



Hull York Medical School

**Code of Practice on Termination of
Research Degree Programmes**

Approval Process:	
Committee	Outcome/Date of approval
Postgraduate Research Board	21 st February 2013
HYMS Board of Studies	18 th April 2013 (Chair's Action)
HYMS Joint Senate Committee	2 nd May 2013
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Responsibility to update:	Chair of Postgraduate Research Board

To obtain this Code of Practice in an alternative format, please contact governance@hyms.ac.uk.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document sets out the procedure to be followed in circumstances where the Postgraduate Research Board wishes to recommend to the Board of Studies that a research degree candidate's programme of study be terminated for reasons other than the use of unfair means (including research misconduct).
- 1.2. This procedure applies to all candidates undertaking research degrees by thesis whether at Master's or doctoral level.
- 1.3. A candidate's programme can be terminated under this procedure on the grounds of:
 - Unsatisfactory progress (sections 3. to 6. of this Code)
 - Unauthorised absence (clauses 8. to 11. of this Code)

2. Authority

- 2.1. The HYMS Board of Studies (BoS) is the final arbiter of the interpretation and application of this code of practice.

3. Termination due to unsatisfactory progress

- 3.1. HYMS must define specific criteria and procedures, outlined in the HYMS Code of Practice: Research Students, through which candidates will be required to demonstrate satisfactory progress throughout the prescribed period of study: such criteria and procedures must be given to candidates in writing no later than the commencement of their programme of study.
- 3.2. Such criteria and procedures must be approved by the HYMS Board of Studies.
- 3.3. The purpose of the criteria and procedures are in the first instance to ensure that a candidate is made aware that his/her progress is unsatisfactory and to agree specific steps which need to be taken to improve progress. Termination of programme is therefore a last resort where such steps have not been taken.
- 3.4. The following defines a three-stage process leading to termination due to unsatisfactory progress. This process works outside the process followed for failure to meet progression criteria after a Progression TAP, as outlined in the Code of Practice for Research Degrees (section 19.6). The following process is triggered if it is deemed that unsatisfactory progress is being made between Progression TAPs.

4. Stage One: Postgraduate Research Board warning

- 4.1. Where, according to the criteria established by HYMS (3.1.), a candidate is not demonstrating satisfactory progress, the Postgraduate Research Board should issue a warning to the candidate which must state the reasons why progress is deemed unsatisfactory, and define the action which must be taken by the candidate to bring progress up to a satisfactory standard.
 - 4.1.1. This warning must not be issued without the candidate being offered an interview with the Chair of the Postgraduate Research Board or a nominated deputy, who has the power to recommend that a warning is not issued.

- 4.2. The warning must state a minimum period of time in which the candidate is permitted to bring progress up to a satisfactory standard.
 - 4.2.1. This time period will depend on the nature and volume of the work required but must be no less than one month and no more than three months for a full-time candidate and no less than two months and no more than six months for a part-time candidate.
 - 4.2.2. Copies of the warning must be provided to the candidate's supervisor(s), members of the Thesis Advisory Panel and the Head of Centre.

5. Stage Two: Board of Studies warning

- 5.1. If the candidate fails to satisfy the stipulations issued as part of the Postgraduate Research Board warning, the Chair of the Postgraduate Research Board or a nominated deputy must request a HYMS Board of Studies warning.
 - 5.1.1. The request must be accompanied by a copy of the Postgraduate Research Board warning.
- 5.2. The Board of Studies must be satisfied that the request for a warning is justified.
 - 5.2.1. The Chair of Board of Studies or a nominated deputy must interview the candidate before issuing a warning and may request interviews with the supervisor and the Thesis Advisory Panel Chair.
 - 5.2.2. If the student does not attend the interview, the Chair of the Board of Studies has the power to issue the warning without hearing the student's case.
- 5.3. The Board of Studies warning must include details of the work the candidate needs to undertake to bring progress up to a satisfactory standard and provide a minimum period in which this can be achieved.
 - 5.3.1. This time period will depend on the nature and volume of the work required but must fall within the limits set in 4.2. above.
 - 5.3.2. Copies of the warning must be provided to the candidate's supervisor(s), members of the Thesis Advisory Panel, the Head of Centre and the Chair of the Postgraduate Research Board.

6. Stage Three: Termination of programme

- 6.1. If the candidate fails to satisfy the requirements of the Board of Studies warning, Board of Studies has the power to terminate the candidate's programme of study.
 - 6.1.1. In making the decision whether or not to terminate a candidate's programme of study, Board of Studies may request an interview with the candidate, the candidate's supervisor(s) and the Thesis Advisory Panel Chair.
- 6.2. Where Board of Studies considers that the candidate's programme should be terminated the secretary of Board of Studies must inform the candidate in writing within three working days, stating the reasons for the decision and the date on which it is effective.

- 6.2.1. The secretary must further inform the candidate of his/her right of appeal in accordance with the HYMS Code of Practice on Academic and Fitness to Practise Appeals (available on the HYMS website).
- 6.2.2. Copies of the termination letter must be provided to the candidate's supervisor(s), Thesis Advisory Panel members, Head of Centre and Chair of the Postgraduate Research Board.
- 6.3. The termination of programme must be reported to the next meeting of the HYMS Joint Senate Committee.

7. Transfer to Masters

- 7.1. Where a candidate for an MPhil, MD or PhD has received a Board of Studies warning in accordance with paragraph 5. and the Thesis Advisory Panel considers that the candidate is making progress which indicates that s/he may be capable of achieving a lower postgraduate research degree (MPhil or MSc by Thesis), the Board of Studies in consultation with the candidate's supervisor(s), Thesis Advisory Panel and the Chair of the Postgraduate Research Board or nominated deputy may recommend that the candidate be transferred to a lower postgraduate research degree as an alternative to termination of the programme of study.
- 7.2. This recommendation must detail in writing the lower postgraduate research degree for which the candidate will be re-registered and the action necessary to enable them to make satisfactory progress towards this award.
- 7.3. Where Board of Studies considers that the candidate should be transferred to a lower postgraduate research degree, the candidate must be informed in writing within three working days, stating the reasons for the decision and detailing the actions necessary to enable satisfactory progress towards the award in accordance with paragraph 7.2.
- 7.4. Copies of the transfer letter must be provided to the candidate's supervisor(s), Thesis Advisory Panel members, Head of Centre and the Chair of the Postgraduate Research Board or nominated deputy.
- 7.5. HYMS must ensure that the candidate's registration is amended and the revised end of the prescribed period of study confirmed to them in writing.

8. Termination of programme due to unauthorised absence

- 8.1. A candidate must meet with his/her supervisors and Thesis Advisory Panel as detailed in the relevant programme regulations and the HYMS Code of Practice on Postgraduate Research Students.
- 8.2. The following defines a three-stage process leading to termination due to unauthorized absence:

9. Stage One: Postgraduate Research Board warning

- 9.1. Where a candidate fails to meet with their supervisors for more than the period specified above, and the Postgraduate Research Board in consultation with the

supervisor(s) and Thesis Advisory Panel has reasonable grounds for believing that the candidate has ceased to undertake his/her studies, the Postgraduate Research Board should issue the candidate with a warning giving them no less than two and no more than four weeks within which to re-establish contact with his/her supervisors.

9.1.1. The Postgraduate Research Board warning must advise the candidate that if s/he is unable to continue temporarily s/he must discuss with the supervisor(s) and Chair of the Thesis Advisory Panel the option to take Leave of Absence (suspension of registration) for an agreed period.

10. Stage Two: Board of Studies warning

10.1. Where the candidate fails to re-establish contact as required by the Postgraduate Research Board warning, the Chair of the Postgraduate Research Board or a nominated deputy must request a HYMS Board of Studies warning, stating the grounds on which the warning is based and providing a copy of the Postgraduate Research Board warning.

10.2. The Board of Studies must be satisfied that the request for a warning is justified.

10.2.1. The Chair of Board of Studies or a nominated deputy must offer to interview the candidate before issuing a warning and may request interviews with the supervisor and the Thesis Advisory Panel Chair.

10.2.2. If the candidate does not attend the interview, the Chair of the Board of Studies or a nominated deputy shall have the power to issue the warning.

10.3. The Board of Studies warning must include the reason for the warning and specify the action that must be taken by the candidate and a time limit within which such action should be taken.

10.3.1. Copies of the warning must be provided to the candidate's supervisor(s), members of the Thesis Advisory Panel, the Head of Centre and the Chair of the Postgraduate Research Board.

11. Stage Three: Termination of programme

11.1. If the candidate fails to satisfy the requirements of the Board of Studies warning, Board of Studies has the power to terminate the candidate's programme of study.

11.1.1. In making the decision whether or not to terminate a candidate's programme of study, Board of Studies may request an interview with the candidate, the candidate's supervisor(s) and the Thesis Advisory Panel Chair.

11.2. Where Board of Studies considers that the candidate's programme should be terminated the secretary of Board of Studies must inform the candidate in writing within three working days, stating the reasons for the decision and the date on which it is effective.

11.2.1. The secretary must further inform the candidate of his/her right of appeal in accordance with the HYMS Code of Practice on Academic and Fitness to Practise Appeals (available on the HYMS website).

- 11.2.2. Copies of the termination letter must be provided to the candidate's supervisor(s), Thesis Advisory Panel members, Head of Centre and Chair of the Postgraduate Research Board.
- 11.3. The termination of programme must be reported to the next meeting of the HYMS Joint Senate Committee.

Version history
February 2025: Administrative update on accessible formatting and clarification on section 3.4.