

Guidance document for maintaining PGR supervisory records

1) Overview and purpose

The University has a duty of care to monitor a PGR's ability to progress throughout each year of study and to give timely and honest feedback on their research.

The supervisory meeting form is a tool to capture progression and key successes. It also allows supervisors to formally record any challenges or difficulties the PGR is facing that may prevent them from progressing at the formal next review point, and also to record what has been agreed in terms of actions or interventions.

Areas where intervention may be required include, but are not limited to:

1. Attendance: The postgraduate researcher needs to be physically (or, in exceptional cases, virtually) present at planned meetings and events.
2. Engagement: The postgraduate researcher needs to be actively participating in learning so that there are measurable work outputs.
3. Skills and training: The postgraduate researcher needs to have the necessary skills and competencies to complete the research.
4. Personal circumstances, health and wellbeing: The postgraduate researcher needs to have good health and wellbeing and a suitable work-life balance.

The information captured in the form is a resource for supervisors and PGRs to check progress and outstanding actions on an ongoing basis. It also provides a clear record of what has taken place should there be any disagreement between the supervisor and PGR.

The UKVI academic engagement Code of Practice also outlines [{link}](#) how and why records of supervisory meetings are required to ensure UKVI compliance reporting can be completed for sponsored student visa holders.

2) Recording supervisions and using the dashboard

For each formal monthly supervision, supervisors and PGRs will be able to capture a record of the meeting using the form. The comments and information included by both supervisors and the PGR will be available to the PGR, all current supervisors in the team, the PGR Director and the internal assessor.

The screenshots below indicate how the form will appear to you in each scenario.

The forms allow us to capture and record three key scenarios:

- a) Meetings are not taking place at all:

Supervision meeting

*Date

*Location

*Reason for no meeting in person

It is recommended for this scenario you complete that record as soon as possible after the month has passed without supervision; it is important you select a date within the month you are reporting for (we recommend you select the last day of the month).

- b) Meetings *are* taking place, but there are challenges that mean (if nothing changes) the PGR may struggle to progress at their next review point.

Supervisor comments

*Did you identify any cause for concern that could prevent progression?

*Reason for concern and actions taken

- c) Meetings are taking place, and the PGR appears on track for a positive progression outcome at the next meeting.

Supervisor comments

*Did you identify any cause for concern that could prevent progression?

Supervision comments

The information included in the form will also populate a dashboard (currently under development) to give a high-level overview of PGRs falling into each of the three scenarios.

The dashboard view will be available to:

- Supervisors
- Directors of PGR
- PGR Team, Registry and Academic Affairs
- Visa and Immigration team

The roles and responsibilities of each of these groups, with regard to how this data is used, is follows:

Role	Responsibility
PGR	<p>To be aware of the responsibilities of the student as defined in the Quality Manual.</p> <p>With regards to the supervisory records:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To keep an accurate and up to date record of supervision meetings • To communicate clearly with their supervisors, taking initiative for raising any problems
Supervisors	<p>To be aware of the responsibilities of the supervisors as defined in the Quality Manual.</p> <p>With regards to the supervisory records:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To communicate clearly with their PGR student, providing timely and constructive feedback • To keep an accurate and up to date records of supervision meetings • To discuss any difficulties or challenges honestly ensuring that potential issues are not evaded, or not accurately reported for compliance purposes (visas).
PGR Director	<p>With regards to the supervisory records:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To maintain an overview of the supervisory meetings records for the School / faculty. • To ensure supervisors and students are engaging with the supervisor records systems as required and are directed to appropriate support if they encounter difficulties. • To help investigate any specific difficulties raised by the student or supervisory team, with reference to the records provided in the system.
Registry and Academic Affairs – PGR team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support and signpost to appropriate support and guidance where the student or supervisor are experiencing difficulties using the system or dashboard. • To advise on specific cases as required. • To escalate any potentially difficult cases that come to their attention to the School / Faculty for review.
Registry and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify cases where there is a risk of non-compliance for visa sponsorship and to investigate or escalate further as required.

3) Follow up actions for each student status

3a) Process for supporting a student who has no cause for concern

Continue to meet with the PGR regularly and work towards agreed objectives. No further action required.

3b) Process for supporting a student who has cause for concern

During supervisions you may wish to note causes for concern which may include (but are not limited to) engagement, skills and training or personal circumstances. When indicating a cause for concern, the reasons for doing so must be clear and evidence based.

It is important to remember that noting a cause for concern does not indicate that a student is 'failing' or that a PGR will be unable to progress at their next review. It is an opportunity however to formally record that the PGR student may need to make changes or improvements in certain areas before the review. This feedback aims to highlight these areas to PGRs as early as possible and to help them make changes. It also acts as a record of what has been recommended, should there be any dispute in the future.

Recording 'cause for concern' is an indicator of potential issues only in this respect. It is up to supervisors and students to use their discretion as to how best to approach potential issues, and also, suitable timescales for managing and resolving them. PGRs cannot be formally assessed as having unsatisfactory progress for having these flags on their records alone. The formal process for assessing progression must still be via the formal progression review.

On account of this, there will be no fixed trigger point to follow up on students with 'cause for concern' indicators and RAA will not ask Schools to take any actions in relation to any students based on the dashboard data alone. It is at the discretion of the School, as to how best to manage and support these students in the run up to their next progression review so that they can achieve a successful outcome.

The only exception to this is for PGRs who are sponsored for a visa. Any PGR with a sponsored visa that shows a cause for concern meeting will be automatically notified to the Visa and Immigration team who will be able to advise if there is any risk of breaching

the conditions of their visa sponsorship. Full details are outlined in the [Student Engagement and Attendance Policy](#).

Supervisors are asked to complete the cause for concern section as accurately and honestly as possible noting that:

- a) It is in the best interest of the PGR to have access to accurate and timely feedback, even if it is difficult to discuss in the first instance. Support for supervisors on managing difficult conversations can be found on the [Researcher Academy Sharepoint page](#).
- b) There is no immediate risk to the PGR's progression and / status or reputation with a sponsor if a cause for concern is recorded.
- c) Accurate information is essential for visa compliance.

3c) Process for supporting a student who is not attending

For ALL PGRs the School will also be responsible for initiating the non-engagement process. This should take place if a PGR is not attending supervision meetings or other required activities and provides no explanation for this non-attendance when invited to do so. The Assumed Withdrawal process will be followed. This process will be launched when there has been no formal contact OR there is any other change in regular attendance pattern that gives you serious cause for concern (for example a PGR that is usually present in a lab daily is suddenly absent for two weeks without explanation or contact with you). The time parameters for non-engagement are currently under review following the implementation of the PGR engagement form and dashboard. It is anticipated that RAA will provide regular reporting and liaise with Schools on specific cases of non-engagement, applying the outlined process below as a triage.

Detailed process

The steps below advice how to go about contacting a student who has become dis-engaged.

- The supervisory team to continually attempt contact with the PGR. If contact is ultimately made, the PGR should be offered appropriate support.
 - Support and Wellbeing team
 - Disability support team
 - Skills based
 - Help managing difficulties with engagement e.g. change to PT, VIS etc through the [RAA PGR team for advice](#)

- Any cases where there is no response to offer of support after **two weeks** should be escalated to the PGR Director and RAA (PGR).
- A follow up attempt of contact will then be made by RAA via the PGRs university email, personal email or phone.
- Supervisory team must raise a student's persistent absence to the Support and Wellbeing team, for triage for emergency protocol. The Support team will liaise with the School directly.
- PGR will then be directed to appropriate support services, if contact is eventually made by any team above. If there is still no contact, after the above steps, RAA -PGR team will approach the School and the PGR to begin the **assumed withdrawal** process for non-engagement. RAA will send the student a letter confirming the closure of their student record in 10 days, if no contact is made from this.

Note: Any PGR with a sponsored visa that shows missed meetings (without approved leave) will be automatically notified to the UKVI team for further discussion to ensure they are not at risk of breaching the conditions of their visa sponsorship. Full details are outlined in the [UKVI academic engagement Code of Practice](#).