

Ph.D. Transfer Policy and Procedure

1. Policy

For all graduate research students wishing to transfer from the Master's Register to the Doctoral Register a formal application must be made, through their respective Graduate Research Programme Boards (GRPB), to the Institute's Registrar. This request can only be made following the formal recommendation from the student's supervisory team and in consultation with their sponsoring Department. Where the student has not been recommended for transfer then the student can appeal the decision through the appropriate registration appeals process

Graduate Research students registered on the Research Master programme are eligible to transfer to the PhD register as follows:

- (a) Full-time students: not less than 12 months and normally not later than 28 months after first enrolling for research;
- (b) Part-time students: not less than 18 months and normally no more than 36 months from first registration for research.

2. Procedure

2.1 Transfer Report and Oral Examination

All graduate research students wishing to transfer to the PhD registrar are required to undertake the following:

1. Submission of a report (not normally more than 50 A4 pages in length) or an equivalent discipline specific submission to their Supervisory Team which is then reviewed by an appropriate independent external expert in the relevant field of study. The structure of the report should be as follows:
 - Review and discussion of the research work already undertaken from initial registration
 - An outline of the proposed PhD research project in addition to a timescale for its completion
 - Confirmation statement by the supervisors that they consider that the candidate has made sufficient progress to justify the transfer.
2. undergo a *viva voce* to a Transfer examination board

2.2 Nomination of External Examiner

The nomination of the independent external expert to the relevant GRPB, by the supervisory team, must take place at least 4 weeks in advance of the proposed transfer process. The supervisors must nominate an independent external expert to their GRPB for consideration and approval.

The independent external expert may be an already approved External Examiner for research degree programmes. If not they must meet the following criteria:

1. Possess a PhD or an equivalent qualification in the relevant field;
2. Have recently supervised at least one PhD graduate student to completion as the

- lead supervisor;
3. They must be research active and possess the required expertise in the research area which is the subject of the transfer request

Note: This external examiner cannot be used for the final PhD oral examination

2.3 PhD Transfer Examination Board

The Chair of the GRPB, in consultation with the supervisory team, convenes the PhD Transfer examination board, which consists of:

- The independent external examiner
- Chairperson (Chair of the GRPB or his/her nominee). The role of the Chairperson is to ensure the Institute's regulations on PhD transfer are adhered to.

The *viva voce* transfer examination is also attended by the graduate student and their supervisory team and the examination takes the following structure:

1. The student gives an oral presentation to the examination board describing the work presented in their transfer report;
2. The examination board then orally examines the student.

The role of the examination board is to determine if the graduate students research programme is suitable for a PhD. The board can recommend one of the following options:

- (a) Student can transfer to the PhD register
- (b) Student can resubmit an updated report (based on recommendations by the examiners) and re-present for a repeat *viva voce* normally no later than 6 months after the original examination date
- (c) Student should remain on the Master's Register

Note: It is possible to hold this PhD transfer examination Board using video conferencing or other electronic facilities if this is more convenient for the external examiner, hence avoiding their need to travel.

2.4 Formal Acceptance of the transfer by the Graduate Research Programme Board

Where the examination recommends the student for transfer, the student and supervisors must complete and submit the following forms to the Graduate Research Programme Board:

- HETAC Application for Transfer to Doctoral Register form
- Report from the chair of the PhD transfer examination board
- Resource Declaration Form: The Head of Department should carry out a review of the supervisory arrangements and availability of accommodation to ensure that
 - The Supervisor(s)' continuing availability to supervise the project for the

extended duration of the new level of award.

- The Supervisor(s) meets the criteria to supervise to the higher level of PhD award.
- The Department has the facilities required to complete the extended programme.

The Chair of the GRPB convenes a meeting to discuss the transfer. Where the GRPB endorses the findings of the PhD examination board the board then sends all relevant documentation to the Registrars Office, who then forwards it to HETAC for approval. The decision of HETAC is final.

Note: Where the student has not been recommended for transfer by the Institute then the student can appeal the decision through the appropriate registration appeals process.