

Guidance for Supervisors for the submission of Annual Progression Exercise (1) and the final thesis for examination

Please refer to Figure 1. Annual Progression Exercise and Thesis Submission Via Turnitin for process details.

1. Annual Progression Exercise

The [Annual Progression Exercise](#) is designed to assess the PGRs ability as a researcher, to confirm the suitability of the project and to ensure that the supervisory team is working well. They should be able to demonstrate they have a thorough background knowledge of their project, be able to appraise key issues critically, be able to describe their research and understand what its significance/contribution is and have a plan of work for future milestones.

Annual progression may vary between years 1 and 2 but will usually consist of a presentation and/or submission of written work. This is assessed by a panel, with a minimum of two members, one of whom will not have had any connection with your PGRs work. This is to ensure that there will be an independent member of staff involved with reviewing the research. The examiners (panel) should feel confident that the plan of work will develop into a thesis that meets doctoral standards. The formal annual progression assessment is mandatory for all year 1 and year 2 PhD students; in some disciplines, an assessment/check-point may also take place in year 3, e.g. for 42 or 48 month programmes.

It is important to ensure the option to not store content on Turnitin is selected for submission of all year 1 Annual Progression Exercises, this will help prevent inaccurate similarity reports for the final thesis.

Annual progression in year one usually takes place around month nine, but each School can vary.

From AY 2022/23 (September), all year 1 annual progression exercises will be submitted via Turnitin (or SafeAssign if format requires).

Your School will inform PGRs on how to submit their Annual Progression Exercise work.

As a supervisor, you will be asked to review the Turnitin report to make a judgement on both the % match identified and the context of any matches within the topic and/or discipline 'norms'. You are required to check that any matches are acceptable and do not infringe plagiarism standards. Guidance on how to interpret the similarity report can be viewed [here](#). Judgement on what will be considered an acceptable level of similarity must be made by the supervisor - acceptable levels will differ based on subject area.

If there are any issues identified, you must report this to your Head of School and the PGR School who will take forward necessary steps to assess further action as outlined in the per [Code of Practice on Student Discipline \(Academic\). Schools](#) will follow the [University procedure for cases of alleged Academic Misconduct \(STAFF\)](#). This will include checking with the PGR School for completion of Mandatory Research Integrity training.

Please note that for PGRs, the G3 grade **should not** be used as PGR assessments are not graded using the CGS.

2. Thesis submission via Turnitin for examination

From AY 2022/23 (September), all theses (PhD, MPhil, Masters by Research) will be submitted via Turnitin prior to being sent to examiners.

PGRs will submit their thesis to postgraduate@abdn.ac.uk following which the Registry team will produce a report via Turnitin.

Supervisors will be sent this report to make a judgement on both the % match identified and the context of any matches within the topic and/or discipline 'norms'. You are required to check that any matches are acceptable and do not infringe plagiarism standards.

This must be returned to postgraduate@abdn.ac.uk within **2 weeks** – if you cannot meet that deadline, you must inform the Registry team immediately. If no response is received on the Turnitin report the thesis together with the Turnitin report will be sent to examiners for review.

If there are any issues identified, you must report this to your Head of School and the PGR School who will take forward necessary steps to assess further action as outlined in the per [Code of Practice on Student Discipline \(Academic\)](#). Schools will follow the [University procedure for cases of alleged Academic Misconduct \(STAFF\)](#).

As this policy is new, many students will not have had their annual progression submitted via Turnitin. In cases where plagiarism issues are identified in a final thesis and there has been no prior review of assessed work via Turnitin, Heads of School will be sympathetic to any cases and will treat them as a first instance. This will likely result in PGRs being able to revise and resubmit work prior to examination.

3. Turnitin

Turnitin is an online service which compares written work with other online sources (e.g. books, academic journal papers and webpages) and produces a similarity report of % match.

The Turnitin Similarity Report does NOT detect plagiarism, it is a tool which identifies text matching for which there may be a very good reason. Acceptable levels of similarity may differ based on subject area.

Confidentiality Agreements

Content submitted to Turnitin will be stored. Where there are confidentiality agreements/IP clauses in studentship agreements, reports will be submitted to a separate site Turnitin link where content is not stored.

Safe Assign can be used for theses where there is a large amount of formulae or the thesis is presented in different software packages e.g LaTeX.

Figure 1. Annual Progression Exercise and Thesis Submission via Turnitin

