

# Graduate Supervision System (GSS)

## MPLS Division - Guidance Notes for Postgraduate Research Students

### 1. Policy

You are required to submit a reflective report on your progress each term. This should follow on from a supervision meeting where you have discussed your progress and next steps with your supervisor.

### 2. Reflecting on Academic progress

It is recognised that students in different situations will have differing needs and concerns. Your termly report should reflect on the progress made on your research project during the current term, you can choose to focus on those aspects of your research and training that are of greatest importance to you at the present time. Your report can be as brief as is appropriate and the following are points you may wish to consider:

- Written work to date (e.g. drafts of chapters)
- Progress against agreed plan of research including timetable and milestones
- Any concerns about your academic progress or difficulties you have encountered this term
- Training received during the current term, including subject-specific research skills and more general personal/professional skills (mention seminars, one-to-ones, presentations made etc.)
- Training required during the coming term
- Resources required to undertake the work which you intend to carry out
- Professional development/career goals?
- Concerns about supervision

*You may either use the free text fields in the form to record your information, or save your reflection as a file and use the 'Upload file' button to attach to your report.*

A specific form is provided for the meeting in the term before your Transfer milestone to support you in reflecting on your level of preparedness for this assessment. This form will also go to your transfer assessors. All other reports can be provided using the "free text", sections (noting that some have a word limit). In due course a form will also be provided for pre-confirmation.

**Important Note:** If you are only uploading a file, you must ensure that you add a note to the text field to indicate that you have done this, otherwise the system will not register that you have submitted a termly report.

### 3. Recording the number of supervision meetings

Use the "meetings" drop down menu to enter the number of meetings<sup>1</sup> you have had with your supervisor since your last report (this will vary according to the stage of your research). Typically, you should expect to have meetings with your supervisor, or a member of the supervisory team, at least once every two weeks averaged across the year.

### 4. Concerns about progress

Please note that it is not unusual to feel some concern from time to time about your progress. If you have a strong sense that you are not satisfied with your progress please do talk to your supervisor and note this in your report. Your supervisor will also discuss with you if they feel you are not progressing at a reasonable pace. Your supervisor may also check the 'progress concern' flag on their report if they think that there are specific concerns to be addressed. This is not necessarily something to worry about as most concerns can be addressed by discussing through the issues, but it is important that you are made aware of any concerns as early as possible to give you the best chance of getting back on track.

## 5. Other concerns

If you have any *formal* complaints about the supervision which you are receiving, you should raise these with your Director of Graduate Studies. Please do **NOT** use the supervision reporting system as a mechanism for formal complaints. If you have any concerns you do not feel able to put on your form you should discuss these with your Directors of Graduate Studies.

## 6. What happens to the reports?

Once you have completed and submitted your sections of the online form, the form will be released to your supervisor(s) for completion. If you decide not to complete a form within the fixed two week time-scale for students (weeks 6 and 7), you will not be able to complete a form for that term. If you do not submit a report either for two subsequent terms, or for two terms out of three (on a rolling basis) this will trigger your being invited to a meeting with the Director of Graduate Studies to discuss your progress.

When the supervisor's sections are completed, you will be able to read his/her report, and the relevant Director of Graduate Studies will be able to view the report and add any comments if they wish. You can then discuss any points that your supervisor raises in their reports at your subsequent meeting.

Your college advisor and University and college graduate studies administrators with designated access will also be able to view the report. Directors of Graduate Studies are responsible for ensuring that appropriate supervision takes place, and this is one of the mechanisms they use to obtain information about supervision. College advisors are a source of support and advice to students, and it is therefore important that they are informed of your progress, including concerns (expressed by yourself and/or your supervisor).

Access to data about you is carefully controlled in line with Data Protection requirements. Please see <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/councilsec/dp>

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<sup>1</sup> *A meeting consists of a substantive meeting, pre-arranged or not, instigated by either party to discuss progress, results and plan ahead. Meetings might also take the form of e-mail discussions, videoconferencing.*