**EXAMINATION OF FIRST YEAR REPORT - guidance**

The First Year Assessment should take the form of a meeting between student and two assessors lasting perhaps 1–1.5 hours.  Assessors should be aware that this meeting aims to provide the student with guidance as well, but also to rigorously assess student performance.  In general it is not appropriate for the supervisor to be present throughout the assessment, unless invited to be so by the student.  However, supervisors will need to consult with the assessors after the assessment, and often this is best achieved by meeting immediately after the assessment.  This is an ideal opportunity for refining the goals of the thesis.

**Objectives of the assessment**

* to check that the student has the ability and motivation to successfully complete the PhD
* to reassess the specifics of the project that the student will pursue
* to ensure that there are no difficulties with the supervisor/student relationship.

**Assessors’ report.**

Once an assessment is completed, the assessors compile a report and send this to the supervisor and Graduate Office (fr288@cam.ac.uk).  Comment briefly on the following:

* Summary of project
* Progress of work to date
* Motivation and enthusiasm of student, any supervisory issues
* Standard of the report - standard of writing, detail, scope, presentation
* Knowledge and understanding shown by the student of the subject
* Planning, timescales and direction of the Project
* Any concerns, or limitations identified
* Meetings with Supervisor and Advisor – please discuss and record the regularity of meetings that take place between student & Supervisor and student & Advisor
* Summary of assessment and recommendations.

**Outcomes:**

The possible recommendations from a first-year assessment are as follows:

1. Recommend to register for a PhD straight away
2. Delay registration decision – the assessors are not happy to recommend registration straight away but require some further action to ensure a decision to re-register is a correct one.
   1. Rapid corrections: the first year report is not a library document, and we do not expect typographic or similar corrections to be performed, although the examiners should note poor presentation in their report and in particular if data presented are not of publishable standard, they may wish to see a revised presentation of these. Rapid corrections do not have to take the form of a rewriting of text but could be an insertion or addendum. This could be bullet points addressing a specific concern or for example, a timeline or a revision of a methodology. In general we would expect these to be completed within two weeks.
   2. More major corrections: this should be considered an unusual outcome, as extra time spent with the first year report can be shown to be associated with over-running submission of the PhD. However if a complete rewrite of one or more sections or representation with additional data are essential to allow a fair decision on PhD registration, this outcome is available. Corrections should be satisfactorily completed within 6 weeks.
3. Assessors cannot recommend for registration: Assessors believe student will not be able to achieve the standard required for a PhD.  In these cases the assessors and supervisor should consider if the student could complete as MPhil, and may so recommend.

**Assessors and supervisors are asked to take a careful and realistic view** of weak candidates and not to recommend PhD registration if they have doubts about the candidate’s ability to complete.

**Reporting the assessment** Assessors should wherever possible try to produce their report **immediately** after the assessment. The report should then be sent to the supervisor and Graduate Office (fr288@cam.ac.uk).

**EXAMINATION OF FIRST YEAR REPORT – ASSESSORS’ REPORT**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Section 1: Student Details – to be completed by Graduate Office** | | | |
| **Name:** | |  | |
| **USN:** | |  | |
| **Admit Term:** | |  | |
| **Supervisor:** | |  | |
| **Department:** | |  | |
| **Section 2: First Year Viva Details and outcome to be completed by Assessors** | | | |
| **Name of Assessor 1:** |  | | |
| **Name of Assessor 2:** |  | | |
| **Date of oral exam:** |  | | |
| **Title of First Year report:** | | | |
| **Joint Assessors’ Report:** | | | |
| *Please write a brief report on the quality and scope of the student’s report, the knowledge shown by the student at the oral, his/her understanding of any limitations and weaknesses in the current and future work, etc.* | | | |
| **Joint Assessor’s Comments on the Project’s Feasibility:** | | | |
| *Please comment on the suitability of the project for completion within 3–4 years, as appropriate, and highlight any foreseeable problems.* | | | |
| **Contact with Supervisor and Advisor:** | | | |
| *How often has the student met with Supervisor and Advisor? (weekly/monthly/bi-termly/termly etc)*  Supervisor:  Advisor:  Any comments: | | | |
| **Joint Assessor’s Recommendation (please indicate which one):** | | | |
| 1. Student should now be registered formally for the PhD | | |  |
| 1. Student should be asked to submit a revised report or additional materials – no re-exam needed **(please indicate how long to allow for re-submission)** | | |  |
| 1. Student should be asked to revise and be re-examined  at a later date **(please indicate how long to allow for re-submission)** | | |  |
| 1. Student should be advised to take the MPhil or MSc option | | |  |
| 1. Student should be asked to withdraw | | |  |
| **Section 3: Supervisor’s Comment and recommendation – to be completed by Supervisor** | | | |
| *Supervisor: Please write a brief justification for your recommendation. Please expand this to a detailed explanation (400 words max) if your recommendation is different from that of the assessors or if you choose recommendation 4.* | | | |
| **Supervisor’s Recommendation (please indicate which one)** | | | |
| 1. Student should now be registered formally for the PhD | | |  |
| 1. Student should be asked to submit a revised report or additional materials – no re-exam needed **(please indicate how long to allow for re-submission)** | | |  |
| 1. Student should be asked to revise and be re-examined  at a later date **(please indicate how long to allow for re-submission)** | | |  |
| 1. Student should be advised to take the MPhil or MSc option | | |  |
| 1. Student should be asked to withdraw | | |  |
| **Section 4: Department PGEC Comment and recommendation** | | | |
| *Comments:*  *Date of PGEC decision:* | | | |
| **Department PGEC Recommendation** | | | |
| 1. Student should now be registered formally for the PhD | | |  |
| 2. Student should be asked to submit a revised report or additional materials – no re-exam needed **(please indicate how long to allow for re-submission)** | | |  |
| 3. Student should be asked to revise and be re-examined  at a later date **(please indicate how long to allow for re-submission)** | | |  |
| 4. Student should be advised to take the MPhil or MSc option | | |  |
| 1. Student should be asked to withdraw | | |  |