



Transfer of Registration from MPhil to PhD (or equivalent) Policy

Scope: All research programmes leading to an award of City St George's, University of London.

Senate Regulations: Senate Regulation 24.

Summary: This Policy outlines the principle of transfer from MPhil to PhD (or equivalent) for doctoral researchers.

Date approved/re-approved: July 2026.

Date for review:

To be reviewed by the end of 2028/29 academic year, with allowance for minor updates, as required.

Equality and Diversity Statement Freedom of Speech

City St George's, University of London, regards freedom of speech and academic freedom to be fundamental to delivering its mission as the University of business, practice and the professions. Its values in this respect are set out in a code of practice on freedom of speech and academic freedom, which explains how the University will uphold, secure, and promote freedom of speech within the law. See:

<https://www.citystgeorges.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/code-of-practice-on-freedom-of-speech> . Nothing in this policy should be interpreted in any way that would be inconsistent with the code of practice and – in the event of any inconsistency – the provisions of the code will prevail.

City St Georges, University of London is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in all its activities, processes, and culture, under its Public Sector Equality Duties and the Equality Act 2010. This includes promoting equality and diversity for all, irrespective of any protected characteristic, working pattern, family circumstance, socio-economic background, political belief or other irrelevant distinction.

Where relevant to the policy, decision-making panels will ensure a reasonable gender balance (with at least one man and one woman) and will actively consider representation of other protected groups.

1. This policy sets out the procedure by which a doctoral researcher enrolled on a programme of study leading to the award of a PhD (or equivalent) will be assessed on their progress and their intended award confirmed as a PhD (or equivalent). The following statements should be read alongside the University's Regulations for Doctoral Programmes ([Senate Regulation 24](#)) and Masters Degrees by Research ([Senate Regulation 23](#)). The statements are intended to provide further clarity on the policies and processes that assure the quality and enhancement of research degree provision across the University and which are outlined in the [Research Degrees Framework](#).
2. The University's Research Degree Framework and Regulations apply equally to partnership provision unless different arrangements have been agreed between the University and the partner institution and have received University approval. Details will be set out in the Memorandum of Agreement for the partnership and in information provided to candidates.
3. Any application for Transfer of Registration from MPhil/PhD (or equivalent) is subject to approval from the Doctoral College Board of Studies on the recommendation of the School Research Degree Programmes Committee.

Principles

4. Doctoral researchers are registered initially as a MPhil/PhD student (or equivalent) except in those circumstances where they have transferred from another institution and have provided suitable and appropriate evidence that permits direct registration as a PhD candidate (or equivalent);
5. Their Assessment for the Transfer of Registration from MPhil to PhD (or equivalent) should ordinarily be undertaken as close as possible to 12 months, and no later than 18 months, for full-time candidates, and as close as possible to 24 months and no later than 36 months for part-time students from the original date of registration.
6. For programmes with a significant taught component, the timing of the Transfer of Registration from MPhil to PhD may be adjusted to reflect the structure of the programme, provided that progression arrangements are clearly defined and approved through the relevant programme regulations.
7. The date of assessment for any candidate who have transferred registration from full to part-time study, or vice versa, will be calculated pro-rata;
8. Doctoral researchers application for the Transfer of Registration from MPhil to PhD (or equivalent) may only be recommended after appropriate assessment on their progress has been undertaken. Means of assessment will be subject-specific but may include:
 - i. written submission, such as draft chapters including literature review and;
 - ii. statement of the intended further work, including details of the original contribution to knowledge which is likely to emerge and/or;
 - iii. oral presentation to peers and;
 - iv. oral examination.

9. The body of evidence submitted in support of their application for Transfer of Registration will normally be assessed by a minimum of two members of academic staff who are not part of the supervisory team (who may be from outside the Department or Research Centre), including the Senior Tutor for Research for their programme (or nominated alternate, where they form part of your supervisory team). An academic member of staff external to the University may be used in the place of any of the other assessors. For candidates who are members of University staff, at least one assessor must be an academic external to the University.
10. Schools should consider the expertise (subject knowledge) and experience (previous experience of supervising doctoral researchers to successful completion) of the Transfer panel, as well as the panel's gender balance. All assessors should hold a postgraduate research qualification of their own as a minimum to make an informed assessment of the candidate's potential to reach the required PhD standard.
11. Schools are encouraged to appoint a Chair for the upgrade panel, who will usually be an STR, ADR or equivalent. The Chair will not be involved in academic assessment. They are expected to prepare a concise, one-page report on the Upgrade, which will be filed alongside the assessors' report. If any procedural issues arise, these must be flagged to the STR, ADR or equivalent.
The Upgrade panel Chair will ensure that:
 - i. The upgrade is conducted in a professional, fair, and neutral manner.
 - ii. The academic staff provide constructive, supportive, and productive feedback.
 - iii. The candidates are given sufficient time to respond to points raised regarding their Upgrade material.¹
12. Conflicts of interest, where the examiner(s) have a professional or personal interest in the outcome of the examination, must be avoided, or declared as part of the nominations process in order that advice can be taken. Examples include:
 - i. The assessors have collaborated or co-authored with the candidate
 - ii. The assessors have collaborated or co-authored with the supervisory team at any time in the previous five years
 - iii. The assessors own work forms a significant part of the thesis
 - iv. Any external assessor has a formal relationship with the department which may have brought them into contact with the candidate (e.g. honorary visiting professor)
 - v. There is a personal relationship (e.g. sexual, romantic and/or familial) between the assessors(s), supervisors, or candidate
 - vi. Where the research project involves collaboration or funding with an external partner, that the assessors are not independent of this relationship
 - vii. An external assessor who has a direct commercial interest in the outcomes of the research
 - viii. An external assessor has previously worked at City, University of London (within the last 5 years)
 - ix. The assessors have acted as a personal tutor, or dissertation supervisor to the candidate as part of a previous taught programme (this may be at a previous institution)

13. Candidates must demonstrate the following:

¹ SPGA (2026) *Upgrade MPhil to PhD Transfer Panel Guidelines*

- i. the ability to present material in a coherent manner;
 - ii. the ability to critically evaluate literature within your particular discipline;
 - iii. the ability to evaluate and re-evaluate your contribution to the field of research;
 - iv. the ability to communicate your research to peers;
 - v. the ability to manage the project;
 - vi. that the project being undertaken is of sufficient scope, originality and theoretical interest to constitute a genuine contribution to the subject.
14. If the candidates do not meet the requirements for Transfer of Registration from MPhil/PhD to PhD (or equivalent) to be recommended, they will be advised in writing of the following:
- i. a clear written statement of the reasons why the transfer of registration was not recommended.
 - ii. guidance on how they may reach the required standard;
 - iii. a date by when the recommendation will be reviewed.
15. In the event that Transfer of Registration from MPhil to PhD (or equivalent) is not recommended upon re-assessment, they will be advised of the outcome in writing and of their right to appeal against registration category. Please also see Annex A for further information.
- 16.
- In the case of non-submission of the MPhil to PhD transfer within the deadline, the School has two options: a) to permit the candidate to remain registered on an MPhil programme and to be examined for an MPhil award, or b) withdraw the candidate.

Guidelines for Doctoral Candidates who Fail the Transfer from MPhil to PhD

1. The decision for transfer from MPhil to PhD, commonly referred to as upgrade, will be an academic decision made by assessors appointed according to the Transfer of Registration from MPhil to PhD Policy.
2. Candidates who fail to meet the requirements for transfer from MPhil to PhD at first attempt shall be given clear written reasons for the decision and guidance on how to reach the required standard (section 14 of the Transfer of Registration from MPhil to PhD Policy).
3. Candidates who fail to meet the requirements for transfer from MPhil to PhD at first attempt will be given a second attempt normally after 3 months and no later than 6 months after the date of the first assessment.
4. The requirements for resubmission – written submission, oral presentation, oral examination, thesis plan – will be made clear to the candidate immediately following the first assessment and then recorded on the online system (or equivalent process for Tooting programmes).
5. The assessors for transfer should remain the same, in line with the appointment of examiners for a PhD viva, unless there are exceptional reasons necessitating a change.
6. Candidates who are judged not to have met the requirements for transfer from MPhil to PhD at second attempt will be:
 - a. given clear written feedback about why they have failed to satisfy the assessors for upgrade from MPhil to PhD (or equivalent)
 - b. counselled by their supervisory team about the potential to continue the work for a MPhil degree, including content and timeline
 - c. given details of their right to appeal against the registration category (section 15 of the transfer policy)
 - d. counselled by their supervisory team about options should they decide to leave the programme, including whether there is publishable material from the work to date, transferring to another institution, and careers advice.

[Guidelines initially approved by DC BoS: 11th May 2023]

Policy Title	
Transfer of registration from MPhil/PhD to PhD (or equivalent)	
Policy Enabling Owner and Department	Responsible for Implementation and Department
Doctoral College Board of Studies	Doctoral College Board of Studies School Research Degree Programme Committees
Approving Body	Date of Approval
Senate, upon recommendation from the Doctoral College Board of Studies	21 st of July 2026 9 th of July 2025
Last Reviewed & Version	Review Due Date
February 2022 (CDC BoS) June 2012 (Education Committee)	July 2028
Publication of Policy (<i>tick as appropriate</i>)	
For public access online (internet)? x	For staff access only (intranet)?
Website Link: https://www.citystgeorges.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/doctoral-researcher-policies/ nocache	Intranet Link:
Storage of Policy (<i>Previous versions of the policy must be stored in the drive by the author</i>)	
Drive Address: CUoL – Doctoral College Documents	
Queries about this policy should be referred to	
doctoralcollege@citystgeorges.ac.uk	