

## Masters and Doctoral Progress Reports

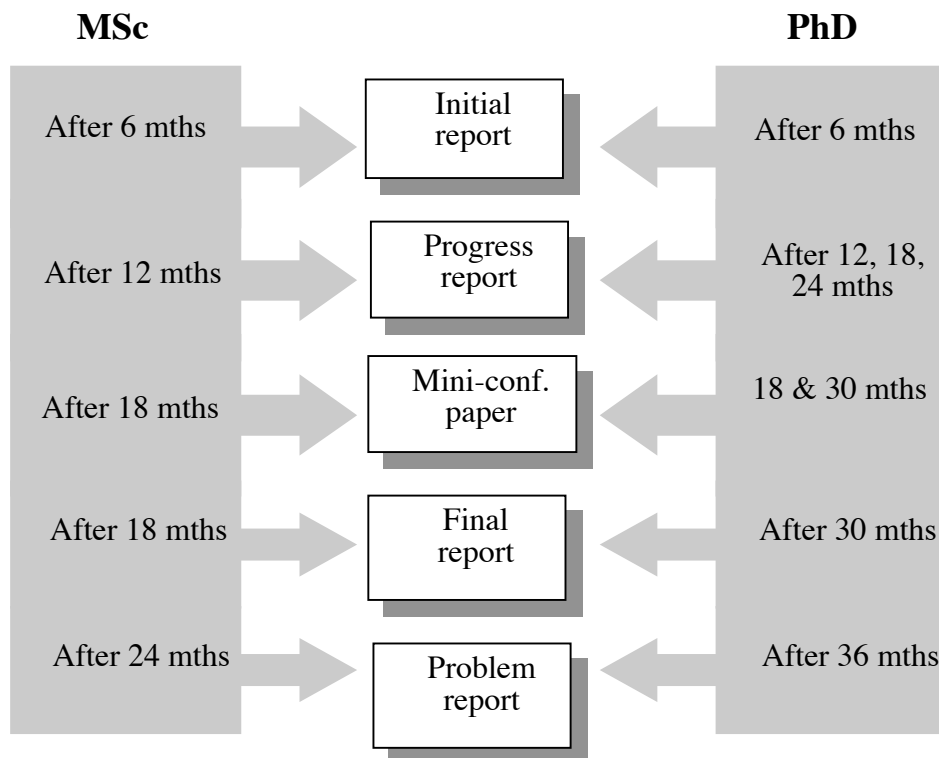
The Graduate Student Committee requires two progress reports from all post-graduate students per year. These progress reports are reviewed by the committee who will meet to discuss everyone's progress. You will receive a letter from the committee with appropriate feedback.

In addition, the committee may decide to interview some or all graduate students and if necessary the committee may also request a further report.

The purpose of the report is to judge whether you are on track, and to assist us in deciding whether to allow you to re-register for the next year. Masters students should complete within 18 months and PhD students within 30 months. The maximum for Masters students is two years and for Doctoral students it is three years. You will only be allowed to exceed these time periods in exceptional circumstances. In all cases where the normal submission deadline is not met special motivation and proof of progress is required. The committee will have to be convinced that the new time-frame is feasible.

The reports must be signed by *both* you *and* your supervisor. Remember that your report will be read by people who are not specialists in the area. As a guideline, progress reports are typically 4-5 pages long. You must give clear deliverables and milestones to judge your progress by at the next meeting.

### What report should you write?



## **Types of Report**

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### **Initial Report**

The first progress report has to contain:

1. A short research proposal (2 pages), see guidelines below.
2. A project plan for the duration of the project, listing deliverables and milestones. In particular the steps leading up to the complete write-up of the masters dissertation by September of the following year must be clear. For PhD students this submission may be planned for March or September two years hence.
3. A bibliography

### **Progress Reports**

The normal research progress report is a brief record of progress achieved. It will contain

#### **Title of thesis** (see above)

Explain *any* change in title – any major change of direction has to be motivated and a new research proposal has to be submitted.

#### **Account of work done**

The report must state *clearly* what you said you would achieve and what you have actually achieved. If there is a variation between the two, please provide a brief reason why.

Tell us of difficulties overcome.

#### **Overview of what remains to be done.**

Are there any problems or concerns?

#### **Time schedule for remainder of the study**

This is also your opportunity to revise your milestones bearing in mind that re-registration or not will be decided on the basis of your progress.

Allow plenty of time for writing up. A masters will take at least three months to write up and a PhD about six months. Remember that during writing up you may discover a much better way of doing things. This is often because the detailed examination of the topic that is needed to describe your work for others makes something clear to you that you had never previously seen or fully understood. You might then need to modify your system and re-evaluate it.

In all cases *you must say* when you expect to submit the thesis. If you are going to require re-registration beyond the normal time span of the degree then a special motivation is required. The University receives no subsidy for such further years and the Science Faculty does not allow such registration unless special motivation is provided by the supervisor and Head of Department.

### **Your Publications**

List all Departmental Technical Reports (TRs) and other publications. All research students must complete at least a TR on their research after one year. Only students in the first year of a Masters by coursework and dissertation are exempted from this. Students in their second year (or above) are expected to have made a presentation at a conference or have submitted a journal paper (and these should all be submitted as TRs as well). If you failed to do this please say why and what you are doing about it.

### **Chapter and Section outline of your dissertation**

N.B. Only complete *iff* you intend submitting within the next six months. State the date on which you intend to submit.

If this progress report raises questions, an immediate interview may be organized or a further report may be required within 3 months.

### **Mini-conference Paper**

The department will hold a mini-conference in July each year. You are required to submit and present a full paper at that conference, based on the work of your research degree. The paper will be peer reviewed and then published as part of a proceedings. The topic of the paper should be agreed with your supervisor and the final version submitted to the conference chair (usually the postgraduate programme coordinator). The paper format will follow ACM submission guidelines.

### **Final Report**

The progress report of the last year of study (i.e. July for a September submission) should confirm that the work is complete and that the first draft of the dissertation is ready. An outline of the dissertation and of the results actually achieved should be given.

### **Problem Reports**

If submission within the normal time-frame seems impossible then a detailed report on progress achieved and a plan for the future has to be produced.

## **Guidelines for a Postgraduate Research Proposal**

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### **Title**

Give your proposal a meaningful (provisional) title that summarises your area of interest and your planned research project.

### **Research Questions**

What is being investigated? What are the main research questions you are asking?

Why is the problem important, has anyone else said so? Briefly review previous research on each research question.

What is your contribution? How is your research topic different from what has been done before?

### **Methodology**

What do you intend doing? Briefly describe the methods that you will use to answer your research questions.

Why is this strategy being adopted? Why is this necessary for your study?

### **Anticipated Outcomes**

What might we expect the outcomes of your project to be? What do you expect to find? The aim here is not to anticipate your study but rather to give an outline of what you envisage.

You should have a plan for testing your system when it is complete. Work this out now; everything will be wasted if you finish your implementation but cannot evaluate your “advance” convincingly.

Indicate the interpretation and conclusions that you will place upon the results. What difference will your work make? Indicate the implications of your research for current theory and practice.

### **Bibliography and Previous Systems**

List the main sources on which your research will be based.

As your work progresses you have to show that you have read the relevant papers and books and understand the field. You should show that you know which are important contributions and how they are related and may be grouped. You should know where the concepts you use were first described.

Gary Marsden 27/2/2002