

Research Degrees: Guidance notes series

# **#5.** TRANSFER

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### Related documents

**Policy 2R: Regulations for Postgraduate Research Students**  
<http://portal.solent.ac.uk/documents/academic-services/academic-handbook/section-2/2r---regulations-for-pgr-students.pdf?t=1534525946909>

**Intellectual Property Rights at Solent University**  
<http://portal.solent.ac.uk/documents/academic-services/policies-procedures-guidelines/intellectual-property-rights-policy.pdf?t=1534437839680>

**Academic Handbook 4S: Procedures for the ethical approval of research / enterprise projects**  
<http://portal.solent.ac.uk/documents/academic-services/academic-handbook/section-4/4s-procedures-for-the-ethical-approval-of-research-enterprise-projects.pdf?t=1535102214698>

**Academic Handbook 2S: University ethics policy**  
<http://portal.solent.ac.uk/documents/academic-services/academic-handbook/section-2/2s-university-ethics-policy.pdf?t=1535102287891>

**Academic Handbook 2L: Student Academic Misconduct Policy**  
<http://portal.solent.ac.uk/documents/academic-services/academic-handbook/section-2/2l-student-academic-misconduct.pdf?t=1535126909597>

**UK Research Integrity Office: Good practice checklist for researchers**  
<http://ukrio.org/wp-content/uploads/UKRIO-Recommended-Checklist-for-Researchers.pdf>

RD2T form available on line

### Further reading

**Intellectual Property Office**  
<http://www.ipo.gov.uk/>

**UK Research Integrity Office**  
[www.ukrio.org](http://www.ukrio.org)

**Solent Researchers library guide on Reference Management**  
<https://libguides.solent.ac.uk/c.php?g=657980&p=4665038>

## INTRODUCTION

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### Review timeframe

1. Students registered for the MPhil/PhD route are expected to transfer from MPhil registration to PhD, normally between 12-18 months of full-time study (24-36 months for part-time study).
2. Students who have registered for the PhD Direct route or the PhD by Prior Publication will not be required to Transfer. Students who have registered for an MPhil only can elect to apply to transfer to PhD in the same timeframe as those students registered on the MPhil/PhD.
3. In the event of an unsatisfactory transfer submission, the full-time candidate may be offered a 3 month probationary period (6 month part-time) with the opportunity to revise the report in the light of feedback from the Transfer Panel. If the transfer document(s) remain unsatisfactory, the Transfer Panel will either recommend the student remain registered for an MPhil, or that the student be withdrawn from their studies.
4. Failure to submit an application within 18 months of the commencement of full-time study, or part-time equivalent (36 months), may result in a recommendation that the student remain registered for an MPhil or that the registration be withdrawn.

MPhil/PhD	Transfer window for registration for PhD	Probationary period
Full-time	12-18 months	3 months
Part-time	24-36 months	6 months

5. Where appropriate transfer applications will be considered at one of the standard points in the annual monitoring cycle. Where the transfer report is submitted as part of the annual monitoring process, this report will take the place of part A.3 of the annual monitoring progress review report, except where the Director of Studies recommends that the full progress review take place. This will not exempt the student from undertaking the independent review element of the annual monitoring process. (*see Guidance note #6*)
6. A candidate who is registered for the degree of PhD and who is unable to complete the approved programme of work may, at any time prior to the submission of the thesis for examination, apply to the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee for their registration to revert to MPhil, provided that the maximum permitted period for MPhil registration is not exceeded.

### Context of review

7. The transfer process is a key milestone and an opportunity to take stock of what has been achieved and reflect on the remaining body of work that needs to be done before submitting a thesis. It is also one of the occasions when students get careful feedback from experienced academics who are not directly involved in their project. Experience shows that meticulous preparation for the transfer process can substantially increase the likelihood of timely and successful completion of a PhD thesis.
8. Supervisors' guidance and advice should be sought by students in a timely manner regarding appropriate timing and preparation for the transfer. Students should agree a schedule of meetings with their supervision team to discuss transfer, and factor into their preparation sufficient time to for their supervision team to read and comment on the draft(s), for the

candidates themselves to think about the comments and respond before the deadline for submission, and allow time to obtain the necessary signatures to support their application.

## THE TRANSFER PROCESS

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### Submitting the RD2T and associated documents

9. In support of the transfer application, the candidate shall be required to submit evidence in the form of:
  - a) a full transfer report, plus other material subject to the nature of their research,
  - b) a Turnitin report and
  - c) the completed form RD2T
10. They will also be required to attend a viva voce at which they must successfully demonstrate the work has the potential to meet the learning outcomes for the doctoral award.
11. The student must submit their transfer report to Turnitin, complete the form RD2T, and then forward all the above documentation to their supervisory team for their Director of Studies or co-supervisor to confirm that they have checked the Turnitin report and to complete part D of RD2T.
12. When all the above actions have been completed, all documentation should be forwarded by the Director of Studies to [research.degree@solent.ac.uk](mailto:research.degree@solent.ac.uk). Doctoral Student Administration will record the submission and forward it to the Doctoral Hub Coordinator, who will convene a Transfer Panel (*see below*).
13. If any part of the documentation is incomplete when it is submitted to Doctoral Hub Administration (i.e. with information missing or incorrect, or missing signatures or attachments; e.g. the Turnitin report) it will be sent back to the student for revision.

### The RD2T form

14. When completing form RD2T, applicants are asked to take particular care not to alter the layout of the form or delete sections.
15. In any section of the form where there is no applicable information, student should insert a 0 (e.g. if there are no collaborating establishments).
16. Students must complete sections A, B and C. The Director of Studies must complete section D.

### The transfer report

17. While the specific requirements may vary from discipline to discipline, a typical thesis based study should require a full transfer report of circa 10,000 - 20,000 words; whereas a practice-based project would normally require an artefact plus supporting document.
18. A full transfer report would normally take the form of a coherent document in the style of a thesis that includes the following chapters:
  - a) An introduction that sets out the contextual rationale to the work, and an appropriate set of aims and objectives;

- b) A critical literature review that provides a comprehensive contextualisation of the research and demonstrates that by satisfying the aims of the project, an appropriate original contribution to knowledge will be achieved;
  - c) A research methodology that demonstrates how the methods selected will achieve the desired aims and objectives and fully justifies the approach taken;
  - d) A presentation and consideration of any findings to date, demonstrating how the final results of the project will satisfy the requirements of the research in addressing the project's aims; the purpose of the chapter is not to attempt to answer the research question but to demonstrate that the research question can be answered;
  - e) An outline of the subsequent steps necessary to complete the research, including a timetable of completion of the thesis from the date of initial registration; a progress report by the supervision team; and a chapter-by-chapter outline of the final thesis.
19. Students should give reference to any work mentioned, or referred to, in their proposed plan of work using the Harvard system or other agreed referencing system appropriate to their field, with the list of references in alphabetical order at the end. For information regarding referencing systems see the University Library Guide (*in further reading above*).
20. Failure to observe referencing conventions is considered a very serious breach of research integrity at this level of study and this is reflected in the investigation of any reported case of academic misconduct by a doctoral research student.

## THE TRANSFER PANEL REVIEW

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### The panel meeting

21. It is the Doctoral Hub Coordinators' responsibility to complete the following actions:
- a) Arrange a transfer viva voce examination, appointing an independent chair and two assessors from the relevant Hub Scrutiny Panel(s), or to co-opt members of academic staff to ensure appropriate disciplinary expertise. The assessors will not be members of the candidate's supervision team and will normally be internal to the University. An external assessor may be appointed, if approved by the relevant Scrutiny Panel. The Doctoral Hub Coordinator may act as the independent chair, or an assessor where appropriate.
  - b) Ensure the report by the Transfer Panel assessors, on part E of the RD2T form, is complete, has all relevant signatures
  - c) When a final transfer outcome, including any amendments, are agreed by the panel, this is forwarded to the Chair/Deputy Chair of RDC for approval.
22. At the Transfer Panel meeting the student will normally open with a short presentation, which will be followed by questions and answers, and informal discussion.
23. The student may request one of their supervisory team members to be present at the panel meeting as an observer, but the supervisor will not take part in the discussion. A student must confirm in writing to Doctoral Student Administration if they are requesting to have a supervisor present. Doctoral Student Administration will issue the invitation to the named supervisor.
24. The Transfer Panel should give the student informal, verbal feedback at the end of the review meeting.

## Transfer panel assessment criteria

25. In reviewing the transfer documents and the student's viva voce performance, the Transfer Panel must be convinced of the following:
- a) That the Panel have received sufficiently detailed material to ascertain;
    - i. If progress to date has been satisfactory, and if there is a feasible and realistic plan of work to ensure that the project will be completed within the permitted registration period?
    - ii. What methods have been used, how they have been deployed and the rationale for their use?
    - iii. What findings have emerged or are expected to emerge?
    - iv. That the project, as it has developed, is going to deliver an original contribution to knowledge (which is what distinguishes the PhD from an MPhil)?
  - b) That the style and presentation of the transfer report represents the qualities of PhD level work;
    - i. Can the candidate write clearly and in a manner appropriate for an advanced piece of academic writing?
    - ii. Are concepts, theories and relevant methodological issues confidently and accurately handled?
    - iii. Is data presented in ways that comply with academic conventions, and does the candidate understand how to interpret these data and know their limitations?
    - iv. Can the candidate distinguish clearly between explanations, interpretation and speculation in the discussion of findings and the inferences to be drawn from them?

## Transfer panel report

26. The Transfer Panel will complete a report in section E of the RD2T form, which the independent chair will submit to the Doctoral Hub Coordinator (copying in Doctoral Student Administration, [research.degree@solent.ac.uk](mailto:research.degree@solent.ac.uk)). The report will:
- a) assess the candidate's transfer outcome against the above criteria,
  - b) clearly acknowledge the strengths of the project, as well as identify any areas of weakness or limitation, and where possible provide constructive suggestions for addressing these,
  - c) provide an explicit recommendation for one of the four possible outcomes (*listed in Transfer Panel outcomes below*), and
  - d) In cases where the recommendation is for referral, state clearly what issues need to be addressed and how this will be achieved. The Transfer Panel should ensure that any recommendation for referral also nominates the Panel member(s) who will review the resubmitted documents, or state if the Transfer Panel should be reconvened on resubmission.
  - e) In cases where the recommendation is for approval, the Transfer Panel should state whether the candidate is likely to be in a position to make an application for 'writing-up' status at the next annual registration point for their award.

## Transfer panel outcomes

27. The Transfer Panel may:
- a) approve the transfer of registration to PhD,
  - b) require further work to be done within a 3 month probation period (6 months part-time),
  - c) retain the registration for MPhil, or
  - d) terminate the student's registration

28. Students will receive formal notification of the outcome in writing as soon as possible after the transfer after the above processes have been completed.
29. In the event that the student requires further guidance on the panel outcome, they should contact the Doctoral Hub Coordinator.
30. Students can also seek informal feedback from their Doctoral Hub Coordinator and from the supervisor they invited to be present where appropriate.
31. If the student has submitted revisions for outcome b), and the panel reviewer(s) conclude that the transfer report remains unsatisfactory, they will normally recommend to the Chair/Deputy Chair of RDC that the student's registration be retained at MPhil or, that the registration be withdrawn.
32. A student who has been unsuccessful in their Transfer may appeal the decision (*Academic Handbook 2R refers*).