

Transfer from MPhil to PhD

Note: The following information should be read in conjunction with that provided in the latest version of *Research Degrees: The Code of Practice*. (This is currently the August 2007 version, orange cover, p.11)

The majority of research students in EDU are initially admitted with MPhil status, with the opportunity to then transfer to PhD within the first two years of their study. When the student, in consultation with their supervisor, feels that their research is such that it justifies consideration for a transfer to the PhD, then they may apply to transfer. The transfer must take place during the 'period of study' time, and ordinarily at least six months prior to the end of the MPhil period of study.

The transfer process normally has two elements: presentation at an open seminar, and the preparation of a formal paper. Only the second is formally assessed.

1. The student will present their research at a seminar in the EDU Informal Seminar Series. This will be an open seminar, lasting no more than 1.5 hours, including time for questions and discussion. It should occur in advance of the preparation of the formal paper. The seminar is intended to offer to the student an opportunity to share their work with a wider audience, to obtain feedback from colleagues, and to contribute to a larger academic community. It should also help the student with writing the transfer paper.
2. The student will prepare a paper, which will be considered by a specially constituted transfer panel (which will have a membership of *at least* two teachers in the University, and including no more than one member of the students' supervisory team). This panel will meet with the student and make the decision about whether he or she should transfer to the PhD. It is envisaged that the paper will take the form of an expanded research proposal, though depending on the timing of the transfer, the student might have conducted initial data collection and write a paper reporting on 'research in progress'. The paper serves a number of functions:
 - it is a formal assessment of the student's progress and potential;
 - it requires students to marshal their thoughts on their research topic and to consider strategies for developing their research;
 - it can provide "early warning" of difficulties in conceptual framing, design, methodology and methods;
 - it offers an opportunity to identify any further training needs;

The panel will make a recommendation about the transfer to the Head of School acting on behalf of the School Board. If successful, the registration time will be amended and the 'period of study' already completed will count

towards the 'period of study' for the higher award. If the recommendation is not to transfer the candidate, a second attempt may be permitted on the advice of the supervisory team. If this is the case, the student will be provided with written feedback on the panel's areas of concern. Where a student is not recommended for transfer to PhD, then they will be able to submit their thesis for an MPhil degree.

Content of the transfer or procedural paper

The paper should be a maximum of 10,000 words and should normally include the following:

- a statement of the thesis. What is being argued? What is being explained? How is this a contribution to knowledge?
- an advanced draft of the literature review that identifies the key theoretical directions, delineates the field and explains its history and development, and identifies any similar, related or parallel studies to that proposed;
- a comprehensive and detailed discussion of relevant methodological issues;
- a statement about research ethics;
- a detailed research design;
- a report of progress so far on the study – including any pilot studies;
- an up-to-date completion schedule and time-line for the research;
- full references (in the form required for PhD theses)

Criteria for transfer

The criteria for transfer are:

1. that the project is of sufficient scope, originality, theoretical or practical interest to represent a significant contribution to learning;
2. that the project is methodologically sound and feasible;
3. that the student understands the research topic/problem and is aware of the associated literature;
4. that the student has demonstrated the potential to undertake Doctoral level work.

Students registered initially for a PhD

Although the formal transfer process is not applicable to those students initially registered as PhD, the School believes it is generally in the best interest of all students to share their work with colleagues and to receive feedback on this. Normally students should, at the appropriate time and in negotiation with their supervisor, present their work at an informal seminar. Following the seminar, feedback and comments will be offered to the student

to help them in the subsequent stages of their research. They may also be asked by their supervisor to prepare a paper similar to that for the transfer process.