

# **A Student Guide to Transfer of Registration between MPhil and PhD and Formal Progression Within the Doctoral Research Programme**

**Graduate School Office  
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## **A Student Guide To Transfer of Registration Between MPhil and PhD and Formal Progression Within the Doctoral Researcher Programme**

This document is intended to offer guidance on the completion of the transfer report or formal review for all research degree students registered for an MPhil transfer to PhD or the Doctoral Researcher Programme.

The transfer process must occur between 12 and 15 months after enrolment for full-time students or between 18 and 24 months after enrolment for part-time students. These deadlines are calculated from the original enrolment date.

The transfer report or formal review, generally, coincides with the stage of research where there has been time to conduct an in-depth literature review of the subject area and where preparatory work for the body of the research work has been undertaken and initial use has been made of the chosen research methodology or approach.

Students applying for transfer or formal review will be required to submit a written report, to undergo a formal interview with the assessor, and in the case of creative practice based work to submit evidence of the work to date, in order to inform the decision of the internal assessor(s). The student will be informed of the arrangements for the interview by the supervisor.

The purpose of the transfer report or formal review is to provide evidence that the work to date and the proposed research plan are capable, in the view of the supervisors and assessor(s), of reaching the level necessary for the award of PhD. To achieve this, the report should demonstrate that the research project:

- constitutes a timely and relevant issue for research
- shows evidence of analytic insight/theoretical development and creative development where appropriate
- demonstrates a plan for an investigation that addresses the issues identified
- includes evidence that work is progressing in an orderly and pre-planned manner
- outlines the work to be done and the original contribution to knowledge which will be made

Once this has been achieved then the case for transfer or formal review will be justified.

### **1. Background To The Transfer or Formal Review Process**

#### *1.1 MPhil and PhD*

There are three types of research degree, MA/MSc by Research, MPhil and PhD, at De Montfort University. As set out in Regulation 2.1 in the Code of Practice, students can be admitted to, and subsequently enrolled on:

- a) MPhil
- b) MA/MSc by Research
- c) MPhil with possibility of transfer to PhD (MPhil/PhD)\*
- d) PhD\*
- e) Doctoral Researcher Programme (aiming for PhD)

## f) PhD by Published Works

\* Only students enrolled prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2012 are eligible for these programmes

When a student starts their research studies, she or he is enrolled onto the research degree programme. In due course, they are registered; as explained in Regulation 2.2, the period between enrolment and registration is the probationary period. This guide is intended to help those registered on MPhil with possibility of transfer to PhD or the Doctoral Researcher Programme.

Transfer or formal review requires nominated academics to form a judgement that a student has the potential, motivation and capability to make an original contribution to knowledge and to become capable of being an independent researcher.

## 2. Transfer or Formal Review

The timing of the transfer report or formal review means that the student should ensure that the registration is submitted as soon as possible after enrolment. The regulations state that it should in any case be submitted within 6 months from enrolment for full-time students and within 12 months of enrolment for part-time students.

Regulation 13.9 in the Code of Practice outlines what is expected in the transfer report or formal review and more details are given in the guidelines below. The stipulated length of the transfer report or formal review is 5,000 to 10,000 words.

Those students studying under Regulation 11.1, Exhibition, Performance, Creative Writing or similar work will produce a 3,000 – 5,000 word written transfer report or formal review together with evidence of the practice based work created. This evidence shall be submitted either as a body of work in a physical form or suitably documented.

In order to approve the transfer or formal review status, the nominated academics must be satisfied, on the basis of the recommendations of the supervisors and the assessor, that the student's submission fulfils the following criteria:

- i) the proposed research project constitutes a critical investigation and evaluation of an approved topic which can result in an independent and original contribution to knowledge and a demonstration of an understanding of research methods appropriate to the chosen field;
- ii) the transfer report or formal review on the work undertaken should be 5,000 to 10,000 words in length and include a brief review and discussion of the work already undertaken and a statement of the intended further work, including details of the original contribution to knowledge which is likely to emerge;
- iii) A student registered for a research degree by creative, scholarly or practical work shall also present, in an appropriate form, examples of the creative, scholarly or practical work in support of the transfer report or formal review, which in this case will appropriately be within the range of 3,000 - 5,000 words;
- iv) Students submitting their application to transfer or formal review should undergo a formal interview with the assessor in order to inform the decision of the internal assessor(s);

- v) Before approving transfer or formal review, the nominated academics must be satisfied that the student has made sufficient progress and that the proposed programme provides a suitable basis for work at PhD standard, which the student is capable of pursuing to completion.

### **3. The Transfer Report or Formal Review**

There are different strategies to write the transfer report or formal review. Students can:

- a) write a brief review and discussion of work already undertaken, including a review of relevant sources and methodologies as well as a plan of further work,

OR

present an annotated list of chapter headings indicating the overall thesis structure together with a provisional timetable for the completion of each draft chapter and include one or two draft chapters, together with a statement outlining the rationale, methodology and theoretical perspectives of the thesis including a statement of the original contribution to knowledge that is likely to emerge; (it is likely that some students from the Faculty of Art, Design and Humanities will choose this option)

- b) in the case of creative work, students will be able to present a body of work together with a statement outlining the rationale, methodology and theoretical perspectives of the thesis including a statement of the original contribution to knowledge that is likely to emerge.

Students are strongly recommended to seek advice from their supervisors about the transfer report or formal review before submitting it for review.

### **4. Guidance On The Content Of The Transfer Report or Formal Review**

As guidance, students are recommended to include statements about the following points:

- i) a *brief* description of the aims and objectives of the research, articulating the specific research question. (If these have changed since the original registration, outline the developments);
- ii) critical evaluation of the literature and or precedents in the field;
- iii) an account of the research methods employed;
- iv) a summary and evaluation of the work already completed (this can include published papers in conferences, exhibitions, performances or planned published material);
- vi) the proposed programme of research at PhD level;

Students should bear in mind the criteria for PhD level work; theoretical development, contribution to knowledge, originality and a sound basis for the chosen methodology.

## **5. Formal Interview With Assessor**

The transfer or formal review procedure requires all students to undergo a formal interview with the Assessor(s). This should not be viewed as an additional hurdle but rather as an opportunity to present the research programme in person and to address any issues which the Assessor(s) may have identified when reading the report. It also provides an opportunity to rehearse for the longer viva examination which will take place following submission of the final PhD thesis, since many students will not have taken part in a viva examination before.

## **6. Outcome of the Transfer or Formal Review Process**

Following assessment of the transfer report or formal review and the subsequent formal interview, the recommendation of the supervisors and assessor(s) will be reviewed by the relevant Faculty Head of Research Students and their deputies.

If they are satisfied the work presented meets the required standard approval will be given for the registration of the student for the PhD award. If it is deemed the work needs further development before approval can be granted, the student will be given appropriate feedback outlining the areas which need improvement and asked to resubmit their transfer report or formal review document within a maximum of 3 months for reassessment.

In rare cases, if it is felt that the student's work is really not capable of reaching the standard required for PhD, the student will be recommended to submit for the MPhil award rather than PhD.