



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Postgraduate Research Transfer Process

**Guidance for Transfer Panels,
Supervisors, Directors of PGR Studies
(DoPGRS) and Doctoral College staff**

2022/23

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1. Guidance for PGRs on transfer

Faculties/Schools will make available to PGRs written guidance on the transfer process including details of local deadlines for submission of the transfer report and the required content of the report. Faculty specific information is located is included in the Annex to the [Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidatures](#).

The [Postgraduate Research and Training page](#) includes a suite of online courses covering the research degree process. On-line provision is now available to those starting studies throughout the year.

From induction to transfer:

This is an interactive course covering a host of useful information for those starting their research degree. The training provides further information about the Transfer process, and also includes important information around academic integrity and avoiding plagiarism, Copyright, Ethical review and Data Management and professional development.

Support for postgraduate researchers

This course provides video introductions to the support offered specifically for postgraduate researchers by each of the University services. There is also a link to each service website.

Post-transfer to completion

This covers the thesis submission process, thesis format regulations, the viva and more. This course also provides an opportunity to reflect on research progress to date and what needs be done to complete the research degree.

PGRs can also revisit [the Doctoral College Induction and Welcome page](#) of the For Students website for information about key aspects of their study such as key policies, registration, personal admin, working with their supervisor, support available and some specific information for year 2 onwards of your study. Further information is also available in the [PGR Handbook](#).

The Library runs a regular Research Data Management Essentials course, open to all candidates and staff, which addresses basic good practice and includes writing a data management plan. The Library can provide a Data Management Plan (DMP) template.

2. Timescales for Transfer

University deadlines for the transfer assessment

The University's time limits for transfer (excluding any adjustments for formal periods of suspended study) are [set out on the website](#). The University has two deadlines related to the Transfer process.

Deadline for transfer viva

This is the deadline for the first transfer viva/assessment to be held. For a full-time PhD this would typically translate to the end of month 12 of their studies. This date is shown in GRAD as the "Deadline for decision on Transfer".

Deadline for final decision on transfer

The second deadline sets down when a **final** decision on transfer has to be taken, allowing for any period of deferral. For a full-time PhD this would typically translate to the end of month 18 of study (which allows for a deferral period of up to 6 months).

School/Faculty deadlines for the transfer assessment.

Some Faculties do set earlier deadlines for submission for the Transfer Assessment such as month 9 or month 10. Faculties can set this locally in GRAD and, if set, will appear as the "Faculty/School Deadline for submission of Transfer Report."

Faculties/Schools are advised to avoid setting rigid deadlines for transfer which are earlier than those set by the University. They may, however, advise PGRs and their supervisors that it is normal practice within the Faculty/School for the transfer to take place earlier than the University's deadline and to encourage supervisors to arrange transfers in accordance with local practice. However, requests for additional time for completion of the transfer process should be considered sympathetically provided this is within the timescales set by the University.

Postponement of the Transfer viva beyond the University deadlines

The regulations require that a decision on transfer will normally be taken by no later than 12 months from the date of commencement of full-time Provisional PhD study (see time limits above). Postponement of the transfer assessment beyond the University's timescales requires the permission of the Progression and Examination Group (PEG) (or Chair acting on its behalf). Requests for postponements should be submitted to DCO pgrprogress@leeds.ac.uk for consideration on behalf of PEG. In all cases a final decision on transfer must be taken within the time limits specified.

The Graduate Board is of the view that postponement of the decision because the supervisor(s) believes the PGR is not ready for transfer or because a member of the transfer assessment panel is unavailable should only occur in the most exceptional cases and subject to prior approval by its PEG.

When the initial transfer viva is conducted late (beyond the 12 month point) this will reduce the timescale by which the panel may defer a decision. For example:

A full-time PGR commencing Provisional PhD study in October 2021 should undergo transfer assessment by no later than 30 September 2022. The panel may normally defer the decision on academic grounds by up to 6 months with a revised deadline for a decision on transfer of 31 March 2023. However, if the first assessment is postponed until late December 2022 the panel no longer has the option to defer the decision by 6 months – it may only defer the decision on transfer by 3 months until 31 March 2023.

Late Transfer Recommendations

PEG asks that the Head of School be formally requested to investigate the situation when a transfer recommendation for a PGR is more than six months late.

3. Transfer Assessment Panel Membership

Transfer Assessment Panel

Transfer Assessment Panels are responsible for making the decision on transfer. The Panel must comprise a minimum of two individuals who are independent of the supervisory team. Two members is the norm but flexibility is permitted to allow for additional members (e.g. in cases where an interdisciplinary project crosses a number of subject boundaries). The Panel may comprise:

- two independent individuals with relevant subject expertise OR
- one individual with subject expertise and one who has previous research degree supervision and/or examination experience (e.g. this might be the Director of PGR Studies (DPGR)) both of whom are independent of the supervisory team.

The Progression and Examinations Group does not define a minimum eligibility criteria for the transfer assessment panel members, for example the academic position held or a minimum number of previous assessments completed. However, the Director of PGR Studies must be satisfied that, between them, the Panel have the appropriate experience of research degree supervision, the transfer process and the relevant discipline experience/knowledge to effectively reach a judgement on the transfer submission.

The transfer interview will normally be chaired by one of the independent members of the Panel. However, Schools may appoint an additional individual (who is also independent of the supervisory team), to Chair the transfer interview.

Where the Programme Director was recorded as supervisor during the first year of an Integrated PhD and MSc programme, consideration will be given to their appointment as transfer assessor where it is confirmed they have had no involvement as supervisor of the PhD component.

One member of the Panel must be designated in GRAD as the 'Principal Panel Member'. This person will receive the task and notification to complete the joint report of the panel after the transfer interview in GRAD. Only the 'Principal Panel Member' can input and edit the report in GRAD on behalf of the other panel members.

Use of an External Assessor (individual from outside of the University)

In exceptional cases, consideration may be given by PEG for the use of an External Assessor on the transfer assessment panel. Such cases might, for example, include situations where it is not possible to identify a member of staff at Leeds who has relevant expertise and who is unconnected with the supervision of the PGR. When sending forward recommendations for the appointment of an External Assessor, Graduate Schools will be required to provide for consideration by PEG details of the current employment of the proposed assessor (the normal expectation is that they will be senior members of the academic staff of a UK University or other UK higher education establishment)

Where an External Assessor is approved for appointment, the relevant DPGR is responsible for ensuring that the Assessor is fully briefed upon the regulations and procedures of the University of Leeds and receives all relevant paperwork¹. It is **not possible** for the same individual to act as the External Assessor at transfer stage and as the External Examiner for the final examination of the PGR.

Member of the Transfer Panel as Internal Examiner

The Graduate Board has agreed that it is possible for an individual to act as a member of the Transfer Assessment Panel and subsequently as the Internal Examiner at the final examination. However, if a member of the Transfer Panel is to subsequently act as the Internal Examiner direct involvement in the academic assessment, monitoring and provision of feedback on the work is not appropriate subsequent to the transfer assessment (for example reading and commenting on academic work submitted by the PGR at the end of years 2 and 3 as part of the APR process) and prior to the oral examination.

4. Role of the Supervisor(s) at transfer

Role of the Supervisor

Supervisors have a role to play in informing the deliberations of the transfer panel. This includes:

- ensuring that arrangements are made for the transfer review within the timescale prescribed by the University;
- identifying individuals to serve on the transfer panel;
- commenting on the PGR's progression prior to the transfer interview via the pre-transfer progress report in GRAD;
- normally attending the transfer interview²;

¹ As an external member of the Transfer Panel they will not be able to access the information via GRAD.

² If the supervisor will not be attending the viva they should be available for consultation as necessary (ideally in the School but contactable by telephone is acceptable).

- the supervisor(s) may ask questions of the PGR at the transfer interview but should refrain from answering questions on behalf of the PGR;
- the supervisor(s) should be offered the opportunity to feedback to the Panel in the absence of the PGR at the end of the transfer interview and before the decision on transfer is taken.

The supervisor does not take part in the academic judgement and the decision making process. The supervisor(s) must leave the room when the Panel is discussing its recommendation.

If the PGR does not wish their supervisor(s) to be present at their transfer interview they should inform the DPGR at the earliest possible opportunity prior to the interview date. The DPGR will then advise the Transfer Panel of the PGR's position. It is expected that the transfer panel and the supervisor(s) will respect the wishes of the PGR.

If the supervisor has serious concerns about a PGR's progress at an early stage in the candidature and does not believe the PGR is capable of undertaking successful doctoral study Graduate Board strongly encourages them to raise this with the PGR at the earliest opportunity prior to transfer. Where appropriate the [Progress Support Process \(PSP\)](#) should be instigated. PSP is intended to provide the means to address the concerns of the supervisor(s) and to support the PGR's future progress. The transfer process can be used as the end point assessment under the PSP.

5. The Transfer Interview and Assessment

Purpose of the transfer assessment

The assessment at the "transfer" stage is intended to identify whether the individual PGR and the research project have the potential for research at doctoral level and also whether completion of a thesis within the standard period of study for the programme concerned is a reasonable expectation. It has, however, no direct bearing on whether the PGR will be successful at final examination.

PGR's Written Submission for Transfer ("Transfer Report")

The PGR is required to prepare a written submission for assessment as part of the transfer process. This is sometimes known as the PGR's transfer report. This must include a planned schedule for completion of the work. It might also include a synopsis of the work already carried out, a sample chapter and other written or experimental work. For PGR's commencing study from 01/09/2019 a data management plan must also be submitted. Faculties will provide details of local level requirements for the format of the PGR's Transfer Report.

Where the PGR has published work during their candidature prior to the transfer stage, the PGR may use the work contained within the publication which they were directly responsible for authoring within their transfer submission. The transfer report must otherwise meet requirements specified by the Faculty for the format and content of a transfer submission. The PGR should declare such work at the start of their transfer report.

Plagiarism

In cases where the Panel identified a concern about possible plagiarism in a PGR submission the Director of PGR Studies (DoPGRS) and Graduate School should be informed immediately. Where the DoPGRS is one of the assessors/examiners or the Supervisor, the Head of Graduate School (HOGS) should be informed. The DoPGRS/HOGS must arrange for the case to be investigated following the [Procedure for investigating plagiarism in University assessments by Postgraduate Researchers \(PGRs\)](#). Cases at transfer are investigated at School level as set out under the [Procedure](#).

Pre-Transfer Progress Report

The transfer report is submitted through GRAD. As part of the process the PGR must also complete the Pre-Transfer Progress report which includes a progress report, information relating to ethical review and data storage arrangements and a statement on academic integrity. PGRs also have the opportunity to comment on anything that has adversely affected their progress. The supervisor is then required to complete their part of the process through GRAD which includes providing comments on the PGR's progress before the transfer interview.

Evidence upon which the decision on transfer is based

The transfer assessment panel require access to the following information ((available to the Panel through GRAD):

- PGR's written submission ("Transfer Report")
- A planned schedule for completion of the thesis within the [standard period of study](#) (e.g. a Gantt chart)
- Training Plan and record of training undertaken
- PGR's pre-transfer report which includes a report on progress to date, information relating to ethics review and data storage and a statement of academic integrity
- Reports on the PGR's progress from the supervisor(s) (the first formal progress³ and pre-transfer stage reports)
- Data Management Plan (for PGR's commencing study from 01/09/2019 onwards – please see [section 11](#) for further information)

Arranging the transfer viva

There are three possible models for a transfer viva:

- Fully in person (all parties together on campus for a face-to-face viva)
- Fully remote (all parties complete the viva via Microsoft Teams or Zoom)
- Hybrid (some parties are face to face whilst others in the meeting are video streaming).

³ For full-time PGRs at 6 months (or earlier) and in the case of part-time PGRs at 9 months (or earlier)

Please consult the [video-streamed viva policy](#) for further advice on agreeing the format of the viva. For in person vivas, please ensure that the venue is suitable for an examination. For a video streamed viva, please consult the video-streamed viva policy.

The examination is normally held – and should be concluded - within office hours, as this is when staff are available to provide advice and support to examiners and PGRs, should this be needed. Due consideration should be given to this when planning the start time of the viva to ensure sufficient time is available. Panels should avoid arranging a viva for the last day before a University closure period (Christmas and Easter), when there will be an extended period post-viva where advice and pastoral support will not be available. Wherever possible, Panels are advised to avoid arranging a viva for a Friday afternoon to ensure that support is available before the weekend, should this be needed.

The Panel asked to confirm that pastoral support (normally via the supervisor or other appropriate member of staff) will be available to the PGR immediately after the viva, should this be necessary.. Please see [the post-viva support section](#) for further guidance about the arrangements for pastoral support, if needed, after the viva.

Reasonable Adjustments and Support for PGR Level Assessment and Examination

Disabled postgraduate researchers, their supervisors and the transfer assessment panel, can access a wide range of support from [Disability Services](#). The process for identifying and agreeing support and reasonable adjustments for the transfer assessment is set out in a [separate document](#). This document, which is intended to provide a single point of reference for PGRs and staff in Disability Services, Schools/Faculties and DCO:

- Summarises the routine adjustments with clear precedents which can be accommodated without prior approval by PEG.
- Provides examples of adjustments which may be facilitated with prior approval by PEG, with a framework and timescale for consideration of these
- Summarises the support available to all PGRs in preparation for assessment.
- Summarises the adjustments that may need to be considered depending on the format of the viva (Online or In Person)

There are time limits for the transfer assessment and it is therefore important that the need for reasonable adjustments is identified well in advance of the transfer interview. Schools are asked to work in partnership with PGRs and Disability Services, where required, to identify when reasonable adjustments may be required and what those reasonable adjustments might be. It is recommended that discussions about any reasonable adjustments for the transfer assessment should begin as part of first formal progress report (approx. month 6 of full-time study) which will be 3-6 months prior to the expected transfer viva date.

Information on any reasonable adjustments should be made available to the panel following discussions between the PGR, the supervisor(s), the DPGR and the University's Disability Services. The Principal Panel Member (or Chair) of the transfer assessment panel will normally take responsibility for facilitating on the day any reasonable adjustments to the oral examination, which will have been agreed upon in advance.

Transfer Interview (viva voce examination)

All PGRs must undergo a transfer interview which will be conducted in English⁴ and this should take the form of a *viva voce* examination. The University does not have any specific requirements regarding the length of the Transfer Interview. Good Practice Guidance on the conduct of the Transfer Interview can be found in [Annex 1](#). The questions the Panel are required to report on can be found in [Annex 2](#). This includes:

- the potential for originality and independent critical ability within the research;
- the written style and overall presentation of the submission as well as the PGR's ability to communicate their research;
- the PGR's understanding of the area of study (for example, awareness of key literature in the field) and their knowledge of research techniques and methods;
- the planned schedule of work for the remainder of the research, and whether this is achievable within the standard period of study.

The core questions in the joint report of the transfer assessment panel are aligned to the learning outcomes for doctoral award. This is intended to provide PGRs with feedback on progress being made towards meeting the final assessment criteria. Panels are welcome to provide additional feedback to PGRs, either in the optional feedback section or as a file upload, but are asked to answer the questions explicitly and specifically in the report workflow on GRAD which relate to the learning outcomes to ensure that all PGRs receive specific feedback in this form.

The language/communication skills of all PGRs should be assessed by the transfer assessment panel at the transfer stage. The transfer assessment panel should consider whether writing a thesis at a standard suitable for submission for a research degree and defence of the thesis at an oral examination is a realistic prospect for the PGR. If the Panel reaches the view that this is not a realistic prospect then the Panel should recommend that the PGR be withdrawn.

All PGRs are required to provide information relating to Academic Integrity, Safeguarding Data and Ethics Review in GRAD when they submit their transfer report. This information is available to the Transfer Panel in GRAD and will assist with discussions in the following areas:

- Whether the arrangements for data storage and management are being adequately addressed
- Whether a data management plan has been created
- Whether ethics review arrangements have been appropriately considered

The Transfer Panel must give the candidate the opportunity to discuss their progress and supervision in the absence of the supervisor(s) and confirm this in their report (even if the candidate declined the opportunity). If the PGR raised issues with the supervision or other issues the Panel will need to consider if these should be recorded in their report or raised outside of

⁴ For PGRs registered in the School of Languages, Cultures and Societies who have been granted permission to submit a [thesis in a language other than English](#) the transfer assessment may be conducted in a language other than English

GRAD with the DoPGRS or HOGS. This will be a judgement for the Panel. If the discussions were raised confidentially in the part of the meeting where the supervisor is not in attendance, the panel will need to bear in mind that all parties, including the supervisors, will have access to this report at the end of the process. Depending on the nature of any issues raised, the Panel may instead need to be report these outside GRAD, directly to the DoPGRS and/or HOGS or other appropriate staff member.

Practice-led PGRs registered in the Faculty of AHC have additional requirements for transfer, these are [listed in the practice-led section 11](#).

Mitigating Circumstances

The Graduate Board accommodates 'mitigating circumstances' for PGRs by considering a period of suspension or postponement to the transfer assessment which will delay the deadline for the decision on transfer to be made (please see time limits below).

In order to recommend a PGR for transfer the panel must be satisfied that the PGR and the research project have the potential for success at doctoral level and also whether completion of a thesis within the standard period of study for the programme concerned is a reasonable expectation. The same academic standards for transfer to a specific research degree must be upheld and mitigating circumstances which may have affected the candidate during their period of study should never lead the transfer panel to recommend transfer where the required evidence for success has not been demonstrated. However such factors might be taken into account when determining what support the PGR may need going forward, including whether any suspension or extension of studies should be considered.

Covid-19: Guidance for Schools and Panels

For the avoidance of doubt, the University is not lowering the standard or quality of work expected at transfer. In order to recommend a PGR for transfer the panel must be satisfied that the PGR and the research project have the potential for success at doctoral level. The same academic standards for transfer must be upheld and mitigating circumstances which may have affected the PGR should never lead the panel to recommend transfer where the required evidence for success has not been demonstrated. However, transfer assessors should be flexible in considering what constitutes such evidence and be sympathetic to any Covid-19 related circumstances that may have interrupted or slowed down a research project.

The written material and evidence required at transfer will vary between disciplines. The focus of the transfer process can be on the quality of the submission rather than the quantity, along with the performance in the transfer interview and the robustness of future plans. Faculties should consider flexibility, if appropriate, on the volume/length of material expected in the transfer report, whilst ensuring panels will still have sufficient evidence on which to make an academic judgement on transfer. This may not always be easily quantifiable, but Faculties are encouraged to consider how best to interpret this for their disciplines.

6. Outcomes after first transfer assessment

Possible Recommendations on a first transfer assessment

After a first transfer interview, the following recommendations are available to the Panel

- Transfer to doctoral registration;
- In the case of Provisional PhD candidatures , transfer to M Phil registration;
- Deferment of a decision about the transfer for a limited period to permit the work to be revised and then reassessed (see below)
- A decision that the PGR withdraw from a research degree candidature.

Transfer to a Mastership by Research as a transfer outcome is not permitted.

Transfer to doctorate

A decision to transfer to full doctoral registration confirms that the Panel are satisfied – on the basis of the first transfer submission and the interview with the PGR – that the PGR and their project have the potential for success at doctoral level.

Deferral

Deferral should be used when a transfer submission and/or PGR's performance in the transfer interview does not fully satisfy the Panel at this stage, but does demonstrate the potential to satisfy the requirements for transfer. A deferral implies that the PGR should be able to reach the required level for transfer to full doctorate, but needs a little more time in order to convince the panel that they can do so. A deferral period allows the PGR the time to revise and resubmit their Transfer Submission for a further attempt at the Transfer Assessment. Please [see section 9 for full guidance on the deferral and resubmission process.](#)

Transfer to MPhil

For Provisional PhD candidatures, if the Panel do not feel there is evidence from the transfer submission and viva of the potential to satisfy the criteria for transfer to PhD, the Panel must also consider the possibility of transfer to MPhil and whether the individual PGR and the research project have the potential for research at MPhil level. In the case of a first submission the Panel should always recommend deferral for the decision if they believe that the project and the PGR are potentially of PhD standard, and if the PGR has not yet exceeded the maximum period available for a final decision on transfer.

When assessing the potential for study at MPhil level, Panels may find it helpful to look at the learning outcomes for MPhil in the [programme of study entry](#) on the SES web pages. The following table provides a comparison of the differences in requirements between the two levels of research degree.

	PhD	MPhil
Duration	3 Years full-time 5 Years part-time (2 years overtime)	2 Years full-time (1 year overtime) 4 Years part-time (2 years overtime)
Thesis length	100,000 words (300 pages)	60,000 words (200 pages)
Criteria for award	Originality Independent critical ability Matter suitable for publication	Independent contribution to knowledge Material at a level suitable for publication
Learning outcomes	See the Programme of study entries on the SES website	See the Programme of study entries on the SES website

In the report, the Panel must provide clear reasons for the decision to require the candidate to transfer to MPhil. This should include explicit statements explaining why transfer to a Doctorate was not recommended or a deferral of the decision (in the case of transfer to MPhil on a first submission).

Withdrawal

A decision to withdraw implies that the project and PGR do not show potential for either PhD or MPhil study. In the report, the Panel must provide clear reasons for the decision to require the candidate to withdraw. This should include explicit statements explaining why transfer to a Doctorate or deferral of the decision (if withdraw on a first submission) were not recommended. For those PGRs registered for a Provisional PhD it must also include a statement confirming why transfer to M Phil was not recommended. In the case of a first submission the Panel should always recommend deferral for the decision if they believe that the project and the PGR are potentially of PhD standard, and if the PGR has not yet exceeded the maximum period available for a final decision on transfer.

Failure to Reach an Agreement

In the exceptional circumstance that members of the Transfer Assessment Panel fail to reach an agreement on the recommendation to be made following the transfer interview the Panel should contact the DPGR immediately. In the event that agreement cannot be reached, the DoPGRS must inform Doctoral College Operations who will advise on the procedure for managing disagreements between panel members. A copy of the procedure is available on request from Doctoral College Operations.

7. Informing the PGR of the Decision on Transfer

The University recommends that a Faculty/School adopts a consistent approach for all PGRs. This is normally that the PGR is asked to leave the meeting whilst the members of the Panel deliberate their decision before being called back to the meeting to be informed of the Panel's recommendation. Additional advice to Panel members on the post-viva pastoral support arrangements in the event of a recommendation to transfer to MPhil or withdrawal is included below

It is important that PGRs receive timely feedback on the outcome of the transfer assessment. For this reason it is expected that the Report of the Panel will be completed within 10 working days of the transfer viva and the PGR informed of the decision within this timescale. Formal notification of the outcome will be sent by DCO after the Programmes & Quality Group (PEG) has considered the report (see below).

[In the event of transfer to full doctoral status](#)

The PGR will receive email notification from GRAD after the report has been approved by PEG. The report of the panel will also be available to the PGR at that point.

[In the event of a deferral of the decision](#)

It is essential that the PGR is made aware of the revisions that are required by the panel in reasonable time and that the deadline for re-submission of the work is confirmed. It is equally important that the supervisor(s) are aware of this information. Once the DPGR confirms the joint report of the transfer assessment panel in GRAD an automated email notification is sent to the PGR with a copy to their supervisor, informing them that the panel has recommended deferral of the decision on transfer and the report is now available to view in GRAD. Once the report and recommendation has been approved by PEG the PGR will receive formal notification of the outcome via email (from the GRAD system), including the date for resubmission

[In the event of transfer to MPhil status](#)

Additional advice to Panel members on the post-viva pastoral support arrangements in the event of a recommendation to transfer to MPhil or withdrawal is included in the [post-viva support section below](#). The PGR will receive email notification from GRAD after the report has been approved by PEG. The report of the panel will also be available to the PGR at that point. DCO will aim to send the formal confirmation of the outcome of the assessment to the PGR within 2 weeks from when the report is submitted by the Director of PGR Studies. If for any reason it will not be possible to meet this timescale, DCO will write to the PGR to keep them informed. For Tier 4/Student Visa PGRs, the University required to report to UKVI a Transfer to MPhil. A report will be made within 10 working days of the outcome letter to the PGR, and a further notification will be sent to the PGR.

[In the event of a recommendation for withdrawal](#)

Additional advice to Panel members on the post-viva pastoral support arrangements in the event of a recommendation to transfer to MPhil or withdrawal is included in the [post-viva support section below](#). The PGR will receive a formal letter from DCO after the report has been approved by PEG. The report of the transfer panel will also be visible in GRAD at that point. DCO will aim to send the formal confirmation of the outcome of the assessment to the PGR within 2 weeks from when the report is submitted by the Director of PGR Studies. If for any reason it will not be possible to meet this timescale, DCO will write to the PGR to keep them informed. For Tier 4/Student Visa

PGRs, the University required to report to UKVI any withdrawal. A report will be made within 10 working days of the outcome letter to the PGR, and a further notification will be sent to the PGR.

Access to the University email account will remain open for 20 working days from the date of notification of the outcome from DCO. If a PGR submits an appeal to the University against an adverse academic decision they may request continued access to their email during the period their appeal is under consideration, by contacting pgrprogress@leeds.ac.uk.

Post-viva support for PGRs

It must be recognised that some PGRs will be disappointed by the outcome of their transfer assessment, and may be upset on receiving the Panel's feedback. Panels are asked to note the following guidance, which is applicable irrespective for the formal of the viva.

The Supervisor is normally in attendance at the transfer viva ([see Section 4](#)) and available to provide pastoral support after the viva, if needed. If not in attendance, the Panel is asked to ensure that pastoral support (via other appropriate member of staff e.g. Director of PGR Studies) will be available to the PGR immediately after the viva, should this be necessary. In the case of the above recommendations the Panel are asked to:

- Ensure that the Supervisor (if not already in attendance at the viva) or other agreed member of staff is available to be called into the meeting if needed.
- Notify the Graduate School and the Director of PGR Studies immediately of the outcome the Panel are making so that appropriate follow-up pastoral support and signposting to support and well-being or other services can be provided after the viva, if needed.
- Inform the PGR of the recommendation the Panel have reached and, as appropriate, provide a verbal summary/feedback on the reasons for this.
- Advise the PGR that the Panel will submit their full report to the University which will give full feedback on the recommendation, and that the PGR will be sent a copy of this after review by the Progression & Examinations Group. The PGR will receive information from the Doctoral College Operations team throughout this process.
- Advise the PGR they can contact their Graduate School and/or Director of PGR Studies for any advice relating to the next steps in the process, and who will also follow-up with signposting to appeal information (see below), if needed.
- Recommend that for PGRs in the UK on a student visa they should take further advice from the Student Visa Advice Team.

In the event that a PGR becomes extremely distressed on receiving an adverse academic decision the examiners are advised to contact the supervisor or other appropriate member of staff as agreed in advance and invite them to join the post-viva meeting to provide support. In the event that the examiners become concerned about a PGR's wellbeing or behaviour on receiving an adverse academic decision they should immediately inform the PGR's Head of School, Graduate School Manager or Graduate School Office staff who will help refer the PGR to more specialist support services (such as the Student Counselling and Wellbeing Service). Staff concerned about an PGR can ask for advice by contacting [Counselling and Wellbeing](#) (9am – 5pm Mon-Fri). Graduate School staff will be able to advise on the relevant support

pathway if needed. Out of hours emergency advice should be sought from Security on EXT 32222 or 0113 343 2222.

Appeal Process

In some circumstances PGRs may appeal against an adverse academic decision⁵ using the Appeals Procedure. The appeal must reach the University within 20 working days of the PGR receiving formal confirmation of the decision from DCO, after approval of the examiners' report by the Progression & Examinations Group. PGRs considering submitting an appeal should be strongly encouraged to seek independent advice and support from the LUU Student Advice Centre (email: advice@luu.leeds.ac.uk). There are also a number of other support services available to PGRs. Details are available on the SES website. In cases where an appeal is being considered, the right team to support and advise the PGR is the LUU Student Advice Centre who can offer independent support and advice, and the Graduate School can sign-post PGRs accordingly.

8. Completing the report of the transfer assessment panel

Transfer Assessment Panel

After the transfer interview the individual identified as the Principal Panel member in GRAD is responsible for ensuring the Joint Report of the Transfer Assessment Panel is fully completed and agreed by all members of the Panel within 10 working days of the transfer viva.

If the PGR raises issues with the supervision or other issues the Panel will need to consider if these should be recorded in their report or raised outside of GRAD with the DoPGRS or HOGS. This will be a judgement for the Panel. If the discussions were raised confidentially in the part of the meeting where the supervisor is not in attendance, the panel will need to bear in mind that all parties, including the supervisors, will have access to this report at the end of the process. Depending on the nature of any issues raised, the Panel may instead need to be report these outside GRAD, directly to the DoPGRS and/or HOGS or other appropriate staff member.

Director of PGR Studies

The Director of PGR Studies (DoPGRS) is required to review all transfer reports. The DPGR must be satisfied that the transfer assessment has been completed in accordance with the University's Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidatures and of the quality and appropriateness of the information provided and that this is consistent with the overall recommendation made by the transfer assessment panel.

If the DoPGRS is happy with the report and recommendation they can submit this to the Progression and Examination Group. If the DoPGRS feels that further information is necessary the report can be returned to the Principal Panel Member. The Principal Panel Member can

⁵ Referral for resubmission, award of MPhil on a PhD submission or Fail

update the report in GRAD and resubmit this to the DoPGRS. Once the DoPGRS has completed the workflow and submitted the joint report of the panel an email notification will be sent to DCO.

Graduate Board's Progression and Examination Group (PEG)

The Graduate Board has delegated authority to its Progression and Examination Group to consider the recommendations of transfer assessment panels. The recommendations arising from transfer assessments must be approved by the Group. The Group will ask for further information if it is not satisfied that the recommendation has been clearly and sufficiently justified in the report or, in the case of a deferral of the decision on transfer, the feedback to the PGR is not sufficiently clear.

9. Deferral and Re-assessment Process

Deferral of the Decision

A case for the deferral of the transfer decision for a limited period can be made by the transfer assessment panel on academic grounds to PEG. Deferral should be used when a transfer submission and/or PGR's performance in the transfer interview does not fully satisfy the Panel at this stage, but does demonstrate the potential to satisfy the requirements for transfer. A deferral implies that the PGR should be able to reach the required level for transfer to full doctorate, but needs a little more time in order to convince the panel that they can do so. A deferral period allows the PGR the time to revise and resubmit their Transfer Submission for a further attempt at the Transfer Assessment. The decision on transfer should also be deferred when a realistic plan for completion of the thesis, within the standard period of study, is not evident. The decision should be deferred pending the receipt of a satisfactory plan.

In some cases it might be appropriate to recommend transfer to full doctoral status with some minor corrections to a report recommended, not for re-assessment by the Panel but as a means of identifying and addressing minor mistakes in presentation, format etc. before production of the final thesis. This is felt to be acceptable by PEG. If there are issues of content where further work is required for resubmission to the Panel this constitutes a deferral and a recommendation for transfer cannot be made at this stage. If the Panel requires further work to be undertaken and resubmitted this must be recorded as a deferral. Transfer to doctoral status cannot be confirmed until the Panel is satisfied with the resubmission.

The period of any deferral is normally no more than three months and in any event cannot be more than six months. However, in all cases a final decision must be reached within the time limit specified. When the initial transfer assessment is conducted late this will reduce the timescale by which the panel may defer a decision— please see section 2 for further advice.

In the case of a first submission the Panel should always recommend deferral of the decision if they believe that the project and the PGR are potentially of doctoral standard, and if the PGR has not yet exceeded the maximum period available for a final decision on transfer.

Guidance to the PGR

The PGR must be given, in writing clear guidance on the reasons for deferral of the decision, details of the further work required by the panel and the revised deadline for submission. This guidance should not stifle the initiative of the PGR. The resubmitted transfer document must be assessed with reference to the requirements set out by the Panel after the first transfer viva. For this reason, the guidance must clearly set out what needs to be done in order for the PGR to reach the standards required for transfer to full doctorate. At a re-examination, the Panel must not introduce new criteria to be met, although they may offer advice on further work that might be required for eventual successful doctoral submission and/or future development of the work.

For resubmission after deferral, the University is not prescriptive about what format the resubmission should take. In view of the disciplinary differences, PEG has agreed that, depending on the nature of the evidence required by the Panel to reach a decision on transfer, that it is considered acceptable to require submission of either:

- (i) a full, revised transfer report; or
- (ii) a revised sub-section of the report; or
- (iii) a separate, supplementary piece of work, as appropriate.

In the case of (ii) or (iii) submission should, however, be made either in, or as an appendix to, the original transfer document.

The Panel are asked to bear in mind the following when preparing the reasons for the deferral and details of the further work required:

- the guidance must be clear and unambiguous
- this is joint guidance and should indicate the view of all panel members.

It should be explained to the PGR that they will be required to attend a second transfer interview if the panel is not satisfied with the revised material

Registration, access to facilities and support the deferral Period

PGRs should continue to attend for supervision meetings in accordance as normal during the deferral period. Records of all supervision meetings should continue to be recorded in GRAD. If the length of time allocated for the deferral period takes the PGR beyond year 1 of their candidature and into the next academic year, it is important that the PGR still follows the registration process and registers as normal at the start of year 2 which maintains access to all facilities. Their registration status does not change during this time, unless they fail to register, and the original maximum time limit for submission of the thesis for examination at the end of the programme remains unchanged.

Since during the deferral period the individual continues to be registered as a PGR at the University of Leeds, and since a deferral does not constitute an extension to or suspension of the normal time limit for the PhD, all facilities normally available to PGRs should continue to be made available to them, as appropriate to their research area:

- to have access to IT facilities
- to have access to the Library
- to have access to other University facilities as normal
- supervisions must continue as normal during this period

Deferred PGRs should only proceed to further data collection following careful consideration by their supervisors and/or DoPGRS.

Reassessment after resubmission and second transfer interview

In the event that a decision on transfer is deferred it is normally expected that all members of the original transfer assessment panel will be involved in the re-assessment. It is expected that the decision on transfer will normally be completed within 3 weeks of resubmission (including a second transfer interview if required).

The resubmitted transfer document must be assessed with reference to the requirements set out by the Panel in writing, after the first transfer viva. The Panel must not introduce new criteria to be met, although they may offer advice on further work that might be required for eventual successful doctoral submission and/or future development of the work.

All members of the Panel must consider the re-submission, and a second transfer interview may be held if the Panel deem it appropriate. If the Panel are in agreement that the resubmission now meets the requirement for transfer to full doctoral status it may not be necessary for a second transfer interview to be held. This is a decision that Panel are asked to take after reading the resubmission for transfer.

All deferred PGRs must be offered a second transfer interview if, after considering the resubmitted work, the panel is of the view that, from the consideration of the written submission, the PGR has not met the criteria for transfer to Doctoral candidature. The PGR must be given the opportunity to defend their second transfer submission at a second transfer interview. PGRs and panel members must make themselves available for the second transfer interview within a reasonable period of time. Please refer to section (5) for further advice on the arrangements for a transfer viva.

Outcomes after second submission

A submission can only be deferred on one occasion and therefore the following recommendations are available to the Panel:

- (i) Transfer to doctoral registration
- (ii) In the case of Provisional PhD candidatures , transfer to M Phil registration⁶
- (iii) Withdrawal

For recommendations under (ii) or (iii) a second transfer viva must be held in all cases. If a Panel is unable to make a recommendation that the PGR should proceed to either doctoral or MPhil study (where that option is available) within the time limit allowed then the PGR must withdraw.

⁶ In the case of split-site candidates the option to transfer to MPhil registration is normally NOT available.

Where a PGR initially registered for a Provisional PhD is recommended to proceed to an MPhil, the studentship awarding body should be informed and the necessary adjustment in funding made.

10. Data Management, Ethics Review, Academic Integrity

All PGRs are required to provide information relating to Academic Integrity, Safeguarding Data and Ethical Requirements in GRAD when they submit their transfer report. This information is available to the Transfer Panel in GRAD and should be reviewed by the Panel. The information will assist with discussions in the following areas. It is the responsibility of the PGR to complete any actions identified in these areas. PEG may ask the School to report on progress against the actions.

(a) Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

All PGRs are required to maintain high standards of academic conduct and, in particular, to avoid conduct amounting to the fabrication of research results or plagiarism. Further information and guidance on academic integrity and plagiarism is available in the Postgraduate Researcher Handbook. The procedures for investigating an allegation of plagiarism in a PGR's transfer report are set out on the [SES website](#) (*see under complaints, appeals and disciplinary matters*). Where plagiarism is suspected in a transfer report the matter must be immediately reported to the DoPGRS and the Graduate School Office. The transfer assessment should be postponed and the allegation investigated in accordance with the procedure.

(b) Safeguarding Data and Data Management Plan

PGRs should be aware of and comply with the University's [policies and procedures](#) for safeguarding and storage of data. Data storage and safeguarding issues should be discussed at the transfer viva, where appropriate, and the transfer assessment panel should be satisfied that such matters are being appropriately addressed. It is the responsibility of the PGR to address any actions identified by the transfer assessment panel for completion.

Graduate Board approved arrangements that with effect from 2019/20, there will be a requirement for all PGRs to create a Data Management Plan (DMP). PEG agreed that the creation of a data management plan would be a requirement of the Transfer process and that the Transfer panel should therefore have access to the document via GRAD. To facilitate this, PGRs are asked to upload their Data Management Plan to GRAD alongside the Transfer report. The Panel is asked to consider whether it is satisfied with the arrangements, and if not, indicate the nature of the problem and the steps the PGR has been asked to take. Completion of these is the responsibility of the PGR.

(c) Engagement in Research Ethics

PGRs should be aware of, and comply with, the [University's ethics arrangements](#). PGRs are required to provide information about the arrangements they have made for ethical review of their research in GRAD when they submit their transfer report. This information will then be available

in GRAD to the transfer assessment panel. Engagement in research ethics should be discussed at the transfer interview, where appropriate and the transfer assessment panel must be satisfied that such matters are being appropriately addressed and a reason for its decision must be given in the panel's report.

The University normally expects the need for any ethical review required by a PGR's work to be identified before transfer. Due to the time it can take to obtain ethical approval for research leaving the seeking of ethical approval until after transfer may prejudice the ability of the PGR to complete the research within the normal period of study. However, it is recognised that there may be, in a limited number of cases, exceptions to this principle. Where the transfer assessment panel identify that ethical review is required but approval has not been granted, or if it anticipated that ethical review (or further ethical review) will be required in the research, the panel is required to provide further information including details of the steps the PGR has been asked to take. Completion of these actions is the responsibility of the PGR. Where the panel is not satisfied with the arrangements this should be clearly stated in the report.

11. Practice-led Research Degree Programmes

The PGR and School should clarify at the transfer stage if the research project is still defined as practice-led. It is not possible to change to a practice-led research degree after transfer. A practice element should be a mandatory submission requirement at transfer assessment, which is indicative of the practice. This could be a contained performance, small installation or concept to demonstrate practice. The PGR must be required to demonstrate the ability to link practice with the written analysis.

It is important to identify at transfer stage if the PGR intends to include live performance or practice as part of the final submission and, if this will take place prior to submission of the written element, to facilitate arrangements for the early appointment of examiners (the GRAD examination entry workflow must therefore be completed at least 3 months prior to the date of the first live practice).

An intention stated at the transfer stage to include live practice in the final examinations will not be binding. If research determines that a live element is no longer required (or dates change), this should be reported as soon as possible and will not have any adverse consequences for the PGR. However, PGRs who do not declare an intention to include live practice at transfer stage will not be permitted to include live practice as part of the submission.

In addition to the usual requirements for transfer, a practice-led PGR must set out what they expect to include for assessment as the final submission. This must meet the regulations as set out in the Ordinances and Regulations for Research Degrees.

In accordance with regulations for a PhD, PGRs could be offered more time to rethink or redo the practice elements. A case for deferral of the transfer decision would have to be made on academic grounds to the Progression and Examination Group. Cases for deferral must be submitted by School/Institute/Faculty. The period of any extension is normally no more than three months and in any event cannot be more than six months.

Annex I: Good Practice Guidance for the transfer viva

(a) Before the Transfer Interview

- Before the transfer interview the Chair of the Panel is asked to establish whether the supervisor(s) will be present. In cases where a PGR has more than one supervisor all supervisors are permitted to attend the transfer interview (for example, this may be appropriate in those cases where an interdisciplinary project crosses a number of subject boundaries).
- If the PGR does not wish their supervisor(s) to be present at the transfer interview they are asked to inform the DPGR at the earliest opportunity prior to the transfer interview. The DPGR will then inform the Transfer Panel;
- If the main supervisor is not present at the transfer interview they should normally be available, if necessary, for consultation. Ideally in the School but contactable by telephone is acceptable.
- Consider the suitability of the room for the transfer interview to ensure as few distractions as possible. This should include environmental conditions (such as lighting and temperature) and noise (e.g. away from building work).
- For an in-person viva, consider the layout of the room (table, chairs, availability of whiteboard/pens, refreshments etc) and practicalities such as ensuring all mobile phones are switched off and placing a “do not disturb” sign to the door. There should be a room where the PGR and supervisor(s) (if attending) can wait during the Panel’s discussions. For a video streamed viva, please consult the video-streamed viva policy.
- Recording of the transfer interview by any party is not permitted.
- PGRs should be given the opportunity either before or during the transfer interview to discuss their progress and supervision in the absence of the supervisor(s).

One member of the transfer assessment panel (usually the Chair) should:

(b) Prior to the PGR being present

- ask panel members for their initial impression, but no decision should be made at this stage, nor should the PGR be told the likely outcome;
- clarify any division of responsibility amongst the panel regarding the focus of the questions e.g. panel member X will concentrate on methodology, member Y on the planned schedule for completion of the thesis etc. However, it is usually the case that there will be some overlap;
- establish whether the supervisor will ask the PGR any questions.

(c) On the arrival of the PGR

- aim to put the PGR at their ease as far as possible (welcome, introductions);
- explain the purpose of the transfer assessment, go through the format for the transfer interview and how things will work, the panel members share responsibility for questioning the PGR during the interview;
- if the supervisor(s) is present clearly explain their role in the transfer interview - the supervisor(s) may ask the PGR questions but cannot answer questions on their behalf. The Panel may ask the supervisor to provide clarification on aspects of the research project. The supervisor is not, however, involved in the decision making process;
- explain the possible recommendations the Panel can make (see possible recommendations below);
- inform the PGR when they will be informed of the Panel's recommendation. Normally this will be on the same day as the transfer interview and immediately after the Panel has completed its deliberations and agreed its recommendation;
- the PGR should be told that they may request a break(s) during the assessment and that they may consult their copy of the submission (which may be annotated with notes/post-it-notes) during the assessment if it helps them;
- explain that success at the transfer stage has no direct bearing on whether the PGR will be successful at final examination it simply confirms that the transfer assessment panel is satisfied that the PGR and the project has the potential for success. To qualify for a doctoral award a PGR must meet the required learning outcomes for the degree and satisfy the examiners that his/her achievement is of sufficient merit and that the thesis contains evidence of originality and independent critical ability and matter suitable for publication;
- explain to the PGR that after the interview they will be asked to withdraw from the meeting whilst the panel confers on their decision before asking them to return;
- ask the PGR if they have any questions and advise them to seek clarification should any part of the process or questioning be unclear.

(d) During the Interview (Meeting)

- give the PGR the opportunity to make a brief presentation of their work;
- wherever possible, transfer panel members should pose succinct and focussed questions and avoid multi-part questions which are more difficult for the PGR to remember. Instead, where possible, ask one question at a time and use follow-up questions as necessary.

Panel Members should actively listen to the PGR's answers. If the PGR gives a poor answer, try to rephrase the question in a different way and given them another opportunity to produce a better response;

- allow the PGR time to collect their thoughts and develop responses to the questions posed by the panel. Allow the PGR to consult their copy of the transfer report (which may be annotated with notes/post-it notes) during the transfer interview if it helps them;
- at the close of the interview ask the PGR if they feel the interview has covered all points they were expecting or if there is anything further they wish to raise;
- Although the transfer interview will normally run continuously and be completed within a day, respect any request a PGR may make for a short break. The Panel or supervisor(s) (if present) may also wish to suggest a break in the case of longer transfer interview (for example should an interview reach two hours);
- In the event of a PGR becoming distressed, the Panel are advised to offer the PGR a break in order to compose themselves before continuing. If a PGR is unable to continue, the Panel should contact Doctoral College Operations (pgrprogress@leeds.ac.uk);
- at the end of the transfer interview, after the PGR has left the room, the supervisor(s) should be offered the opportunity to feedback to the Panel. The supervisor(s) must then leave the room before the decision on transfer is taken. Only the Panel members may be present for this part of the process

(e) After the Transfer Interview

- the process of notifying the PGR and supervisor of the outcome of the transfer assessment should normally take place on the same day;
- invite the PGR and supervisor(s) (if present) back and inform them of the recommendation. A single recommendation must be made. Inform the PGR that the recommendation is subject to approval by the Progression and Examination Group;
- In the event that the transfer assessment panel becomes concerned about a PGR's wellbeing or behaviour on receiving an adverse academic decision they should inform the PGR's Head of School or Faculty Graduate School Manager who will help refer the PGR to more specialist support services (such as the Student Counselling and Wellbeing Service); Please see the [post-viva support section](#) for further advice. Staff concerned about a PGR can ask for advice by calling Counselling and Wellbeing staff during office hours;
- outline the next stages of the process to the PGR, depending on the Panel's recommendation (see informing the PGR of the decision section below);
- The Panel is required to submit their report in GRAD within 10 working days.

Annex 2: Questions in the Transfer Panel Report

From January 2021, Covid-19 questions have been added to the report to record any impacts on research plans/progress, and/or any actions that have been, or will need to be, taken in response to this.

Thesis Title

- Confirm the thesis title

Decision

- Confirm the interview date
- Confirm the outcome of the transfer assessment

Report

- The Transfer Panel considered the Progress Report completed by the supervisor and PGR.
- The Transfer Panel gave the PGR the opportunity to discuss their progress and supervision in the absence of the supervisor(s) (even if the candidate declined the opportunity.)
- Comment on the potential for originality within the investigation. You may wish to comment on whether any aspects may be publishable
- Comment on whether the candidate has demonstrated independent critical ability
- Comment on the written style and overall presentation of the written submission
- Comment on the performance of the candidate in the oral examination (including language / communication skills)
- Comment on the candidate's understanding of the area of study (including an awareness of the field of literature)
- Comment on the candidate's knowledge of research methods / techniques
- Comment on whether the planned schedule of work is achievable in the standard period of study
- Feedback from the Transfer Panel or general comments. Please use this section to record any discussion about the impacts of the Covid-19 situation on research plans/progress, and/or any actions that have, or will need to be, taken in response to this.
- File upload (optional)

Training Plan

- The Transfer Panel has seen the agreed training plan
- Has the candidate made satisfactory progress within the agreed training plan?
- If no, please indicate the steps the candidate has been asked to take. The Transfer Panel is also invited to indicate any additional training to be undertaken by the candidate in the text box. Completion of these actions is the responsibility of the candidate.

Ethics

- Is ethical review required and if yes, has ethical approval has been granted
- If ethical approval has not yet been granted please indicate the nature of the problem and the steps the candidate has been asked to take. Completion of these activities is the responsibility of the candidate

Safeguarding Data

- Is the Transfer Panel satisfied that the University's policy for safeguarding data - storage, backup and encryption - is being appropriately addressed?
- If no, the nature of the problem and the steps the PGR has been asked to take.

Panel Recommendation

- The report has been agreed by all members of the Panel

Recommendation to Defer

- Reasons for the recommendation to defer the transfer decision. Alternatively please attach as a separate file and state 'see attached' in the box below
- Details of the further work required of the candidate (please state clearly what is required). Alternatively please attach as a separate file and state 'see attached' in the box below
- Deadline for resubmission of transfer report

Transfer to MPhil

- Please state the reasons for the decision to require the candidate to transfer to MPhil. This should include explicit statements why transfer to doctorate was not recommended

Withdrawal

- Please state the reasons for the decision to require the candidate to withdraw. This should include explicit statements explaining why transfer to a Doctorate or deferral of the decision were not recommended. For those PGRs registered for a Provisional PhD only please also include a statement confirming why transfer to M Phil was not recommended