

Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science

Procedures for PhD Advisory Committees and Progress Reports (approved May 2, 2012)

1. Each PhD student must have an Advisory Committee consisting of three faculty members: the supervisor plus two additional faculty members, one of whom could be a co-supervisor. Final authority governing the membership of the Committee rests with the Department Graduate Coordinator, but its members will normally be nominated by the supervisor.
2. The Advisory Committee shall assess a student's progress and provide feedback, on the basis of a written Progress Report. The report must be sent by email to the Graduate Assistant, who in turn will circulate it to members of the committee, and each member of the committee is required to respond with an assessment of "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory". It is the responsibility of the student to submit the report in a timely fashion to the Graduate Assistant. In the event that an "unsatisfactory" assessment is received from any of the committee members, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure that a Committee meeting is held to review the report and reach a collective decision of "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory", and submit a copy of the decision to the Graduate Coordinator. More frequent meetings may be convened if requested by the student, the supervisor, or the Graduate Coordinator.
3. In the event that the Advisory Committee assesses the student's progress as unsatisfactory, a memorandum must be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator providing the rationale for the decision, along with recommendations to rectify the situation. The Graduate Coordinator shall, in consultation with the student and the supervisor, decide upon the timing of the next meeting of the Advisory Committee (and submission of the next Progress Report). This meeting must be held within the year, but no earlier than 4 months, from the date of the meeting whose outcome was unsatisfactory. A student will normally be required to withdraw upon receipt of two consecutive unsatisfactory progress assessments.
4. It is the responsibility of the student to communicate to the Advisory Committee any special circumstances that should be considered by the Committee in reaching its assessment.

Notes:

These procedures are intentionally silent on: 1) format of Progress Report, 2) format of meeting (some departments require a formal oral presentation), 3) whether there is more than one report in a given year (some departments require 3 reports per year) and 4) coordination with requirements for Comprehensive Exam. It is assumed that these points will be covered by procedures specific to each Department. It is expected that the Supervisory Committee for the Comprehensive will become the Advisory Committee.

The key elements that must be followed by every department are: a) every PhD student must write and submit a progress report, at least once per year, b) Advisory Committee members must sign-off on the report as being "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory", and must meet with the student in the event of an unsatisfactory assessment from any one member, c) two consecutive unsatisfactory reports from the Advisory Committee are grounds for withdrawal.

The expectation is that PhD students who have successfully completed their Comprehensive Examination before Sept, 2011, will be required to submit a Progress Report before Sept, 2012.

SGS is currently working on a common annual progress report for all graduate programs. The SGS report templates are expected to be available by August, 2013.