

Advanced Artist Diploma – Progress review guidance

This guidance supports the ‘Progress reviews and termination of studies’ policy for Advanced Artist Diploma students. It is based on the University of St Andrews document [Progress review Guidance](#) and has been amended only where necessary to take account of Royal Conservatoire personnel, structures and the practice-based nature of the doctoral programmes offered by the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

Overview

The progress review for the Advanced Artist Diploma will normally take place following the completion of the preparatory project. In the case of opera students this will comprise the performance of a role at the RCS in January: instrumentalists will typically give a recital during the ‘mid session’ period in early February.

The review will comprise an interview with a panel of two RCS members of staff who are not members of the supervisory team, normally one specialist from the relevant discipline and one generalist academic.

Process

Preparatory project performance

- Assessed by two internal disciplinary experts, neither of whom will be a supervisor of the student concerned
- Outcome is satisfactory
 - Record ‘pass’ in student outcomes
 - Assessor feedback (‘crit’) uploaded to student outcomes
- Outcome is unsatisfactory
 - Record ‘fail’ in student outcomes
 - Assessor feedback (‘crit’) uploaded to student outcomes

Progress review interview

- Information required:
 - Record of ‘pass’ or ‘fail’ from student outcomes
 - Assessor feedback (‘crit’) from student outcomes
 - Reports from each of the supervisors
 - A student self-assessment report, plan for completion and initial outline of the commentary
 - Reviewer’s reports from any previous reviews
- Outcomes
 - If the preparatory project is ‘pass’ the outcome may be green, yellow or amber. The review panel may have concerns going forward, but the performance does not need to be repeated. The outcome is reported to RDC and credit is awarded.

- If the preparatory project is 'fail' the outcome will be red. A 'resit' of the preparatory project will be required. Credit is not yet awarded.

Delayed preparatory project performance

Exceptionally, it may not be possible for the preparatory project performance to take place before the progress review in February. Under these circumstances the progress review will still take place, without the evidence of the performance. Reviewers will be expected to interrogate closely both the supervisor reports and the student's plans in order to assure themselves that the preparatory performance is likely to be successful.

Following a satisfactory performance at a later date, the 'pass' is reported to RDC and credit awarded.

If the performance is not satisfactory, a 'resit' will be required.

Guidance for the Royal Conservatoire

The Programme Committee is responsible for administering the annual progress review and for ensuring that the process is managed smoothly and in a timely fashion for all involved. The progress review panel is delegated to undertake the review by the Programme Committee. The process will be overseen by the Head of Programme.

All AdvArtDip students will undergo a formal progress review, normally by month five.

The Head of Programme will ensure that the timings and assessment criteria of the progress review are made clear to incoming students when they begin their course of study. The Head of Programme will ensure that all participating staff and students are aware of Royal Conservatoire policy.

The Head of Programme is responsible for allocating an appropriate review panel to each student being reviewed. In addition to referring to the Policy regulations regarding the allocation of reviewers, the Head of Programme will use their discretion and familiarity with the relationships to ensure that there can be no conflicts of interest in the case of reviewers chosen. The Convenor of the Programme Committee, in correspondence with reviewers and other appropriate members of Royal Conservatoire staff, will also confirm the final outcome of all progress reviews, and will oversee the smooth running of any ensuing processes, such as re-reviews. Any required re-reviews should take place between two and five months after the initial review although students can request an earlier re-review.

Guidance for supervisors

Supervisors should be familiar with the quality and quantity of their students' work, and should attend the preparatory project performance. Supervisors should give guidance on preparing for progress review, including preparing the required documents, and complete the supervisor report form.

Supervisors should be open and honest in their assessment but should keep in mind that the progress review is an information sharing process and the student will have access to their report. To that end, concerns or criticisms should always be constructive. In rare cases a supervisor may have serious concerns about the student that would benefit from an

additional conversation with the Head of Programme prior to submitting the Supervisor's Assessment.

Following the review, supervisors should discuss the feedback from reviews with their students and agree a plan of action based on the outcome.

If a situation arises where it becomes clear that a student is not making adequate progress, the supervisor should be proactive in discussing alternative options with the student, including leave of absence, extension, or withdrawal from study. Where necessary, supervisors should direct students to other sources of support and training, for example IELLI at the University of St Andrews and the Creative Enterprise Development Office (CEDO) at the RCS.

Guidance for reviewers

The progress review is, first and foremost, intended to track the progress of students and to ensure that they both have the capacity and are receiving the necessary support to complete the relevant research degree in a timely fashion. Within the broad spectrum of students that reviewers will encounter during the progress review process, their most serious responsibility is to those who may be seriously struggling with the demands of the programme. In these cases, the reviewers' feedback can begin a process in which students are given as much support as possible to enable them to continue or, where necessary, are guided through the process of terminating their studies.

However, the vast majority of students going through the review process will not be in this situation. For these students, the review process serves a variety of purposes that reviewers should be sensitive to. It provides an opportunity for them to garner new perspectives on their work, outside of their supervisory team. It is also an opportunity for them to discuss any concerns they may have, for example with their supervisory arrangements.

Outcomes of progress review

The 4-tier outcome system (see the relevant programme Policy for details of descriptors) is intended to enable the Programme Committee to respond with sufficient nuance to students across a spectrum of outcomes. The two lower tiers ('unsatisfactory' and 'satisfactory with major concerns') indicate a strong recommendation that the student undergo the re-review process, and are to be used when there are major concerns regarding the student's capacity to finish in a timely fashion. The two upper tiers ('satisfactory' and 'satisfactory with minor concerns') allow for reviewers to provide feedback and suggestions to students who seem to be reasonably well on track to complete.

Awarding a 'satisfactory' outcome does not preclude a reviewer from having comments or advice in their feedback to a student who is clearly doing well. 'Satisfactory with minor concerns' may be used to give more weight, where it is felt necessary, to advice that might be of significant benefit to a student's project and their timely completion. For example, should the review process reveal significant methodological differences between an assessor and a student, but these do not impact upon a student's capacity to complete, 'satisfactory' and 'satisfactory with minor concerns' are appropriate outcomes to use.

Should a reviewer award an outcome of ‘unsatisfactory’ or ‘satisfactory with major concerns’, the decision on the student’s status will be taken by the Programme Committee, in discussion with other appropriate individuals.

Expectations of reviewers

Reviewers are expected to read the submitted materials and conduct interviews with students in a timely fashion. They should be responsive to the fact that different students may have a variety of needs and may respond best to a variety of different approaches in terms of the interview and feedback provided. They should provide conscientious advice on a student’s project within their expertise to do so and should treat seriously any concerns that individual students may raise. Reviewers should be sensitive to the dynamics of the student-supervisor relationship and be aware of the need for discretion when discussing any potential supervisory concerns. Reviewers are encouraged to ask about, and give advice on, the normal range of supervisory concerns, but are not expected to deal with especially complex or sensitive matters. The student can also be directed to the Head of Programme or, where they are a supervisor, the Doctoral Degrees Coordinator, to discuss these concerns at any time.

Guidance for students

Students should make themselves aware of the requirements for progress review from the beginning of their programme of study, and should work towards being well prepared.

Students should approach progress review as a valuable opportunity in a number of different ways. Firstly, it encourages students to reflect upon their own progress and proactively to manage their studies in order to produce the best submission possible within the time allotted. It is also an opportunity for students to receive feedback on their work from academics outside of their supervisory team.

The progress review is also an opportunity for students to report how they feel things have been going – how their research or artistic development, from their point of view, is progressing, and whether they are happy with the supervisory and other support arrangements in place. Students should feel encouraged to discuss any concerns they have with the progress review panel (for example, a desire for more frequent supervisions or the possible need for a change of supervisor due to a change in the direction of the research) but should remember that the progress review is an information sharing activity. If students have any issues that they would like to discuss in confidence they may also contact the Head of Programme or the Doctoral Degrees Coordinator at any time.

Following the progress review students will receive an outcome and a reviewers’ report. The review outcome and report may provide advice or recommend specific actions that the student might take to improve the progress of their research. Students should be proactive in taking any such suggestions on board and in discussing them with their supervisors. If a re-review is necessary, students will receive advice and guidance on the process from the Head of Programme, their supervisor, and other members of staff where appropriate.

If students have any concerns or problems, and if there is anything they feel is hindering their progress, they should, at any point, feel free to contact the Head of Programme or the Doctoral Degrees Coordinator.

Appendix 1: Accommodating different circumstances

Although the processes and protocols given above will apply to the vast majority of students, certain student circumstances may require specific agreed adaptations to these processes. The notes below aim to clarify some of the circumstances in which this may be the case, but are by no means exhaustive. The Head of Programme can provide further advice and support if situations remain unclear.

Leave(s) of absence and extension period

The Royal Conservatoire requires any student on a leave of absence to attend an interview with the progress review panel. The panel will, however, be sensitive to the different time-scales and expected progress rates involved. Students should submit updates on their work every three months, which will be monitored by both the supervisor and the Research Degrees Committee. If there are doubts about timely completion, the Research Degrees Committee may request further information.

Appendix 2: Expectations

Students should:

- Familiarise themselves with relevant rules, regulations, and guidelines.
- Establish a successful working pattern.
- Produce the agreed amount of work.
- Complete the student self-assessment form.
- Contact, at any time, the Head of Programme if they wish to discuss any concerns or problems.

Supervisors should:

- Familiarise themselves with relevant rules, regulations, and guidelines, and be equipped to answer student questions about them, and to provide guidance throughout the review process.
- Be available for, and encourage, regular supervision meetings.
- Be familiar with the quantity and quality of their student's work.
- Provide realistic, constructive feedback on their student's progress.
- Complete the supervisor report form.

The Head of Programme will:

- Oversee the process and be available to offer advice and guidance to all involve
- Assign reviewers, with reference to subject coverage and any potential conflicts of interest.
- Ensure that reviews happen in a timely fashion.

The progress review panel will:

- Review all submissions and conduct interviews with students in a timely fashion.
- Identify any areas for concern, including minor and non-academic concerns.
- Identify any additional training or supervisory needs.

- Provide constructive feedback for student and supervisor and submit a report with reference to outcome descriptors (see the relevant programme policy for further details).

The Programme Committee will:

- Address any issues relating to supervisory arrangements that may have come to light during the review process.
- Approve all outcomes and agree and communicate follow-up actions where necessary.

The Research Degrees Committee will:

- Note outcomes and actions.
- Confirm the award of credit for the Preparatory Project.

Appendix 3: Workflow

- The Head of Programme and supervisory team make students aware of the progress review requirements from matriculation.
- The programme handbook and calendar confirms the date windows for the preparatory project assessment, submission of self-assessment form, and progress review interview.
- Preparatory project performances are scheduled by the relevant department and notified to students via the Asimut timetable.
- Submission date for self-assessment form notified to students via Moodle.
- Pass/fail grade and feedback from preparatory project assessment uploaded to Student Outcomes by AAS
- Students complete and submit self-assessment form on Moodle.
- The Head of Programme assigns reviewers and circulates guidance and expectations.
- Supervisors submit reports by the given deadline.
- Interview takes place, usually as a face to face meeting. The progress review panel use guidance provided to assess the student's progress.
- Progress review panel agree feedback and report to the Programme Committee for approval.
- Approved review outcome, actions and report made available to students and supervisory team via Student Outcomes.
- Head of Programme arranges re-review for any amber or red outcomes. In the case of a red outcome this will include a 'resit' of the Preparatory Project performance.
- Where the outcome is green, yellow or amber, the Research Degree Committee awards credit for the Preparatory Project. The credit is noted on Student Outcomes.
- The Research Degrees Committee escalates any failed re-reviews to the Associate Provost Education for termination of studies.
- Student is informed in writing of any changes to registration and their right to appeal. Any scholarship is suspended only after student has exhausted their route of appeal or the initial appeal deadline has passed.

Appendix 4: Information sharing

The progress review is essentially an information-sharing exercise, ensuring that students, their supervisors, and the Royal Conservatoire are all working towards the same expectations and standards. However, it also involves the creation and distribution of material and information that may be of a sensitive nature. The process, therefore, also creates an opportunity for the student to share some information confidentially with the progress review panel. This table indicates what information or documents should be shared with the different individuals involved at each stage of the review process.

	Before/during progress review, has access to or receives:	After progress review, has access to or receives:
Progress review panel	Outcomes of and all documents relating to a student's previous reviews. The documents submitted in the current review by the student and supervisors. Preparatory project grade and feedback.	
Programme Committee, Research Degrees Committee		Reviewers' report. Supervision-related concerns.
Student	The documents submitted in the current review by the student and supervisors. Preparatory project grade and feedback.	Reviewers' report. The Head of Programme may correspond directly with the student regarding supervisory concerns and how they might best be addressed before taking action (which is likely to involve discussing issues with the supervisor).
Supervisors	The documents submitted in the current review by the student and supervisors. Preparatory project grade and feedback.	Reviewers' report. The Head of Programme may correspond directly with the supervisor regarding a potential re-review or any other action a student may need to undertake.