



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Transfer Process for Leeds Trinity University PGRs

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

Updated February 2021

(This document includes the temporary arrangements for transfer in response to the Covid-19 pandemic)

Arrangements in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic

The following guidance was approved by the Programmes and Quality Group (P&Q) and shared with Graduate Schools.

- The policy remains that wherever possible, the transfer process should continue as normal according to University timescales. At the current time, the transfer viva will normally be held by video streaming. The policy on video streaming is available [here](#), and we have also produced a [good practice guide](#) to support staff involved in the process.
- The University recognises that there will be some situations where progress will have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic in the run up to the transfer process. Graduate Schools should consider the following adjustments to the transfer process to ensure PGRs are not disadvantaged as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Material submitted for transfer

- 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.

Timing of transfer submission/assessment

- The University is not recommending automatic extensions to the transfer process. Wherever possible, PGRs should be encouraged and supported to complete the transfer process at the expected time. However where progress has been impacted, flexibility over timing can be considered on a case by case basis.
- It is recommended that Schools avoid sticking to rigid deadlines for transfer which are earlier than those set by the University. In cases where the Faculty/School normally requires submission of a transfer report at e.g. 9/10 months, requests for additional time up to the 12 month point set by the University - should be considered sympathetically. This approval can be managed at the discretion of the Graduate School and requests do not need to be communicated to the Progress and Examinations section of Doctoral College Operations.
- The Programmes and Quality Group will consider requests to delay the transfer process beyond the 12 month point (for full-time) on a case by case basis. Graduate Schools should submit requests to DCO (P&E). If approved, it will remain open to the panel to recommend a deferral of up to 6 months. When considering whether to request a delay to the transfer, please note that the maximum time limit for final thesis submission will not automatically be extended. Any applications for extensions should be made at the end of the standard period of study, as usual.

Funding implications

- Any University funded postgraduate scholarship award holders or Research Council funded PGRs will continue to be paid maintenance and fees if their transfer is deferred or delayed for up to 6 months after their original transfer date. Any special cases will be reviewed if they arise.

Training and support for PGRs

- It is recognised that the online format of the transfer viva might present additional barriers to disabled PGRs. Previously agreed adjustments around the transfer viva must be honoured, but bespoke arrangements may be

required in some cases. PGRs are advised to contact Disability Services at the earliest opportunity to discuss the reasonable adjustments and/or additional support that may be needed for an online transfer viva. The process for identifying and agreeing support and reasonable adjustments for the transfer viva is set out in a separate document. The training and support available to all PGRs is outlined in the section below.

- Organisational Development and Professional Learning (OD&PL) are offering the following to PGRs in preparation for their transfer viva. The support here is offered in addition to any support from the supervisor in preparation for the transfer viva.

Graduate Board & Programmes
and Quality Group

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1.0 Preparing the PGR for transfer

Supervisors' specific guidance on the transfer process

- 1.1 Supervisors 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.

2.0 Timescales for Transfer

- 2.1 The following section sets out the normal timescales for the transfer process. However please also refer to the Introductory section of this document for advice on the transfer process in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the steps and adjustments that might be necessary at the transfer stage in relation to the deadlines for transfer.

University deadlines for the transfer assessment

- 2.2 The University's time limits for transfer (excluding any adjustments for formal periods of suspended study) are set out in Annex II of this document. The University has two deadlines related to the Transfer process.

Deadline for transfer viva

- 2.3 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.

Deadline for final decision on transfer

- 2.4 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).

Postponement of the Transfer viva beyond the University deadlines

- 2.5 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 Programmes and Quality Group (P&Q) (or Chair acting on its behalf). Requests for postponements should be submitted to DoPGR via the Research Office research@leedstrinity.ac.uk for consideration, the Research office will liaise with the UoL. In all cases a final decision on transfer must be taken within the time limits specified.

- 2.6 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 P&Q.
- 2.7 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 decision⁸. For example:
- 2.8 A full-time PGR commencing Provisional PhD study in October 2019 should undergo transfer assessment by no later than 30 September 2020. 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 2021. However, if the first assessment is postponed until late December 2020 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 2021.

Late Transfer Recommendations

- 2.9 P&Q asks that the Director of Postgraduate Research be formally requested to investigate the situation when a transfer recommendation for a PGR is more than six months late.

3.0 The Transfer Assessment Panel

Transfer Assessment Panel (for PGRs commencing study from 01 September 2018)

- 3.1 Transfer Assessment Panels are responsible for making the decision on transfer. For those PGRs commencing doctoral study with effect from 01 September 2018 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 (eg in cases where an interdisciplinary project crosses a number of subject boundaries).
- 3.2. 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 (eg this might be the Director of PGR Studies (DPGR)) both of whom are independent of the supervisory team.
- 3.3 The transfer interview will normally be chaired by one of the independent members of the Panel. However, in some areas, Schools may appoint an

additional individual (who is also independent of the supervisory team), to Chair the transfer interview.

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

- 3.4 In exceptional cases, consideration may be given by P&Q 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.
- 3.5 When sending forward recommendations for the appointment of an External Assessor, Schools will be required to provide the following information for consideration by P&Q:
- 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)
- 3.6 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
 - receives all relevant paperwork (described in detail in the section “evidence upon which the decision on transfer is based” - see above).
- 3.7 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

- 3.8 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.

4.0 Role of the Supervisor

- 4.1 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;
 - normally attending the transfer interview. If the supervisor will not be attending the viva they should be available for consultation as necessary;
 - 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.
- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 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 [unsatisfactory academic progress procedure](#) (UAPP) should be instigated. UAPP is intended to provide the means to address the concerns of the supervisor(s) and to support the PGR's future progress.

Mechanism for the PGR to raise concerns about the attendance of their Supervisor(s) at the Transfer Interview

- 4.4 If the PGR does not wish their supervisor(s) to be present at their transfer interview they should inform the DoPGR at the earliest possible opportunity prior to the interview date. The DoPGR 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.

5.0 The Transfer Interview and assessment

The following section sets out the normal timescales for the transfer process. However please also refer to the introductory section of this document for advice on the transfer process in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the steps and adjustments that might be necessary at the transfer stage in relation to the deadlines for transfer. In the current circumstances, arrangements have been made for it to be possible for PGRs to complete their transfer viva by video streaming. The revised video streaming policy is available [here](#). The University has also prepared a [good practice guide](#) for those involved in the process.

Purpose of the transfer assessment

- 5.1 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")

- 5.2 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.

Pre-Transfer Progress Report

- 5.3 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 form, providing comments on the PGR's progress before the transfer interview. The completed form should be submitted to the Research Office by the PGR as part of the transfer documentation submission.

Evidence upon which the decision on transfer is based

- 5.4 The transfer assessment panel require access to the following information¹¹:
- PGR's written submission ("Transfer Report")
 - A planned schedule for completion of the thesis within the [standard period of study](#) (eg 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 ethical review and data storage arrangements and a statement of academic integrity
 - Reports on the PGR's progress from the supervisor(s) (the first formal progress and pre-transfer stage reports). For full-time PGRs at 6 months (or earlier) and in the case of part-time PGRs at 9 months (or earlier)
 - Data Management Plan (for PGR's commencing study from 01/09/2019 onwards
 - please see section 11 for further information)
- 5.5 If plagiarism is suspected in a transfer report the matter must be immediately reported to the DoPGR and the Graduate School Office. The transfer assessment should be postponed and the allegation investigated in accordance with procedure. Please see section 11.

Transfer Interview (viva voce examination)

- 5.6 All PGRs must undergo a transfer interview which will be conducted in English and this should take the form of a *viva voce* examination. The normal expectation is that the Transfer Interview (and any second interview (if required)) will be conducted at the University with the PGR and all

members of the Panel present. The University does not normally permit the use of video streaming for the transfer assessment, however special arrangements are in place in response to Covid-19.

- 5.7 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).
- 5.8 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 section 10.
- 5.9 The questions the Panel are required to report on can be found in [Annex I](#). 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.
- 5.10 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.
- 5.11 All PGRs are required to provide information relating to Academic Integrity, Safeguarding Data and Ethical Requirements when they submit their transfer report.
 - Whether the arrangements for data storage and management are being adequately addressed
 - Whether a data management plan has been created
 - Whether ethical review arrangements have been appropriately considered

Reasonable Adjustments and Support for PGR Level Assessment and Examination

- 5.12 Disabled postgraduate researchers, their supervisors and the transfer assessment panel, can access a wide range of support from [student support and wellbeing](#)
- 5.13 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.

- 5.14 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.

Mitigating Circumstances

- 5.15 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).
- 5.16 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.

6.0 Outcome after first transfer assessment

Possible Recommendations on a first transfer assessment

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 Please note that transfer to a Mastership by Research at this stage of a candidature is not permitted

Distinction between transfer to doctorate and deferral

- 6.3 A transfer to full doctoral registration implies 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.
- 6.4 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.
- 6.5 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 P&Q.
- 6.6 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. Please refer to section 9 for further guidance on the deferral process.

Failure to Reach an Agreement

- 6.7 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 DPGR must inform Doctoral College Operations who will advise on the procedure for managing disagreements between panel members. A copy of the procedure is available as an Annex to this document.

Appeals Against Adverse Academic Decisions

- 6.8 Postgraduate Researchers may appeal against an adverse academic decision using the University's appeals procedure. A copy of the procedure can be found on the [Secretariat website](#). The appeal must reach the University within 20 working days of the date of the letter from DCO confirming the decision.
- 6.9 PGRs considering submitting an appeal should be strongly encouraged to seek independent advice and support from the LUU Student Advice Centre ([Website](#) and email: advice@luu.leeds.ac.uk). There are also a number of other support services available to PGRs. Details are available on the at [SES website](#) for further information.

- 6.10 Where a sponsored PGR is recommended for transfer to MPhil or withdrawal, they should also be advised to contact records@leedstrinity.ac.uk further advice.

7.0 Informing the PGR of the Decision on Transfer

- 7.1 The University recommends that Schools adopt a consistent approach for all PGRs. This could be 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.
- 7.2 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 returned to the Research Office research@leedstrinity.ac.uk, and the PGR informed of the decision within this timescale. Formal notification of the outcome will be sent by the Research Office to the DCO Programmes & Quality Group (P&Q) has considered the report (see below).
- 7.3 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 DoPGR (or approved nominee) who will help refer the PGR to more specialist support services (such as the Student Counselling and WellbeingService). Staff concerned about a PGR can ask for advice by calling Student Support and Wellbeing staff during office hours.

In the event of transfer to full doctoral status

- 7.4 The PGR will receive email notification from the Research Office after the report has been approved by P&Q. The report of the panel will also be available to the PGR at that point.

In the event of a deferral of the decision

- 7.5 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 DoPGR confirms the joint report of the transfer assessment panel email notification should be 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. Once the report and recommendation has been approved by P&Q the PGR will receive formal notification of the outcome via email (from the Research Office), including the date for resubmission

In the event of transfer to MPhil status

- 7.6 The PGR will receive email notification from Research Office after the report has been approved by P&Q. The report of the panel will also be available to the PGR at that point.

In the event of a recommendation for withdrawal

- 7.7 The PGR will receive a formal letter from Research Office after the report has been approved by P&Q. The report of the transfer panel should also be made available to the PGR.

8.0 Completing the Report of the Transfer Assessment Panel

Completing the Joint Report of the Transfer Assessment Panel

- 8.1 After the transfer interview the individual identified as the Principal Panel member 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.

Director of PGR Studies

- 8.2 The Director of PGR Studies 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.
- 8.3 If the DPGR is happy with the report and recommendation they can submit this to the Research Office research@leedstrinity.ac.uk who will liaise with the University of Leeds.
- 8.4 If the DPGR feels that further information is necessary the report can be returned to the Principal Panel Member. The Principal Panel Member can update the report and resubmit this to the DoPGR. Once the DPGR has approved the report, the Research Office will liaise with the University of Leeds.

Graduate Board's Programmes and Quality Group (P&Q)

- 8.5 The Graduate Board has delegated authority to its Programmes and Quality Group to consider the recommendations of transfer assessment panels. The recommendations arising from transfer assessments must be approved by the Group. To ensure that there are no delays to the consideration of recommendations the Chair (or alternative member of the Group) takes action on its behalf on a weekly basis to consider recommendations.
- 8.6 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.

9.0 Deferral of the decision.

- 9.1 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 the Programmes & Quality Group. Please see section 6 of this document for further guidance on the distinction between transfer and deferral.
- 9.2 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 of the decision 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.
- 9.3 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 (see time limits in Annex 2). 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.
- 9.4 It should also 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.

Guidance to the PGR

- 9.5 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.
- 9.6 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.
- 9.7 For resubmission after deferral, the University is not prescriptive about what format the resubmission should take. In view of the disciplinary differences, P&Q 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.
- 9.8 In the case of (ii) or (iii) submission should, however, be made either in, or as an appendix to, the original transfer document.

- 9.9 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.

Registration, access to facilities and support the deferral Period

- 9.10 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 submitted to the Research Office.
- 9.11 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.
- 9.12 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
- 9.13 Deferred PGRs should only proceed to further data collection following careful consideration by their supervisors and/or DPGR.

Reassessment after resubmission and second transfer interview

- 9.14 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).
- 9.15 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.
- 9.16 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.

- 9.17 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.
- 9.18 The expectation is that any second interview will be conducted at the University with the PGR and all members of the Panel present. Please refer to section (5) for further advice on the arrangements for a transfer viva.

Outcomes after second submission

- 9.19 A submission can only be deferred on one occasion and therefore the following recommendations are available to the Panel:
- Transfer to doctoral registration
 - In the case of Provisional PhD candidatures , transfer to M Phil registration. In the case of split-site candidates the option to transfer to MPhil registration is normally NOT available.
 - Withdrawal
- 9.20 For recommendations under (ii) or (iii) a second transfer viva must be held in all cases.
- 9.21 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. 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.

10.0 Good Practice Guidance for the conduct of the interview

The following section sets out the normal arrangements for the transfer process. However please also refer to the Introductory Section of this document for advice on the transfer process in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Good Practice Guidance for the Transfer Interview

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 supervisors should be 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 (eg away from building work).
- 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.
- 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:

A. Prior to the PGR being present

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 eg 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.

B. On the arrival of the PGR

- aim to put the PGR at their ease as far as possible (seating, 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.

C. 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 give 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 the Director of Postgraduate Research (or nominee) who will liaise with the Doctoral College Operations;
- 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.

D. 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 into the room and inform them of the recommendation. A single recommendation must be made. Inform the PGR that the recommendation is subject to approval by the Graduate Board's Programmes and Quality 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 Director of Postgraduate Research (or nominee) who will help refer the PGR to more specialist support services (such as the Student Counselling and Wellbeing Service);
- Staff concerned about a PGR can ask for advice by calling student support and wellbeing;
- 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 to the Research office (research@leedstrinity.ac.uk) within 10 working days.

11.0 Data Management, Ethical Review & Academic Integrity

- 11.1 All PGRs are required to provide information relating to Academic Integrity, Safeguarding Data and Ethical Requirements when they submit their transfer report to the Research Office. This information is made available to the Transfer Panel by the Research office 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. P&Q may ask the DoPGR to report on progress against the actions.

A. Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

- 11.2 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 on the LTU web pages . The procedure for investigating plagiarism in University assessments by PGRs (e.g. an allegation of plagiarism in a PGR's transfer report) are set out on the [SES website](#) (see *under complaints, appeals and disciplinary matters*).
- 11.3 Where plagiarism is suspected in a transfer report the matter must be immediately reported to the DoPGR who will inform the UoL Graduate School Office. The transfer assessment should be postponed and the allegation investigated by the Graduate School in accordance with the procedure.

B. Safeguarding Data

- 11.4 PGRs should be aware of and comply with the University's policy for [Protecting you and your 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.

C. Engagement in Research Ethics

- 11.5 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 identifies 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.

D. Data Management Plan

- 11.6 Graduate Board approved arrangements that with effect from session 2019/20, there will be a requirement for all PGRs to create a Data Management Plan (DMP). P&Q 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 the Research Office. To facilitate this, PGRs are asked to ensure that their Data Management Plan is submitted to the Research Office 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.
- 11.7 A DMP is a tool to increase the likelihood that materials of all kinds captured during the research process are handled appropriately and remain findable, retrievable and understandable for as long as they are required. The plan should be proportionate to the amount and type of data being captured. A DMP offers many benefits to researchers and supervisors, offering a framework to support:
- safe storage of research materials, reducing the risk of loss
 - good housekeeping (file naming, folder structures, documentation, appropriate file formats)
 - consideration of whether materials will be shared, with whom, when and how (during and after the live project)
 - appropriate consents – making sure plans for data retention, sharing or destruction are clear to research participants
 - clarity in research partner agreements, ensuring data ownership and plans for sharing are addressed
 - clarity of research data protocols, ownership and responsibilities where

- the research degree is part of a larger research programme
- reduction in the risk that the institution and research colleagues lose valuable data either through lack of a local copy and / or documentation

12.0 Practice-Led research degree programmes

A. Confirmation of practice-led status

- 12.1 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.

B. Transfer assessment

- 12.2 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.

C. Defining the final submission

- 12.3 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 workflow must therefore be completed at least 3 months prior to the date of the first live practice.
- 12.4 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.
- 12.5 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 for alternative submissions as set out in the Ordinances and Regulations and Programmes of Study for Research Degrees.

D. Deferral

- 12.6 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 via the DoPGR to the Programmes and Quality Group. Cases for deferral must be submitted by Supervisors. The period of any extension is normally no more than three months and in any event cannot be more than six months.

ANNEX 1: 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

- 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

ANNEX II: Deadlines for the Transfer Assessment

Method of Study	Degree	Transfer interview to be held	Final Decision on Transfer must be taken by no later than
Full-time	Provisional PhD or MD	within the first 12 months of period of study	18 months from the date of commencement of study
Part-time	Provisional PhD	within the first 24 months of period of study	30 months from the date of commencement of study
Full-time	Provisional DClin Psychol, DPaedDent	within the first 18 months of period of study	24 months from the date of commencement of study
Part-time	Provisional DPaedDent	Within the first 30 months of period of study	38 months from the date of commencement of study
Part-time	Provisional MD	within the first 18 months of period of study	24 months from the date of commencement of study
Full-time	Provisional EdD	within the first 24 months of period of study	24 months from the date of commencement of study
Part-time	Provisional EdD	within the first 36 months of period of study	36 months from the date of commencement of study

Full-time	Integrated degree of PhD and Master	PGRs are accepted for study to the registration category of Postgraduate Research. Upon completion of the first year, the progress of PGRs is reviewed and, where it is satisfactory, registration to a Provisional PhD candidature is permitted. If successful in progressing to Provisional PhD status, PGRs will be required to undergo assessment by a formal transfer assessment panel for transfer to PhD status before the end of the second year of study
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It is important that deadlines for transfer are adhered to and that PGR's submit their work for assessment on or before the deadline. Failure to submit by the deadline may lead to a PGR being required to withdraw from their studies. Supervisors should seek guidance from the Director of Postgraduate Research (or nominee) immediately if there are concerns about a PGR's ability to submit for transfer/undergo a transfer assessment by the University's deadlines

ANNEX III: Disagreement between transfer panel members

Process in the event of a disagreement between a transfer assessment panel

Arrangements will be considered by the Programmes and Quality Group on a case by case basis in line with the following:

1. In the exceptional circumstances of a failure to reach agreement on the recommendation the Panel is asked to contact the Director of Postgraduate Research Studies (DPGR) for their School immediately. If the Director of PGR is the supervisor or a member of the transfer assessment panel the Deputy DoPGR should be informed and would be expected to manage the process going forward.
2. In the event that agreement cannot be reached, the DPGR must inform Doctoral College Operations.
3. The Graduate School must advise the PGR in writing, within 1 working day of the transfer viva, that the Panel are unable to reach an agreement and that they will be submitting separate transfer assessment reports to the University.

4. The transfer panel members must submit separate, independent reports on the transfer assessment to the DPGR within 5 working days of the viva.
5. The DPGR is responsible for ensuring the quality and appropriateness of the information provided in each report and that the recommendation reached by each Panel member is consistent with the content of their report. If the DPGR is not satisfied with the information contained in the report(s) they should make further enquiries of the member(s) of the transfer assessment panel with the support of the Graduate School Office before the reports are forwarded to Doctoral College Operations.
6. The DPGR must forward the completed reports to Doctoral College Operations.
7. Both transfer assessment reports, will be referred to the Programmes and Quality Group for consideration. After consideration by the Group, the Head of the Graduate School shall be asked to recommend, within a period of 2 weeks, the appointment of an additional independent assessor to adjudicate. The DPGR may consult with the DPGR and/or the Supervisors as appropriate.
8. It is expected that the individual nominated as the adjudicator will be a senior member of staff from the same or from a cognate subject area or discipline to the work submitted by the PGR, and a very experienced PGR Supervisor, including experience of the transfer assessment process at Leeds.
9. The Graduate School shall send the adjudicator:
 - A copy of the PGR's transfer submission.
 - The separate transfer reports of the original panel.
 - In the event that a disagreement relates to a resubmission following deferral the original submission made by the PGR along with the joint report of the panel following the first viva will also be made available.
- 10.0 The adjudicator will be asked to submit their report (as set out in Annex A) to the DPGR within a period of 2 weeks for review (which may be subject to any minor points of clarification under the normal procedures). The DPGR must submit the completed report to Doctoral College Operations.
 1. The Programmes and Quality Group will consider the report from the adjudicator, normally within 1 week, alongside the separate reports of the original panel members.
 2. The Programmes and Quality Group will normally approve the recommendation of the adjudicator (subject to any minor points of clarification under its normal procedures).
 3. Doctoral College Operations will inform the PGR (cc to the supervisor, DPGR,

Head of Graduate School and original Panel members) of the outcome. A copy of the adjudicator's final report will be provided, along with copies of the original Panel members reports.

4. If an adverse academic decision is reached, the PGR will have the right to appeal under the University's appeals procedures.