

Funding incentives to encourage engagement with Annual Progression

What did/do you do?

The School of Mechanical and Systems Engineering allocates £1000/year to a PGR student's supervisor once all progression requirements have been met.

Who is involved?

Each PGR student receives the allocation (distributed to his or her supervisor) once he/she has met all progression requirements. The School office staff manage the bulk of the work, and the Senior Finance Assistant distributes the money.

How do you do it?

The School holds three progression panels a year, a practice that facilitates progression for students with varying start dates and allows borderline students to be given extra time to work toward progression requirements. This structure allows panels to identify those students whose progress is delayed and to ask them to undergo a second panel session at the next scheduled occasion—by which time a given student should have achieved a particular set task. The allocation of £1000 is distributed to the student's supervisor once all progression requirements have been met. The funds, which the student then requests from the supervisor, can be spent on conference travel, minor equipment needs, and/or consumables.

Students are told about the distribution of funds along with progression requirements during induction. Staff are reminded annually.

Why do you do it?

The School used to allocate £500/year and hold progression panels only once during the year. It was decided that holding three progression meetings per year would keep struggling students on track and would help to keep students with different start dates on schedule. The funding allocation was increased, and it was decided to use the funding as an incentive to complete progression requirements on time. It is also easier to keep track of funding allocations when they are tied to progression.

Does it work?

It is too early to tell whether or not the funding incentive works to tighten up progression, but the thrice annual scheduling of progression panels has worked well thus far. The financial incentive works better with new staff, who are generally more concerned about resources, while more veteran staff members occasionally still need to be reminded and chased up

Teaching and Learning Case Study

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Coherent Curriculum themes:

- Student engagement

Other keywords:

Postgraduate research, funding, progression