1.0 OVERVIEW

The Research Student Log is UCL’s online project management and development tool specifically designed for our research students. The Log provides a framework and timeline for the formal supervisory meetings of your research project, and will help you assess your progress as well as plan and chart evidence of the development of your research and generic skills. Keeping a Log is a MANDATORY part of all research degrees at UCL (MPhil/PhD, EngD, DPro (Professional Doctorates) programmes, MD(Res) and MRes).

The Log is intended to be used in a flexible manner, to allow for different research processes between different disciplines. How and when you interact with your Log will depend on which research degree you are registered for – there are slightly different modes for the MPhil/PhD and EngD; Professional Doctorates; and for the MRes.

The Log does not record your more frequent supervisory meetings you likely have several times per week/month, but it ensures that objectives are set, recorded and monitored at key points — your Formal Supervisory Reviews. It is your responsibility to maintain your Log for your own long-term benefit.

1.1 REQUIREMENTS

You are required to fill in your Formal Supervisory Reviews and submit them to your supervisory team online so they can be verified and made part of your supervision record. At each of the Formal Supervisory Review milestones indicated in the timeline in your Log, you will use the Log to record your progress since your last review, objectives for the coming period, and the skills you need to achieve them.

You will receive email reminders before each review is due and a few weeks after if it still hasn’t been submitted. Whilst there is no penalty for submitting a section after its due date, you should aim to submit your section on time so your supervisors can do their part promptly. Your Departmental Graduate Tutor will confirm that the UCL Log has been satisfactorily completed at upgrade and thesis submission milestones (MPhil/PhD students).

You should also periodically use the Log’s Personal Training and Development Planning Tool to help identify areas in which you need to develop.

If you are funded by a UK Research Council, you should average at least 20 points (10 days) worth of skills training per year (based on a 3 year, full time, programme). Even if you are not funded by a UK Research Council it is still recommended to aim for 20 points per year although it is not mandatory.

2.0 GETTING STARTED

To create your account on the system you will need your UCL ID and Password. This will be the same credentials you use to access other UCL systems such as Moodle or Desktop@UCL and should have been supplied to you by ISD upon enrolment. If this isn’t the case, please contact the ISD service desk:

https://www.ucl.ac.uk/isd/common/servicedesk

Once you have your credentials enter them in the top set of login boxes and click ‘Sign In’.

2.1 FIRST LOGIN

For most students you simply need to scroll down and click continue to create a new Log account from your Portico record.
But the Log will search the records from other Doctoral School Systems such as the Skills System for entries that match your name first in case you had another account from which to import your details. If you had previously set up an account on another system using a static email and password combination, select it from the list and confirm the password from that account.

Select your Log Mode

All MPhil/PhD students and EngD students should select “Doctorate (Full-Time)” or “Doctorate (Part-Time)” mode, depending on whether you are studying full or part-time.

All Professional Doctorate students should select “DPro” mode.

All MRes students should select “MRes” mode.

The correct Log template will then be available for you to use.

Add figure showing options, ie

- Doctorate (Full-Time)
- Doctorate (Part-Time)
- MRes
- DPro

N.B. How and when you use your Log differs depending on the mode, so make sure you have selected the right mode.

Add your Supervisory Team

Principal/Subsidiary Supervisors: The Research Student Log draws your official Principal and Subsidiary Supervisor details directly from Portico, the student record system. If your supervisor/s do not appear in the Log when you log in, then please check to see that they are correctly recorded in your student record in Portico. If they are not present in Portico then please ask your Departmental Administrator to add your supervisors’ details to Portico for you.

Please note your supervisor will also need to have an account on the Research Student Log in order to appear in your supervision list, so if they are in Portico but not showing in the Log, then ask your supervisor to activate their Log account too.

If your supervisors change during your programme then you will need to ask your Department Administrator to update Portico accordingly and your Log will then reflect the changes too.

For DPro and MRes students this will be set to your Course Director or equivalent initially, and updated with the details of the research supervisors once they are allocated.

Tertiary Supervisors: You can give Log access to other members of your wider supervisory team, provided this is done in consultation with your Principal and Subsidiary Supervisors and with the approval of your Departmental Graduate Tutor. These people are termed “Tertiary Supervisors” for the purposes on the Log, and could be other UCL academic staff or industrial collaborators for example – in all cases they should be people with whom you are working closely on your research and who need to follow your Log progress.

To add a Tertiary to your team, type part or all of their surname into the box, then apply for them to be Tertiary Supervisor. If a supervisor is not listed it is likely they do not yet have an account on the system. Ask them to log in and their name will appear on the list for you to add to your Log.
3.0 FORMAL SUPERVISORY REVIEWS

When you select the Formal Supervisory Reviews Section of your Log (from the menu at the top) you will see all the formal review points laid out in the vertical timeline on the left, taking you from your first Research Summary to just before you submit your thesis.

The names of the reviews correspond to the approximate timing they need to be filled out, and each review has an icon next to it indicating its submission status:

- □ = no status – Haven’t yet reached the due date of the review
- ● = in progress - You have completed and submitted the form and it is waiting for one or more supervisors to sign off.
- ▲ = overdue - The review is past its due date. You need to fill this out and submit it as soon as possible.
- ■ = All done - The review has received signatures from all supervisors and is no longer editable.

N.B - How and when you complete your formal supervisory reviews depends on the Log Mode you have selected, please see below for full details.

3.1 LOG MODES

3.1.1 Doctorate (Full-time)
You will select this research mode if you are registered on a full time 3 or 4 year research programme (MPhil/PhD for example). If you are on a 4-year programme (MPhil/PhD or EngD for example), please shift your research start date by 1 year within the “About Me” section.

Once the study mode has been selected, please go on the “Formal Supervisory Reviews” section of your Log. You will see all the Log milestones, the points at which you need to submit your reviews throughout the course of your study at UCL. Each milestone has a due date located at the top of the form. The final milestone is the “Prior to Thesis Submission” which is due after the 60 months review.

The Log will send you an automated email reminder 2 weeks before a milestone due date and a reminder 2 weeks after the due date. At each milestone you are required to fill in a review (see section 3.3 for details) and submit this to your supervisor to review and sign off. Please ensure you complete your reviews promptly.

The Log will send you an automated email reminder 2 weeks before a milestone due date and a reminder 2 weeks after the due date. At each milestone you are required to fill in a review (see section 3.3 for details) and submit this to your supervisor to review and sign off. Please ensure you complete your reviews promptly.
3.1.3 DPro
You will select this research mode if you are registered on a Professional Doctorate research programme.

As a DPro student, you can use the Skills & Courses section of the Log from the outset of your programme to plan and record your skills training, but you are only required to complete the “Formal Supervisory Reviews” at the point your research project or projects commence (this will be agreed with your supervisor). Until then your “research start date” will default to 01/01/2000 and all the milestones (within the “Formal Supervisory Reviews”) will be set to “No Action required”.

Once your research starts, set your research start date in the “About Me” section, ensure that your research supervisors are correctly recorded in the “Supervisors” section, and complete your “Research Summary” and “Initial Skills and Objectives” under the “Formal Supervisory Reviews” section. You will now see all the Log milestones, the points at which you need to submit your reviews throughout the course of your study at UCL. Each milestone has a due date located at the top of the form: you will see that this is every 6 months (with an extra one at the beginning setting out your initial objectives and skills, and at the 3 month stage).

The Log will send you an automated email reminder 2 weeks before a milestone due date and a reminder 2 weeks after the due date. At each milestone you are required to fill in a review (see section 3.3 for details) and submit this to your supervisor to review and sign off. Please ensure you complete your reviews promptly.

3.1.4 MRes
You will select this study mode if you are registered on a full time MRes programme.

As an MRes student, you can use the Skills & Courses section of the Log from the outset of your programme to plan and record your skills training, but you are only required to complete the “Formal Supervisory Reviews” at the point your research project or projects commence.

At that point, set your research start date in the “About Me” section, ensure that your research supervisors are correctly recorded in the “Supervisors” section, and complete your “Research Summary” and “Initial Skills and Objectives”. Then go to the “Formal Supervisory Reviews” section of your log and you will see the two subsequent reviews you are required to submit: these are the same for all MRes students - 25th of May (1st Review) and 25th of August (2nd Review).

The Log will send you an automated email reminder 2 weeks before a milestone due date and a reminder 2 weeks after the due date. At each milestone you are required to fill in a review (see section 3.3 for details) and submit this to your supervisor to review and sign off. Please ensure you complete your reviews promptly.

3.2 HOW TO FILL IN YOUR RESEARCH SUMMARY
All students should complete their Research Summary soon after starting their research with the working title of the thesis, and main research goals. You should update this section as necessary as you proceed through your programme.

You should also indicate whether your research requires ethical approval and if so by which body (UCL or NHS for example). Please note that you will not be able to submit your Prior to Thesis Submission milestone (MPhil/PhD students) until you have entered the UCL ethics number. Your name and ethics number should be identical on both your UCL ethics form as well as the Research Student Log. You will also need to be a named researcher on the Ethics form in order for the Log to match the ethics number to you.

3.3 HOW TO FILL IN YOUR INITIAL OBJECTIVES AND SKILLS
You should fill in this section at the beginning of your research with your initial objectives and the skills you will need to get started.
As part of this you will need to identify your Research Integrity training needs (in discussion with your supervisor) and plan the integrity training you will take as you progress. You will be asked at Upgrade (MPhil/PhD students) to confirm that you have undertaken integrity training.

3.4 HOW TO FILL IN A SUBSEQUENT REVIEW (3-months, 6-months etc.)

You will receive an email reminder from the Log system asking you to fill your subsequent reviews when they are due. To do this you need to log into the system and click on 'Formal Supervisory Reviews' in the top menu.

Each of these formal reviews follows the same format. It is recommended that these reviews take the form of documentation of actual supervisory meetings. You should record, in the boxes indicated, your discussions about:

1. Progress since your last review – you and your supervisory team will review the progress against the objectives you set at your last review point. Have these been achieved? Was it necessary to change any and if so how? Do any of your objectives have to be continued into the next period?

2. Objectives for the next period – you and your supervisors will agree and record objectives for the coming six month period (or three for the first review).

3. Skills required to complete objectives – the skills you need will change over time, this section allows you actively to consider the skills you do not currently possess and those you need to further develop as you move through your programme. Think about what training you are going to need for the coming period, your future goals and aspirations, and where you might get that training from (from your department, the central Doctoral Skills Development Programme, or outside UCL for example). Discuss this with your supervisor. To help you do this you should at each review stage to use and update the Personal Training and Development Tool in the Log (see section 4.3).

For MPhil/PhD students - You will see that Upgrade Review and the Prior to Thesis Submission Reviews are subtly different. Each will ask you to confirm that you have received ethics approval for your project by entering your application number (you will have indicated whether or not your project requires ethics approval in your Research Summary). The Upgrade and Submission reviews also ask additionally for the proposed dates to your Upgrade and Final Submission respectively.

3.4.1 Editing the form

To edit a form click 'Edit Form' in any of the form’s boxes. You’ll be able to type into the boxes and perform basic formatting (bulleted lists, emphasised text etc.). To exit edit mode you should click ‘Save’ (to save changes) or Discard Changes if you do not wish to keep the changes you have made.

3.4.2 Attaching a document

You can upload and attach documentation to your reviews by clicking 'Attach doc.' This will open a window where you can either upload a file directly from your PC or attach a file from your online 'Filing Cabinet' or 'Gallery'. Either select 'browse' to browse your PC for a file (ensure you have specified if the file is a picture or a document) or select a file from your uploaded documents and click the relevant 'Attach' button. The attached file will appear below your review.

3.4.3 Adding a comment

'Make Comment' to add it to your review. This comment will be available to your whole supervisory team who can respond in the same manner.

3.4.4 Submitting the review

Once you have finished filling in a review it will need to be submitted to your supervisory team. This will notify them by email that there is a Log section you would like them to sign off. To submit a Review look for the grey bar at the top of the page, confirm that you do wish to submit the form and then click 'Submit for Signature'. You’ll notice this changes the icon in the left hand navigation.

NB – Once you have submitted a review you can still edit it. However you will need to provide a reason for the edit and the form will be versioned to allow your supervisors to step back and view what was there before.

NB – Once a review has received signatures from all supervisors it will no longer be editable although you can still add comments etc.

4.0 SKILLS AND COURSES

The Skills and Courses section of the Log provides a record of the Skills Development course and activates you have undertaken and allows you to search for opportunities to the training needs that you have identified. You can find information here on a wealth of training available to you from your department and from the central Doctoral Skills Development Programme.

4.1 MY TRAINING

This is a list of your training. Your courses are split into 'Attended' and 'Upcoming Courses'. It will display courses you are booked on to, the courses you are on the waiting list for and the total number of points you have accrued. You can also remove courses from this screen.
NB – If you cannot attend a course please remove it to free up the place for someone on the waiting list as soon as possible.

If you imported course details from your skills account on your first login they will already be displayed here.

4.2 ADD COURSES
From here you can log points for Courses and Activities. You can search for courses by typing all or part of a course title in the keyword field and clicking 'Find'. This is useful if you wish to take a course on something specific such as MS Excel.

4.3 PERSONAL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN
You can find a link under Skills and Courses to your Personal Training and Development Plan.

It is important for your development to regularly review your skills - what you need for your current work and future aspirations. Based in the national Researcher Development Framework, this tool will prompt you to build an initial profile of your professional skills and attributes, and in light of this to plan your personal and professional development and selection of training courses, development opportunities and resources. You can review and update your Plan at any point in your journey (and you should do so regularly); you don’t have to wait to do it as part of one of your formal Log reviews.

See the RDF manual to get the most from this tool:
https://researchlog.grad.ucl.ac.uk/skills.htm

5.0 IMPORTANT DATES AND MEETINGS
The Log provides a very simple calendar to help keep track of your Log activity by date. You can use it to arrange meetings with your whole supervisory team or simply to document meetings that have already taken place with the option of adding the documentation to your supervisors’ calendars.

Figure 4.1: Course search
You can log all sorts of departmental activity for points by clicking on 'Department'. You’ll also find activities such as poster preparation, writing for a journal and conference attendance in this category.

Likewise, you can see course recommendations based on Student Group (1st year, 2nd year, Laws, Engineering, Arts etc.) or by Skill Set (IT Skills, Teaching Skills, Languages etc.)

Clicking on a course title will allow you to book onto it, join the waiting list, or in the case of departmental courses simply add the points to your tally for attendance.