

Guidance for PGR Students for the submission of Annual Progression Exercise (1) and the final thesis for examination.

*All PGRs must have completed **mandatory Research Integrity training** no later than month 6 of study. This training provides practical information to help ensure research is conducted to the highest standards and includes a module on the avoidance of plagiarism.*

1. Annual Progression Exercise

Please refer to the process flowchart (Figure 1).

The [Annual Progression Exercise](#) is designed to assess your ability as a researcher, to confirm the suitability of the project and to ensure that the supervisory team is working well. You should be able to demonstrate that you have a thorough background knowledge of your project, be able to appraise key issues critically, be able to describe your 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 work. This is to ensure that there will be an independent member of staff involved with reviewing your 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 also takes place in year 3, e.g. if you are on a 42 or 48 month programme.

Annual progression in year one usually takes place around month nine, but deadlines for each School can vary slightly. It is important that you are familiar with your School's expectations and deadlines for the Annual Progression Exercise. If you aren't sure about this, please contact your supervisor or [School PGR administrator](#) who can provide further information. The annual progression exercise may have a different name in your school eg 9-month assessment, PGR1 – please check you know what this is with your school PGR administrator.

From AY 2022/23 (September), all year 1 Annual Progression Exercises will be submitted via Turnitin*(please see Section 3 for more information) prior to being sent to examiners for review (Please refer Figure 1). Your supervisor or [School PGR administrator](#) will provide information on the Turnitin process within your School for Annual Progression Exercise Submissions.

Supervisors will be sent the Turnitin Similarity report generated for your thesis and invited to make a judgement on both the % match identified and the context of any matches within the topic and/or discipline 'norms', this will confirm whether any matches are acceptable and whether they infringe plagiarism standards.

2. Thesis submission via Turnitin for examination

Please refer to the process flowchart (Figure 1).

From AY 2022/23 (September), all theses will be submitted via Turnitin* prior to being sent to examiners.

All PGRs will submit their thesis to Registry using postgraduate@abdn.ac.uk. The Registry team will upload the thesis to Turnitin to generate a similarity report. Please note, it is not your responsibility as a student to upload your thesis to Turnitin, it should also be noted this is not an opportunity to proof check a thesis draft for similarity. Students **should not** self-submit any drafts of their thesis to Turnitin. Turnitin stores content and there is a possibility previously submitted drafts will result in the generation of a similarity report with a high % for the final thesis.

It is recognised acceptable levels of similarity may differ from Discipline to Discipline. Supervisors will be sent the Turnitin Similarity report generated for your thesis and invited to make a judgement on both the % match identified and the context of any matches within the topic and/or discipline 'norms', this will confirm whether any matches are acceptable and whether they infringe plagiarism standards. Comments from supervisors are expected to be returned to Registry within **2 weeks** and once received, the thesis will be sent to examiners. It is important to note that in the event where there may be a delayed response or no response received on the Turnitin report, in order to prevent delays to the viva process, the thesis together with the Turnitin Similarity report will be sent to the viva examiners for review.

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. As such it is important similarity ratings are explored by supervisors or viva examiners prior to any examination taking place.

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.

If a thesis requires Safe Assign, please discuss this with your supervisor or Registry at least two weeks prior to submission. Safe Assign is used for theses where there is a large amount of formulae or the thesis is presented in different software packages eg LaTeX.

Outcomes and suspected cases of academic misconduct.

If your supervisor(s) confirms there are no concerns, your viva or Annual Progression Exercise panel will be arranged.

Academic Misconduct

In cases where plagiarism issues are identified in an Annual Progression Exercise, this will be discussed and action to be taken will be determined by your supervisor(s).

In cases where plagiarism issues are identified in a thesis, your viva will be postponed and a preliminary [Academic Misconduct investigation](#) will be initiated, as per Section 4 of the [Code of Practice](#). The outcome of the investigation will determine whether your viva can proceed. Depending on the severity of the perceived plagiarisms, revisions and resubmission to work prior to examination *may* be granted. Please view the [STUDENT flowchart](#) for details of the process the University will follow.

Figure 1. Annual Progression Exercise and Thesis Submission via Turnitin

