PLEASE SEEK ADVICE FROM PGR & OPERATIONS OR INTERNATIONAL STUDENT OFFICE ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS FOR TIER 4 STUDENT VISA HOLDERS OF A CHANGE OF PROGRAMME OF STUDY

**These arrangements apply to the following Schools in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures only:**

* English
* History
* Languages, Cultures and Societies
* Philosophy, Religion and History of Science

**Other Schools**

The Programmes of Study and Audit Group will consider requests for PGRs registered in other Schools on an *ad hoc* basis[[1]](#footnote-1) provided that the request is made at an early stage in the candidature allowing sufficient time to prepare for the transfer assessment.

**Change of Programme: Mastership by Research to Provisional PhD Registration**

**With effect from session 2014/15**

*The document explains the arrangements whereby PGRs registered for the degree of MA by Research in the Faculty of Arts may be permitted a change of programme to Provisional PhD registration status, before proceeding to an assessment for transfer to PhD.*

1. Policy

MA by research candidates registered in the Schools of English, History, LCS and PHRS may request permission to change their registration status to that of a Provisional PhD candidate and to undergo an assessment for transfer to PhD status. This opportunity is available to PGRs registered for an MA by research only and is not available to PGRs registered for a taught MA programme.

Such a change of programme must be approved by the Graduate Board’s Programmes of Study and Audit Group (or Chair acting on its behalf) by no later than 9 months from the date of commencement of full-time MA by research study (or 18 months of part-time study). The period of study registered on the MA by research programme will be counted in total towards the doctoral candidature.

The periods of study for both programmes are set out below for information:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Programme | Full-time | Part-time | Additional Information |
| Mastership by Research | 12 months | 24 months | In exceptional cases up to 3 months extension of study may be granted by the Graduate Board’s Programmes of Study and Audit Group |
| PhD | 36 months | 60 months | For full-time PGRs up to 12 months over-time is permitted (for part-time PGRs up to 24 months overtime) |

1. Guidance

The process for considering applications for a change of programme is set out below:

**Stage One**

By no later than 9 months from the date of commencement of full-time MA by research study (or 18 months of part-time study)

1. **The PGR** must provide the PGR Tutor with the following:

* Written confirmation (email or letter) of their wish to withdraw from their MA by research degree candidature and change their registration status to Provisional PhD
* A description of their research thus far and how this can be revised for a doctoral research project within the period of study permitted for a PhD programme (approximately 500 words)
* Provide details of the proposed funding arrangements for a PhD candidature, and where applicable, provide written confirmation from the existing sponsor that it has no objections to (a) the change of programme and (b) withdrawal from the MA by research candidature;

International students studying in the UK on a Tier 4 (General) Student Visa must seek advice on the implications of a change of programme on their immigration status from the International Student Office as soon as possible.

Any Postgraduate Loan payments will cease once the PGR has transferred to provisional PhD. PGRs should not register for a Masters by Research programme with the direct intention of transferring to provisional PhD.

1. **the main supervisor** must provide the PGR Tutor with the following:

* Confirmation (or otherwise) of the supervisory team’s academic support for the change of programme including comments on the PGR’s academic progress and the doctoral research proposal (approximately 250 words)
* Comments on any ethical implications of the change of programme and whether these have been/will be addressed to his/her satisfaction
* Confirmation of the capacity of the supervisory team to supervise the PGR for doctoral study – indicating whether any change to the supervisory team is required.

**Stage Two**

By no later than 9 months from the date of commencement of full-time MA by research study (or 18 months of part-time study

**The Postgraduate Research Tutor** considers the above information on behalf of the School. If he/she is supportive of the change of programme he/she should submit a request for consideration by the Graduate Board’s Programmes of Study and Audit Group (or Chair acting on its behalf) which includes the following information:

* The School’s support for the PGR to withdraw from the MA by research degree candidature and to change registration status to Provisional PhD
* Confirmation of the supervisory team
* Confirmation that the PGR has made satisfactory academic progress to date
* Confirmation the PGR has provided satisfactory information about the proposed funding arrangements (and, where applicable, the PGR has provided written confirmation from the existing sponsor that it has no objections to (a) the change of programme and (b) is aware that the PGR is withdrawing from the MA by research degree candidature)
* Where applicable immigration advice has been sought from the International Student Office
* Any ethical issues have been/will be addressed.

A form for requesting a change of programme is available on the [SES website](http://ses.leeds.ac.uk/info/22173/research_degree-related_policies/722/change_of_programme_ma_by_research_to_provisional_phd_arts_only).[[2]](#footnote-2)

**Stage Three**

**The Programmes of Study and Audit Group (or the Chair)** takes action to consider the request. Requests will normally be considered within 7 days of receipt by PGR and Operations. In some cases, however, it may be necessary to request additional information before a decision is taken.

Where a change of programme is approved the School and the PGR will be informed by Postgraduate Research and Operations. The PGR will receive a letter confirming their new registration arrangements. The letter will be copied to the Postgraduate Research Tutor, Supervisor(s) and Student Finance (Fees).

The Banner Record (and GRAD) will be updated and the new degree type will show in GRAD.

The period of study registered on the MA by research programme will be counted towards the Provisional PhD candidature.

**Stage Four**

The PGR will be expected to undergo a formal, rigorous assessment procedure for transfer to full PhD status in accordance with normal practice for transfer to doctoral registration <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/rsa/policies.html#supervisors>. This should take place before the end of 12 months of full-time study (or 24 months of part-time study), which includes the period of registration for the Mastership by Research. The decision to transfer to full PhD status will be considered by a Transfer Assessment Panel and based on the submission of documentation prescribed within the Faculty Protocol for the implementation of the University’s Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidatures. All PGRs must undergo an oral examination by a Transfer Assessment Panel.

The options available to the Transfer Assessment Panel will be:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| (i) | transfer to PhD registration; |
| (ii) | transfer to M Phil registration; |
| (iii) | On the first occasion only that the work is assessed, deferment of a decision about the transfer for a limited period to permit the work to be revised and then reassessed; |
| (iv) | A decision that the PGR withdraw from a research degree candidature. |
| **Please note that transfer to a Mastership by Research at this stage of a candidature is not permitted.** | |

Opportunity to change back to study for an MA by Research

The University recognises that in some, very rare cases, the PGR may change their mind and wish to return to registration for the degree of MA by Research. In such cases the Postgraduate Research Tutor should consider the request on behalf of the School. If the request is supported by the School, and within the time limit allowed for the submission of an MA by Research thesis (12 months of full-time study or 24 months of part-time study), submit the case for consideration by the Programmes of Study and Audit Group (or Chair). It is expected that such requests will be made prior to the PGR undergoing a formal transfer to doctoral registration assessment. The programme of study specification for a Mastership by Research allows for this period to be extended by not more than three months by prior permission by the Programmes of Study and Audit Group. Postgraduate Research Tutors are invited to consider whether to submit such a request at the time a transfer back to MA by research is requested.

1. Process Map

A process map is attached as Annex A (below).

ST/Ext 35778/ 03/07/2014 (updated 27/03/2017)

**Annex A**

**Masters by Research transfer to PhD**

**PSAG13/39b**

**Year 2**

**Transfer Route to PhD**

**Year 1**

**Masters by Research Route**

**Year 3**

**36 months**

**Month 1 Month 9 Month 12 Month 15 Month 24**

Submits for Masters by Research

PGR registers for Masters by Research

Latest date to submit for Masters by Research

Submission for PhD & Viva

Fall back exit qualification for PhD remains MPhil

PGR may request up to 3 months extension on academic grounds

End of Year 2 Progression

Training Plan

Transfer Report

Synopsis chapter by chapter

Timeline for completion of Thesis Bibliography

Sample of Written Work

PGR changes mind and applies for permission to submit for Masters by Research

PGR’s academic focus changes to meeting requirements for PhD Transfer Process which must take place in 3 months time (month 12)

School notifies PGR &Ops of intention to change programme to Provisional PhD

Change to PHP registration status considered on behalf of PSAG

Possible outcomes:

Successful Transfer;

Recommend continue for MPhil;

Deferral;

Withdraw

Assessment for Transfer to PhD

1. Tier 4 visa holders should take advice from the International Student Office.

   Any Postgraduate Loan payments will cease once the PGR has transferred to provisional PhD. PGRs should not register for a Masters by Research programme with the direct intention of transferring to provisional PhD. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <http://ses.leeds.ac.uk/info/22173/research_degree-related_policies/722/change_of_programme_ma_by_research_to_provisional_phd_arts_only> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)