University of Central Lancashire

Policy on Transferring from MPhil to PhD - Guidance for Students

To be implemented
with effect from September 2016

STUDENT REGULATIONS AND POLICIES

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RESEARCH STUDENT REGISTRY

Transferring from MPhil to PhD – Guidance for Students

The aim of the transfer process is to establish whether you have produced work of sufficient quantity and quality to suggest that you can achieve PhD standard. The main criterion for this is the ability to produce work that makes an original contribution to knowledge. There are three elements to transfer:

A: Written Transfer Report from student *(approximately 3000 – 6000 words) containing an Abstract (approximately 400-500 words) and summarising the work so far, the intended further work, and detailing the original contribution to PhD level. At least 1500 words of the report should be devoted to contextualisation and the assessment of wider implications;*

***B: Written report from supervisors on progress made (around 500 words**). Supervisors are asked to comment on the approved programme of research, on the student's individual training programme, and the evidence for work at PhD standard.*

C: Transfer Viva by a Panel

The Transfer Report
Your written transfer report is intended to show that you can summarise work done so far and articulate its significance, and help the Referee to interpret a (hopefully) large body of draft writing in a time-effective way.

You are required to write an abstract and a longer summary of your progress. You should meet with your supervisory team to discuss your progress and they will advise you on your transfer report. The 'abstract' is a summary of your study so far and should provide members of the committee with a succinct overview of what you have achieved so far, and in particular what original contribution to knowledge will be made by your work. The report is intended to be a useful exercise in itself – it will help you take stock of your work, reflect on its significance, and focus clearly on what you need to do to complete.

The guidelines below indicate the points you should address in your abstract and your report, and provide a possible way of structuring them. If you depart from the structure because it suits the nature of your project better, make sure that you nonetheless address the main points given.

Abstract:

1. Set the scene – background to your research. (*Current views on … / Literature reviewed so far shows that …, In the past it was thought that… , Currently people assume that ….)*
2. Aims of your study *(what are your research questions?)*
3. Methodology *(what have you done? what kind of data? How collected? How analysed?)*
4. Summarise preliminary results *(what have you found? what issues/questions have been raised?)*
5. Summarise preliminary conclusions and relate them to (1). *(how do your results match up with what has previously been assumed? What is new about what you have found?)*
6. What remains to be done? *(Further data collection/analysis?)*

Transfer Report:
Construct your report around the following points (not necessarily in the order presented here). Make sure you have these in your report:

1. State the aims of the research project
2. Contextualise your project. What is the background to it?
3. Describe your methodological approach?
4. Outline your results so far.
5. Give the overall plan of your thesis (provisional table of contents). Summarise what you have found/ written so far (either chapter by chapter, or overall).
6. Discuss what is new about what you have found? Comment on how your findings relate to the original context – do they reinforce current views or do they suggest that those views may have to be revised? What are the implications of your findings?
7. What needs to be done to complete the thesis?

Your Referee and the rest of your Transfer Panel will be asked to pay particular attention to the element of originality in your work. Originality can be defined in a number of ways: these can include challenging, extending or otherwise affecting existing theoretical frameworks or assumptions. It can also involve applying existing methodologies in an original way (often cross-disciplinary), synthesising information in an original way or testing existing knowledge in an original way. At least 1500 words of your report should be devoted to the contextualisation of your study and the implications of your findings.

The Transfer Viva
The Transfer Panel will usually consist of the Referee, your Director of Studies (or second supervisor) and your Research Degrees Tutor. The Transfer Panel will be asked to provide a short narrative report to address the following criteria:

- ✓ A brief summary of the student's presentation;
- ✓ A brief summary of the viva examination itself;
- ✓ Whether the presentation of the student's research was satisfactory;
- ✓ Whether the Abstract was satisfactory.
- ✓ Whether the quality and quantity of work produced was sufficient to indicate that PhD could be achieved;
- ✓ Whether the level of academic writing and standard of presentation was suitable for doctoral work;
- ✓ Whether there was likely to be an original independent and significant contribution to knowledge and whether this has been clearly articulated in the transfer report;
- ✓ Whether there was evidence of satisfactory progress with the project and that the PhD can be delivered within the published timescales;
- ✓ Whether there has been satisfactory progress with the programme of related studies and whether the student has acquired the appropriate research and other skills to be able to deliver at PhD.
- ✓ To comment on any issues other than academic probity which are of concern and may impact on the programme and which have not been addressed during the review process.

The Panel will be assessing whether you have made sufficient progress in terms of quantity to complete the PhD within the registration period (full-time students are expected to submit after three years; part-time students after six years) but also whether you understand and are able to articulate the expected element of originality in the work, including practice/performance elements. In other words, the way in which the specific study contributes in an original way to existing theoretical frameworks, widespread assumptions etc.

Outcomes of the Transfer Viva
The Panel will decide whether you have reached a quality threshold to be allowed to progress to PhD, or whether further work is required, and will make a recommendation to the Research Degrees Board. You will receive written confirmation of the decision agreed by the Research Degrees Board.

If the Panel identifies ***minor issues***, these may be recommended to you and the Panel will decide whether or not these must be completed before Transfer can be recommended.

If the Panel identifies ***major issues***, you will be given an opportunity to reapply for Transfer and a new deadline will be set.

Students are entitled to appeal against the decision of the Research Degrees Board and are encouraged to consult the Appeals Procedure in the Assessment Handbook.

Students who successfully transfer between April and June will only be required to undertake a 'light touch' Annual Progression Monitoring that year, to check that progress remains satisfactory and that the support arrangements remain appropriate, so that the Research Degrees Board can be assured that you remain on track for timely completion.

Advice and Guidance
If you need advice and guidance about any aspect of the Transfer process, please consult your supervisory team in the first instance or your Research Degree Tutor. Advice on the process is available from your Key Admin Contact in the Research Student Registry.