

Doctoral Program Progress Report

Aim

The yearly progress report serves three main purposes:

- **Keeping the TAB informed:**
Update TAB members on your research development, future plans, and progress. Meetings also allow discussion of any non-scientific concerns.
- **Encouraging self-reflection:**
Reflect on your own growth, assess scientific and professional skills, and track personal and academic development.
- **Raising confidential concerns:**
Use the report to alert the MCQST Doctoral Program Coordinator to any difficulties or issues, ensuring appropriate support or intervention.

Submission Guidelines

MCQST PhD students are required to submit a yearly progress report by **October 31**. Students who have been enrolled for more than two months should submit their first report by this deadline.

Submission Format

The progress report must be submitted as PDF files via email as follows:

- **Scientific Part:** One PDF file containing the Scientific Part of the report must be sent to both the MCQST Doctoral Program Coordinator and the Thesis Advisory Board (TAB) members.

File Name Format: MCQST_progress_report_scientific_YYYY_LastName_FirstName

- **Confidential Part (optional):** If included, the confidential part must be submitted as a separate PDF file and sent only to the MCQST Doctoral Program Coordinator.

File Name Format: MCQST_progress_report_confidential_YYYY_LastName_FirstName

Mandatory Meetings with Thesis Advisory Board (TAB) Members

Students must hold **mandatory meetings** with TAB members related to the progress report:

1) Meeting with the Supervisor:

Discuss your progress and research plans before submitting the report. Existing annual feedback sessions at your institution can fulfill this requirement.

2) Meeting with the Co-Supervisor:

After submitting the report, meet with your co-supervisor to receive additional feedback on research progress, plans, and career development.

3) Mid-term Check-in with the Doctoral Program Coordinator:

Approximately **1.5-2 years into the PhD**, students are required to meet with the Coordinator to review overall progress and address any issues.

Recommended timing: With submission of the 2nd or 3rd progress report.

Note: No formal confirmation is required. Students and TAB members will be reminded to hold these discussions. Use these meetings to gain constructive feedback on research and professional development.

Structure of the Progress Report

The report consists of two parts: a Scientific part for TAB members and an optional confidential part for the coordinator.

I. Scientific Part

This section is sent to the coordinator and your TAB members. NEW: Adapt the content depending on your PhD stage:

Beginning of PhD

- Provide an overview of your research and identify possible gaps. What key questions or hypotheses will you address?
- Identify scientific skills or methods you need to learn first.
- Clarify expectations with supervisor.
- Outline graduate school obligations (e.g., Kick-off seminar).

Middle of PhD

- Evaluate if you are on track with your initial plan. If not, propose realistic adjustments.
- Outline or draft papers or thesis chapters.
- Assess supervisory interactions and feedback.

End of PhD

- Confirm completion of publications and graduate program responsibilities.
- Plan remaining tasks and responsibilities at least a year before finishing (e.g., final experiments, writing start, delegation of duties).
- Highlight key scientific contributions of your PhD.
- Ensure a clear plan for supervisor review and feedback cycles.

General points for all stages: Summarize work completed over the past year, compare it to the previous plan, explain possible deviations, and outline plans for the next year (scientifically and for career development).

II. General / Confidential Part

Optional, and sent and read **only by the coordinator**. This section is for reflection on your well-being, support, and professional environment. Students are advised to contact the Doctoral Program Coordinator for a personal meeting if they become aware of difficulties and problems while thinking about these questions:

Questions for all stages:

- How are you balancing workload, well-being, and motivation?
- Do you feel respected by your supervisor and able to trust them?
- Is your supervisor approachable, providing constructive feedback, and receptive to your feedback?
- Do you feel supported in your working group? How is the atmosphere both scientifically and personally?
- Are your tasks and expectations appropriate? Do you feel pressure that prevents effective work?