

Mathematics & Statistics Department

Research Student Policy Document

Structured Research Programmes and Other Research Programmes

All new postgraduate research students at Maynooth University are enrolled in a structured research programme. This means that students are provided with a variety of auxiliary modules and they must pass a selection of these modules; the appropriate selection of modules must be agreed between the Student and Supervisor. Details of available modules can be found on the following webpage:

<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/mathematics-and-statistics/undergraduates/module-descriptors-202122>

The most relevant modules are the 800-level modules, although 500-level and other modules may also be taken with the permission of the Head of Department.

Structured Research Masters students must sign up for a minimum of 10 ECTS in taught modules, with at least 5 ECTS in Generic/Transferable modules and at least 5 ECTS in Subject Specific/Advanced Specialist modules. Structured PhD students must sign up for between 30 and 90 ECTS in taught modules, with at least 15 ECTS in Generic/Transferable modules and at least 15 ECTS in Subject Specific/Advanced Specialist modules.

Students who registered for research degrees before the advent of structured research programmes may avail of these taught modules, but are not required to do so.

A structured PhD programme normally takes four years for a full-time student and six years for a part-time student. A structured Research Masters programme normally takes two years for a full-time student and three years for a part-time student.

Supervisor and Supervisory Committee

Each research student in the Mathematics & Statistics Department (below referred to as the **Student**) will have one primary supervisor within the Mathematics & Statistics Department, below referred to as the **Supervisor**. The **Supervisory Team** might include other individuals, such as a co-supervisor from another department or institution, or secondary supervisors. The membership and roles of the Supervisory Team are normally arranged before the student's registration by agreement between the Head of Department and Supervisor, and may be adjusted by agreement between the Head of Department and Supervisor.

All Mathematics & Statistics Department research students will have their progress reviewed annually by a committee. For Masters students, the Committee will consist of the Supervisory Team plus one other member of the Mathematics & Statistics Department, possibly the Head of Department.

Forming a Committee

1. Normally within 30 days of the Student's initial registration for a research degree, a committee--henceforth referred to as the **Committee**--will be formed for the purpose of conducting annual reviews of the student's progress.
2. The members of the Committee will be the Supervisory Team plus **Select Members**, at least one of whom will be a member of the Department. For Masters students, there must be at least one Select Member, and for PhD students, there must be at least two Select Members.
3. The Supervisor and Head of Department will discuss the Select Membership of the Committee, and consult the Student before finalising their decision. The same procedure will be followed if the Select Members are to be subsequently changed.
4. The Head of Department may be a Select Member of the Committee in the case of Masters students, but will not be a Select Member of a PhD student Committee.

Initial Meeting Record

The Supervisor and Student are required to fill out an **Initial Meeting Record** after their first formal meeting; this form can be obtained from the Departmental Office. This meeting should normally take place within 30 days of the Student's initial registration. The Initial Meeting Record includes in the following information:

- **Basic Data:**
 - contact information for the Student
 - start date and expected date of completion of degree
 - area of research
 - names of Supervisor and Supervisory Team
 - attendance at NUI Maynooth Induction Programme
 - familiarity with University regulations and policies
- **Taught Modules Plan**
- **Research Plan:**
 - calendar or frequency of meetings for the first academic year
 - performance goals for the first academic year

The draft Initial Meeting Record as agreed by the Student and Supervisor must then be approved by the Committee. The Committee may request amendments to the Research Plan, which would then require further discussions between the Student and Supervisor before being resubmitted for approval by the Committee.

Once signed by the Student and the Committee, copies of the Initial Meeting Record should be kept by the Student and Supervisor, and another copy will be stored in the Departmental Office. This record will inform the Annual Progress Review Record subsequently carried out by the Committee.

Annual Report

1. During the second semester of each academic year, the Committee will review the performance of the Student during the year. This review will be conducted on the basis of written reports (as detailed below) and a **Review Meeting**.
2. The Committee and Head of Department may jointly choose to cancel the Annual Review if the student is expected to submit his/her Thesis before the end of October of the same year. On the basis of subsequent developments, the Committee and Head of Department may change their mind and hold the Annual Review. An Annual Review should be held before the end of the calendar year if it becomes likely that the Thesis will not be submitted by the end of the calendar year.
3. To aid the review process, the Supervisory Team will prepare at least one draft **Annual Report**. The draft Annual Report will:
 - report on the student's progress since the previous annual review, or since initial registration in the case of a first review, making reference to the agreed Performance Goals for the year;
 - give a Research Plan for the coming academic year (after discussion and agreement with the Student);
 - make any necessary amendments to the Basic Data or Taught Modules Plan.
4. The Student may also choose to submit a draft Annual Report.
5. These draft Annual Reports will be circulated to the Student and to all members of the Committee in advance of the Review Meeting.
6. The Review Meeting will be held at a time agreed by all that are to be in attendance. This meeting will be attended by the Student, the Select Members of the Committee, and normally at least one member of the Supervisory Team. The Student can request in writing, with at least one week's notice, that one or more specific members of the Supervisory Team do not attend the Review meeting.

7. The Review Meeting will discuss the draft Annual Report(s) and any matters of concern that the student might have.
8. At the conclusion of the Review Meeting, the Committee may choose to sign off one of the draft Annual Reports produced by the Supervisory Team. The Committee may choose not to sign off if they find either the draft Annual Report(s) or the Student's progress unsatisfactory. In the case of unsatisfactory progress, a recommendation may be made to change registration (e.g. from a PhD to a research Masters), or to discontinue studies in the Mathematics & Statistics Department.
9. The Committee may discuss changes to the draft Annual Reports if it deems the ones submitted unsatisfactory. After such changes have been discussed with the Student, a single Annual Report will be signed off by the Committee. Any changes that are to be made to the Research Plan for the coming year require the agreement of the Student.
10. Once signed by the Student and the Committee, copies of the signed Annual Report and any draft Annual Reports different from the signed Report, will be lodged with the Departmental Office. The Student and Supervisor should also keep copies of these reports.

Appeal of Annual Progress Review

Before the Annual Report is signed, a student may appeal the outcome of the Annual Progress Review. The appeal will be conducted by an **Adjudicator**. The Adjudicator will be the Head of Department or, if the Head of Department is a member of the Committee, a permanent member of the Department's lecturing staff who is not a member of the Committee. Appeals may be conducted by a team rather than an individual in certain cases, but we still refer to this team as the Adjudicator. In particular, if the Student has co-supervisors from outside the Department, then one representative from the department of each such co-supervisor might be involved in the appeal process.

Before reaching a conclusion, the Adjudicator will consider all relevant written documentation from the Committee and the Student, and will hold discussions with the Student, the Supervisor, and all Select members of the Committee. Other members of the Supervisory Team may also be consulted. At the end of this process, the Adjudicator will draw up an Annual Report for the Student under the guidance of the Student and the Committee. In the case of unsatisfactory progress, the Adjudicator may recommend a change of registration (e.g. from a PhD to a research Masters), or a discontinuation of studies in the Mathematics & Statistics Department. All notes relating to the appeal process will be retained by the Department.

IMPORTANT LINKS

Mathematics & Statistics Department Postgraduate Information

<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/mathematics-and-statistics/postgraduates>

Maynooth University Postgraduate Studies

<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/study-maynooth/postgraduate-studies>