**EXAMINATION OF FIRST YEAR REPORT**

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 rigourously 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).  Examples below show what we would expect to be included in the report, but this can be brief (one to two sides of A4):

* 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
* 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 to allow the assessors to revise their registration decision within the calendar year.
   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 whould 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.

An example format of a report can be found below – whether this or a freeform report is used, it must be signed by both Assessors.

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

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name of Student:** |  | | |
| **Name of Supervisor:** |  | | |
| **Date of Examination:** |  | | |
| **Title of Project:** |  | | |
| **General comments :**  *(See notes above - continue on a separate sheet if needed)* | | | |
| **Summary and Recommendations:** | | | |
| **Outcome 1:** Student can be registered for a PhD straight away | | |  |
| **Outcome 2:** Delay registration decision – *Rapid corrections (2 weeks)*  *- More major corrections (6 weeks)*  give additional comments/requirements below | | |  |
| **Additional Comments if not recommending to register student at this time:**   * *Additional actions you recommend be carried out?* * *Would you like to see an updated First Year Report?* * *Is re-examination is necessary (see notes above)?* | | | |
| **Outcome 3:** Student is not expected to meet standard required for a PhD – give additional comments below | | |  |
| **Additional Comments if student not considered to meet standards for a PhD:**  *Include:*   * *Recommend student to complete as an MPhil?* * *Recommend that student be asked to withdraw?* | | | |
| **Signatures of both Examiners** | | | |
| Signed: | | Signed: | |
| Name: | | Name: | |
| Date: | | Date: | |