

# SCHOOL OF LIFE SCIENCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

## Department of Earth Sciences:

### Annual Review Information:

#### Timeline:

All students in the Department of Earth Sciences are required to undertake their first Annual Review by the end of their ninth month of study.

Full-time students are then expected to have their first attempt at upgrade (normally combined with second year Annual Review) within 20 months of registering on the course. Further information about the Upgrade Process in the Department of Earth Sciences can be found [here](#).

For full-time students who successfully upgrade, the next Annual Review will be due by the end of the 33<sup>rd</sup> month of study. Those students who have not submitted by 3 years and 6 months of their registration will be required to attend a Pre-Submission Interview with their Department PGR Lead. Further information about this meeting is provided below.

For part-time students, the first annual review must take place by the end of the ninth-month of study, however once this is complete, further annual reviews ought to take place once every 12 months from this first review until the first attempt at upgrade after 40 months of registration. Once the upgrade is complete, you are expected to complete further annual reviews until your pre-submission interview six months prior to your final submission deadline.

#### Notification of Deadline and Submitting Documents:

You will be notified **approximately 8 weeks** before your deadline, informing you that you are due to undertake an annual review. It is expected that you will liaise with your supervisory team to arrange the meeting at a time that suits all involved. If you know that your supervisor or advisor are often away (e.g. field work) please try to arrange your meeting well in advance, you do not need to wait for this reminder email.

**Two weeks before your meeting** is due to take place, you will need to send a copy of all the relevant documents to your supervisory panel, with the [Doctoral School](#) and the Earth Sciences Postgraduate Research Student lead copied in. This should include a copy of the [annual review form](#) with parts 1-6 already completed.

On the day that the meeting takes place – one of the members of the panel (typically your supervisor) should ensure that the remaining parts of the annual review form are completed, signed by all parties, and then submitted with the supporting documents to the Earth Sciences Postgraduate Research Student Lead who will check it, offer further feedback (if appropriate) and forward it to [Doctoral School](#) for processing.

## Composition of the Annual Review Panel:

In order to be considered properly constituted, 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. We most strongly recommend that if you have two or more RHUL supervisors then all should be part of the panel. We recommend that your advisor should also attend.

## Annual Review Documentation:

### Year 1 Annual Review:

The purpose of the first annual review is to provide the student with feedback on oral presentation and written work from all committee members, to discuss future directions for the project, plans for publication, conferences, field and lab work etc. The meeting will also review training progress, determine if the student should continue on the MPhil to PhD programme and set targets for upgrade to PhD where applicable. The meeting also provides the student with an opportunity to raise any issues they have been experiencing.

In order to demonstrate 'good progress' at your first Annual Review, you will be expected to produce a satisfactory oral presentation as well as written work that:

- Documents and shows understanding of the context and underlying justification for the project (this is typically based on literature review).
- Clearly states the aims and objectives of the project.
- Describes, interprets and discusses initial results.
- Demonstrates a clear, well-justified plan for future work for the next year with basic timetable.
- The written work should be presented at the standard required in a draft thesis chapter – with logical order, appropriate headings and sub-headings in ranks and with images/diagrams designed to fit an A4 thesis page allowing for margins as required in the regulations.

The oral presentation ought to:

- Take around 15 minutes.
- Include a background to the project, along with its aims, hypotheses to be tested and materials and methods to be used. Some initial results or an in-depth critical comment on selected literature should also be included.

The specific requirements for written work should be discussed with the supervisor. The minimum written documentation to be provided at the first-year review is:

- Written work specific to your project as required by supervisor.
- A bullet pointed list of major achievements and future plans for the next year, including a timetable.
- A record of major meetings with supervisor, with dates and key agreed actions. A template for the [Supervisory Meeting Log](#) is available on the [Annual Review](#) Page; however you may use your own format if this would be beneficial.
- An up-to-date [training log record](#). (A template is available on the [Annual Review](#) Page)

In addition, you should complete your parts of the [Annual Review](#) form and send that to your panel alongside the other documents listed above. As part of the review meeting, you should agree with the panel what the requirements are for the written work to be submitted for the Upgrade meeting.

Once the meeting has been completed, the signed Annual Review Form should be sent to the Department Postgraduate Research Student Lead who will check it, approve it, and then send it to the Doctoral School for processing.

### Year 2 annual review

In Earth Sciences this is normally combined with the upgrade meeting. Please see link for [details](#).

### Year 3 Annual Review:

The purpose of this meeting is to review the progress and discuss a timetable to submission. Key points to be discussed in this meeting include (but are not limited to):

- Is the thesis plan achievable in the time remaining or is it too ambitious?
- If the latter, what content is essential and what could be changed/removed.
- If new data is required, is that essential and can it be obtained in the remaining time frame?
- Are there clear plans (headings and subheadings) for the discussion chapter?
- Is the thesis organisation optimal and logical for the examiners?
- Are more illustrations or improved text explanations / figure captions likely to be needed?
- Do the thesis plan and draft chapters' text and figures follow the required format for submission?

It is expected that drafts of some chapters of the thesis will already have been given to supervisors for feedback and will at least be in their second draft when seen at this meeting.

An oral presentation should be made at the start of the meeting if requested by supervisors or if the student wishes to do so.

You are expected to provide a complete thesis plan with chapter headings, sub-headings and draft thesis chapters. This thesis plan should be annotated to show the status of each chapter, as well as providing a timeline for the completion of the thesis.

The specific requirements for written work should be discussed with the supervisor. The minimum documentation to be provided at the third-year review is:

- A complete thesis contents list with all chapter headings and subheadings listed. (Please check the [Instructions and Notes on Submission](#) for required introductory content).
- The contents list should be followed by all chapters or parts of chapters for which any content exists i.e. all your work so far - including work submitted at previous review or upgrade meetings, work seen in various drafts by supervisors, work submitted for publication or in a manuscript in preparation etc.
- Include a note at start of each chapter or major section of text or figures to indicate status e.g. rough notes; 1st draft; final draft; submitted to journal; figures but no text yet, etc.
- A timetable to completion and submission of thesis (include preparation of exam entry form).
- A record of major meetings with supervisor, with dates and key agreed actions. A template for the [Supervisory Meeting Log](#) is available on the [Annual Review](#) Page, ; however you may use your own format if this would be beneficial.
- An up-to-date [training log record](#). (A template is available on the [Annual Review](#) Page)

As with the Year 1 review, once the meeting is completed, you should send the signed form to the Earth Sciences Departmental Postgraduate Research Student Lead who will check it, approve it, and then send it to the Doctoral School for processing.

#### Year 4 Pre-Submission Interview:

All students who have not submitted by 3 years and 6 months are required to attend a meeting with the Earth Sciences Postgraduate Research Student Lead. You should send the following to the PGR lead at least five days in advance of the meeting.

- The [Pre-Submission interview form](#) with parts 1 and 2 completed.
- A full thesis contents list with all main headings and subheadings listed.
- A draft abstract and introduction – sufficient to indicate the aims of the thesis and place them briefly in context.
- Everything else that will be part of your thesis at whatever stage it has reached. This might be completed, final draft, early draft, rough notes, bullet point lists of subheadings or thoughts etc.
- No work should be done for this meeting that is not already being done.

The purpose is for the student to ask any questions they have and for PGR Lead to give advice to help ensure timely submission whilst minimizing the risks associated with submission very close to the final deadline (one such risk would be an outcome of re-enter for the examination and represent the thesis within 18 months).

Once the meeting has been completed the Earth Sciences Postgraduate Research Student Lead will complete their section of the form (Part 4) and then send the form back to you for you to add comments (Part 3) if you wish and sign the form. You then return it to the PGR lead who submits the form to the Doctoral School for processing.

#### **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. Further information about this process can be found in the [Research Degree Regulations](#).