PGR Student Training Log](#)
- [Supervisory Meetings Log](#)

- [Ethics Self-Assessment form](#) (If Required)

More information can be found here: [Annual review process - Royal Holloway Doctoral School](#)

Please note that the Department of Biological Sciences does not require confirmation of the completion of the Postgraduate Research Experience survey to be provided as part of a progression meeting.

#### The 4 Month Review:

As part of the four-month review, you are required to submit a short report of about 10 pages the report should include the following:

- The Project Title
- The aims and specific objectives of your project
- A focussed introduction supported by reference to relevant literature.
- The methods you intend to use and why.
- A thorough presentation and discussion of any early results.
- A brief discussion of how the work will proceed, with a particular emphasis on experimental priorities, including a plausible timing (such as a Gantt Chart)

In addition to this, the structure and layout of the report should follow the below instructions:

- Reports should be word processed and presented in a formal scientific style, as in scientific papers.
- A complete and systemic citation of the bibliography should be provided.
- Data should be presented either in tables or in graphical form, in such a way that important aspects and outcomes being discussed in the associated text are clearly displayed. Appropriate statistical analyses should be carried out to support the outcome discussed.
- Each table and figure should be numbered, have a clear title, and be fully labelled.
- Provide page numbers, number sections and sub-sections, and provide a contents page. A brief review form will be completed to record the outcome.

A copy of the 4 month review form is available on [Moodle](#). The report, along with the Training and Supervisory meeting logs\* should be sent to the [Doctoral School](#) for processing.

*\*Please use and submit original doc/docx versions of the above documents, do not convert to pdf.*

#### 9 Month Review:

Your 9 month review report is expected to contain:

- A more substantial literature review than was provided for the four month review.
- A more substantial or detailed methodology section
- Typically one complete draft of a results chapter. Key hypotheses should be clearly stated and be well argued.
- The reported results, and their significance should be evaluated in the discussion section. Their novelty, similarity or contrasting outcomes should be compared to published works.
- A detailed plan of the work to be undertaken in the next 6 to 12 months should also be provided, accompanied by a Gantt chart.

A copy of the [annual review](#) form is available on the [Doctoral School microsite](#). The report, along with the Training and Supervisory meeting logs\* should be sent to the [Doctoral School](#) for processing.

During the first year of your studies, you should also provide proof that you have completed the 'Avoiding Plagiarism' course in Moodle ([moodle.royalholloway.ac.uk](https://moodle.royalholloway.ac.uk)).

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### 21 Month Review:

Your 21 month review report ought to contain:

- An updated literature review, covering topics relevant to the research area.
- Typically two completed results chapters,
- A detailed interpretation and an insightful discussion
- A thesis outline, including the plan for the future results chapters. Feasibility of the remaining research work should be address and alternative scenarios considered to allow for contingencies in case of issues.
- A clear work plan outlining the remaining research work to be undertaken to complete the thesis in the third year of your registration (pro-rata for part-time students). This will assist your supervisory team in estimating experimental feasibility with the time remaining.

A copy of the [annual review](#) form is available on the [Doctoral School microsite](#). The report, along with the Training and Supervisory meeting logs\* should be sent to the [Doctoral School](#) for processing.

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### 33 Month Review:

By the time of your 33 month review, the majority of research should be completed or very near completion. The review report should therefore contain a substantial part of the thesis draft including the bulk of the results chapters, and an outline of any remaining chapters.

A copy of the [annual review form](#) is available on the [Doctoral School microsite](#). The report, along with the Training and Supervisory meeting logs\* should be sent to the [Doctoral School](#) for processing.

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### **Annual Review Outcomes:**

After your meeting has taken place, there are three possible outcomes that the Annual Review Panel can choose from. These are:

- Good progress
- Satisfactory progress, save for minor concerns in one or more areas
- Unsatisfactory progress

If you receive an outcome of 'Unsatisfactory progress', you will be required to undertake a further review within a few months of the original meeting. The deadline for this referral meeting will be clearly stated on the Annual Review form and confirmed by the Doctoral School when the form is processed. In certain cases, the department/School may consider whether to issue a formal warning.

### **Additional assessments:**

- **MPhil to PhD upgrade review** (can take place during one of the annual review meeting, but at the very latest at 20 months after start of the PhD, and if required a second attempt, this should take place before 24 months. More information to be found at [Upgrade process - Royal Holloway Doctoral School](#), and the [form](#). More details in relevant section.
- **Pre-submission interview meeting** should take place **6 to 3 months before the submission deadline**. Now, all students not having submitted their thesis by 3.5 years for full-time students) and 7 years (for part-time students) will have to attend a pre-submission interview. You will have to complete the [form](#) ahead of the meeting.