

## **Procedure for Assessing Student Progression in Multi-Year Research-Based Programs**

### **1. Annual Progress Evaluations**

Graduate Chairs (or equivalent) are responsible for overseeing student progress through the use of Pathfinder. In this regard, they work with students' supervisory committee members. Graduate Chairs (or equivalent) and supervisory committee members are expected to regularly communicate with each other and with students.

It is the Graduate Chair's (or equivalent) responsibility to:

- ensure that students are notified of the timeline for submission of their annual (at a minimum) progress report;
- ensure that feedback on progress via Pathfinder is appropriate and effective and is communicated to students, including expectations going forward;
- offer support and advice to all students, including those who are struggling or failing to meet program expectations;
- offer support and advice to supervisors.

### **2. Annual Progress Evaluations and the Use of Pathfinder**

The Pathfinder degree planning portfolio facilitates the monitoring evaluation and communication of student progress in multi-year research-based degree programs.

The progress review process facilitated by Pathfinder involves the following steps:

- Student is asked to complete the portfolio by [date], including comments and feedback.
- The student's supervisory committee members comment on the student's portfolio, including the progress made since the last review and respond to the student's comments and feedback. It is best practice that a student would meet with the supervisor and supervisory committee to discuss their progress and their report.

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- The Graduate Chair/equivalent (or alternate, if the Graduate Chair/equivalent is the student's supervisor) reviews the student's portfolio and the comments of the supervisory committee members and, based on these, provides their input.
- The portfolio is returned to the student for review, comment, and acknowledgement.

At any point during this process, a participant may return the portfolio back to the previous reviewer to discuss.

It is expected that the entire review process will take no longer than 30 days. At the end of the Pathfinder portfolio review process, the content of the portfolio, including comments and a progress assessment, are archived in Pathfinder for future review.

### 3. Guidelines When a Student is Not Meeting Degree Expectations

When a progress review finds that a student is not meeting degree expectations, the following steps need to be taken:

- The Graduate Chair (or equivalent) connects with the Supervisor and the Student (and if appropriate, the Supervisory Committee members) to request a meeting (it is not necessary that it be one meeting with everyone).
- A purpose of the meeting is to remove any possible barriers to student progress and to consider other ways to support student progress. A second purpose is to clarify how and why the student has not met program expectations, and to articulate what is required to meet degree requirements.
- The results of the meeting are documented. A plan of study for the upcoming year/immediate future (or alternate timeframe) with goals and dates, is created and agreed upon by the Student and Supervisor, with support of the Graduate Chair (or equivalent). It is important that the student understand that failure to meet program expectations is grounds for withdrawal. It is important that the student understand where to go to for additional advice and guidance (for example, the Ombudsperson).
- This progress plan is uploaded to Pathfinder as part of the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) evaluation. It is important that the student understand where to go to for additional advice and guidance (for example, the Ombudsperson).

For students who are not meeting degree expectations, regular follow-up is recommended.

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It is strongly advised that students communicate with their supervisory committee and Graduate Chair (or equivalent) if they are unable to meet the progress plan timeline so that barriers and challenges can be examined and discussed. If warranted, additional supports should be put in place. Graduate Chairs (or equivalent), supervisory committee members and students can request meetings as needed.

Consistently failing to meet degree expectations, despite ongoing support to succeed, are grounds for withdrawal. Communication in this regard is documented and shared with the student.

### **4. Sustained Lack of Progress: Guidelines for Withdrawal for Failure to Meet Program Expectations**

When a student consistently fails to meet degree expectations, supervisory committee members and/or the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) convene to discuss the merits of withdrawing the student from the program. If there is agreement that withdrawal is warranted, a meeting is arranged with the student. In this meeting, the program communicates the reasons for their preliminary decision to withdraw the student and offers the student the opportunity to respond both in the meeting and, in writing, afterward.

After considering the circumstances surrounding the failure to meet degree expectations, including the student's feedback, the Graduate Chair, or equivalent, (in consultation with the supervisor) makes a final decision about whether to withdraw the student.

The student is notified in writing of the withdrawal decision. This notification includes relevant information about the appeal process and where the student can seek consultation and advice, such as the Ombudsperson.

### **5. Pathfinder and Confidentiality**

Information collected within the Pathfinder degree planning portfolio is protected by the Official Student Record Information Privacy Policy

*\*Supervisory committee members' include at least one supervisor and at least one committee member. In practice, across campus these committee members are sometimes referred to as 'advisory committee members'.*