

Annual Review of PGR Students on Law and Criminology Programmes

Frequently Asked Questions - Students

1. What is the purpose of the Annual Review?

The purpose of the annual review is to provide you and your supervisors an opportunity to reflect on the progress you have made over the academic year and to ensure that you are on track to meet the milestones at the end of the year. The review enables you to share experiences as a research student with two independent reviewers (members of academic staff) who are not formally involved in your studies and to gain advice from them about your progress and future plans. The review will also give you the chance to ask advice and share your thoughts on the supervision you have received.

2. What do I have to do in advance of my annual review?

First, you and your supervisors must meet to discuss the review and then complete your respective sections of the annual review form on eProg (see separate guidance for that). You and your supervisors should agree on a 5,000-word sample of your writing towards your thesis from the year and you must attach this to the annual review form, for your reviewers to evaluate to help them gauge your progress.

3. Do I have to produce a piece of writing especially for this review?

No. You should select a 5,000-word sample of the writing that you have produced towards your thesis over the year. The only original text that you need to produce is some brief additional text to accompany the 5,000 words that explains how the extract contributes to the thesis.

Discussion should take place between student and supervisors as to what will be the best piece of writing to submit for the review. Once decided on the 5,000 words to submit, then this (along with the brief additional explanatory text) should be uploaded to the eProg annual review form. See separate guidelines on how to do that.

4. How long will the review meeting last?

Usually, the review will last between 20 and 40 minutes.

5. How do I know if I have made 'good enough' progress?

As a rough guide, we might expect 25K words to be written by the end of the first year, another 25K by the end of the second year, and a maximum of 30k by the end of the third year. (Thus accounting for the requisite 80,000 words in three years – or the equivalent for part-time students.) This leaves the additional 'submission pending period' for putting the finishing touches/editing to your thesis, its examination and any necessary corrections. Clearly, different models of PhD will work in different ways: empirical PhDs, for example, that involve much of the second year spent in data collection and analysis, are not as well suited to this model. It is up to the supervisory team to agree on and communicate reasonable expectations that 'fit' a particular PhD. However, it is important that substantial

progress in the early years must occur in order for submission for subsequent examination to occur at or around the end of the third year.

'Good enough' also refers to the quality of your writing. It does not necessarily need to be polished and in final form, but it should have reached, or nearly reached (through successive redrafting if necessary) a level of analytical, critical and structural competence potentially suitable for publication. As these skills develop over the course of the three years of study, expectations in this regard might be a little lower in the early years of PhD registration.

Taking all of these issues into account, reviewers will make a recommendation on the annual review form with regard to your progress. The School's PGR Committee will make the final decision on whether or not you can proceed to the next year of study or if further work/review is required before that can happen.

6. What happens if progress is not deemed to be 'good enough'?

Two things will happen: (1) you will be given a clear indication of exactly how your work has not reached the expected standard; and (2) you will be required to submit further work as appropriate and may be required to undergo an additional review before the start of the next academic year, all the while under a period of more intensive supervision.

A review panel will be reconvened if necessary to determine whether the work is now up to standard and will make a recommendation concerning progression to the next year of study. In order to progress, the revised work must demonstrate the quality and/or quantity that had previously been identified as lacking – and thus bringing you back on track with your study and your progression.

If the review panel consider that the work is still not up to standard, it will be considered whether the work is more suitable for an MPhil. The School's PGR Committee will make a decision concerning continuation/withdrawal from the programme/transfer to MPhil.