

Quick Reference Guide: Progress Support Plans

What is a Progress Support Plan?

A Progress Support Plan (PSP) is a formal document created whenever a candidate's progress is deemed to be 'at risk' in an ad hoc or milestone report. It has four sections:

- A short explanation of the factor(s) behind the 'at risk' determination
- A planning checklist
- A list of progress goals arising from the milestone meeting that give the candidate a clear understanding of how to get back on track
- A summary page describing PSP outcomes

*The goals set out in a PSP must be **authentic** to the project and be realistically **achievable within a fixed timeframe** (typically not more than 12 weeks).*

What's involved?

Upon receipt of an 'at risk' determination in a milestone report, the PSP template should be downloaded by the Progress Committee Chair. The Progress Committee Chair should then complete section 1 of the PSP based on needs identified in the milestone attempt and provide it to the candidate and supervisors for goal setting.

Candidates are not responsible for drafting their own PSP goals, however it would normally be expected that the PSP goals be discussed with the candidate so that they are clear about their expectations and able to offer input into the process.

What are the outcomes?

At the end of the PSP period, Progress Committee review meeting is held. If the candidate has achieved the PSP goals, their progress status reverts to satisfactory. If the candidate has not met the PSP goals, one of the following processes will apply:

- A second PSP period may be warranted, or
- A proposal to consider a degree transfer or other change, or
- The candidate may be asked to 'show cause' (i.e. in order to not be excluded from the program)

*The outcome of the PSP depends on **both** the candidate meeting the PSP goals **and** receiving sufficient support to do so. Inadequate or unspecified support may make it difficult for the Progress Committee to arrive at a clear end of PSP decision.*

How to prepare the PSP?

Where a candidate has been deemed 'at risk', it's important that the reasons for this determination are clear and are understood by the candidate (even if they disagree). When Preparing the PSP, be sure to attend to the following:

- Ensure that everyone's details are correct, and that a reasonable timeframe, together with a **specified end of PSP date**, has been set.
- Ensure that the **reason(s)** for the PSP are clearly expressed, in a way that is constructive, not overly personally judgemental
- Decide on a **list of goals** that are authentic, reasonable, achievable in the specified timeframe. Describe these expectations in as much detail as necessary (*e.g. rather than just 'complete chapter x', try 'complete chapter x, which is expected to be X,000 words in length'*)
- **Describe the support** that will be provided. *Note: just listing 'regular supervision meetings' is unlikely to be enough, as this is presumably what was being provided before the 'at risk' determination was reached. Be more specific about how supervisors will use their time to address the needs of the goals listed. If service or support units are to be consulted, specify which ones and how contact will be made (don't just direct the candidate to 'access service x')*
- Ensure that the supervisors and candidate have **reached a consensus** about the PSP content before finalising the process. *The PSP process may not work effectively if supervisors are in disagreement about what the PSP goals are, and this will cause confusion and instability for the candidate.*
- **PC Chair:** please hold the web form unsubmitted while these steps are completed, and then attach the agreed PSP and finalise the submission of the web form at that point (end of first week).