

# PhD Student Progress Reporting Policy

The PhD student progress reporting policy of the graduate program in Computer Science and Engineering conforms to the following FGS regulation:

“Once established, a dissertation supervisory committee shall meet annually with the student, normally in the spring, to evaluate the Report on Progress submitted by the student and submit a completed copy of the Report on Progress to the graduate program director after the meeting. Reports to the graduate program director of unsatisfactory progress may require a student to withdraw from a program of studies, or withdraw from the graduate program in which the student is enrolled.”

Source: <http://gradstudies.yorku.ca/current-students/thesis-dissertation/supervision/#section1db>

## 1. PhD Student Progress Checkpoints

**Table 1: Progress checkpoints**

Checkpoints	Annual meeting with the SC	Expected completion	Mandatory completion
Breadth statement	Not required	Before admittance	Before admittance
Supervisor selection	Not required	Before admittance	2 terms (Y1T2)
Supervisory committee selection	Not required	2 term (Y1T2)	3 terms (Y1T3)
Course requirement	<b>Yes</b>	3 term (Y1T3)	3 terms (Y1T3)
Qualifying examination	<b>Yes</b>	4 terms (Y2T1)	5 terms (Y2T2)
Thesis proposal	<b>Yes</b>	7 terms (Y3T1)	8 terms (Y3T2)
Teaching Practicum / Industry Internship	Not required	9-12 terms	N/A
Thesis completion plan	<b>Yes</b>	10 terms (Y4T1)	11 terms (Y4T2)
Thesis defense	<b>Yes</b>	12 terms (Y4T3)	15 terms (Y5T3)

*Note:* Y3T2 indicates “3<sup>rd</sup> year” and “2<sup>nd</sup> term”. In this case, the annual meeting with the supervisory committee (SC) must be held and the annual progress report must be submitted to the graduate office before April 30 (i.e., before the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> term of year 3).

Students starting in September 2014 or later will follow the new progress reporting policy described in this document.

Students starting in May 2014 or earlier may choose either the old progress timeline or the new timeline. If a student chooses the old progress timeline, he/she still has to meet with the supervisory committee at least once a year, and must meet the “acceptable deadlines”.

Although FGS regulations suggest that meetings with supervisory committees are held “normally in the spring”, meetings may be held any time during the year to meet the mandatory completion checkpoints.

A student is still required to submit a progress report every term (by April 15, August 15 or December 15), except for the terms in which annual progress meetings are held and annual progress reports are submitted in place of term reports.

## 2. Annual Progress Meetings

Students are responsible for keeping track of the timeline of their checkpoints and for scheduling annual meetings with SCs (as indicated in Table 1) in consultation with supervisors. At the beginning of every term, the graduate program assistant sends out an email to all PhD students, reminding them to schedule meetings as required.

The student completes the first part of the annual progress report, and submits it along with other required documents (e.g., publications, qualifying exam report, or thesis proposal) to the SC at least two (2) weeks before the annual meeting with the committee. In a term when the thesis defense is held, the annual progress report is not required. The thesis must be delivered to the thesis examination committee in accordance with FGS regulations.

After the meeting, the SC completes the second part of the annual progress report and gives it to the student. The student reviews the report and may reply to the SC’s comments. The student then signs the second part of the report and returns it to the SC. After reviewing the student’s comments (if any), the SC delivers the complete report to the graduate office. The complete report, dated and signed by all parties, must be submitted to the graduate office within one week after the meeting date.

### Outcomes of annual progress meetings

Upon completion of an annual meeting, the SC will determine the progress is either “satisfactory”, or “satisfactory, with conditions”, or “unsatisfactory”.

- **Satisfactory:** The student meets all or most requirements of the current checkpoint and may proceed to the next checkpoint. The SC may provide additional feedback to the student (e.g., better working habits, additional reading, more publications, etc.)
- **Satisfactory, with conditions:** The student meets some requirements of the current checkpoint and is required to take specified remedial actions (e.g., additional reading, courses, background study, analyses, experimental results, etc.). The SC should indicate specific remedial actions and results they expect to see from these actions. The SC will meet with the student within the following six (6) months to determine if the student meets the specified conditions. This follow-up meeting should follow the same procedure as a regular annual meeting. The outcome of the follow-up meeting will be one of the above three choices. *Note:* After a successful follow-up meeting, the student must still meet the next checkpoint as specified in Table 1. That is, a follow-up meeting does not automatically extend the completion time of the next checkpoint (see also Note (a) below).
- **Unsatisfactory:** The student meets no or few requirements of the current checkpoint.

If the outcome of a meeting is “unsatisfactory”, possible recommendations include the following:

- In exceptional circumstances, the SC may determine that the student’s progress is unsatisfactory, but may recommend a 6-month extension (as in the case of “satisfactory, with conditions”). The graduate program director (GPD) may grant the student a 6-month extension based on the recommendation. The SC should indicate specific remedial actions and results they expect to see from these actions. The SC will meet with the student within the following six (6) months to determine if the student meets the specified conditions. A follow-up meeting does not automatically extend the completion time of the next checkpoint.
- The SC may advise the student to take a leave of absence to have more time to catch up. In this case, the next checkpoint will be extended according to the duration of the leave. (Students on leave are not eligible to TA but may still be funded by supervisors as research assistants if supervisors are willing to fund them.)
- In very serious cases, the SC may recommend to the GPD that the student withdraw from the program. The GPD may consult with the graduate executive committee and/or the graduate Computer Engineering committee before taking this action. (The student may petition to be re-instated at a later date with proof of significant progress. Upon consultation with the SC, the GPD may approve the petition. In this case, the next checkpoint will be extended according to the duration of the leave.)

*Notes:*

(a) Right after a follow-up meeting, the student has 6 months until the next checkpoint. He/she may not be able to meet all/most requirements of the next checkpoint, and may require another follow-up meeting. This would have a cascading effect on all the subsequent checkpoints, and effectively require the student to meet with the SC every 6 months instead of once a year. To avoid this problem, the SC may ask the GPD to give the student a one-term extension for all subsequent checkpoints to give the student more time to catch up. (The extension is only one term long and not 6 months due to deadlines for funding allocation and RA/TA contracts.)

(b) If a student fails to schedule a meeting (and thus will miss the checkpoint), or fails to submit the required document(s) to the SC (e.g., qualifying exam report or thesis proposal), this is considered as “unsatisfactory” performance.

## **5. Checkpoint Requirements**

### **First annual meeting (course requirement)**

By the meeting date, the student will have

- completed all required courses
- selected or been assigned a supervisor. (If the student does not have a supervisor, the first year meeting will be with the GPD.)
- formed a supervisory committee

If the recommendation is “satisfactory, with conditions” due to the course requirement not met or the SC not formed yet, a follow-up meeting is not required. The student simply submits proofs of course grades, or a supervisor/SC selection form to the graduate office by the next checkpoint.

### **Second annual meeting (qualifying examination)**

The student submits a qualifying examination report and takes an oral examination (as currently done).

If the research will involve human participants, it is recommended that students submit a TD2 form to FGS before carrying out the research.

### **Third annual meeting (thesis proposal)**

The student submits a thesis proposal and gives an oral presentation of the proposal. The oral presentation is conducted in a similar manner to a qualifying examination.

If the research will involve human participants, students are required to submit a TD4 form to FGS as currently done.

### **Fourth annual meeting (thesis completion plan)**

The student will have completed a large part of his/her research and be able to defend the thesis within the following 4 terms.

In addition to the progress evaluation, the SC should comment as to whether the student will be able to defend the thesis within the following 4 terms.

### **Thesis defense or fifth annual meeting**

The student defends the thesis. The annual meeting is replaced by the defense.

If the student is not ready to defend the thesis, an annual meeting is held instead. The student must present a plan for completing and defending the thesis within the following 6 months, extending the thesis completion time to 5.5 years.