PGR Upgrades from MPhil to PhD in SSIS – 2018/19

Introduction and purpose of the Upgrade
The majority of research students studying to obtain a PhD in SSIS are initially registered for an MPhil with an upgrade process (also known as a 'transfer') allowing them to move to PhD status part way through the programme subject to satisfactory academic progress. The upgrade is a significant waypoint in the progress towards a PhD.

The transfer process will take the form of a mini viva on the basis of the work submitted to the panel. The purpose of the transfer process is to assess the student's progress and ability to complete their PhD programme in a reasonable time frame. The panel will establish whether the student has produced work of sufficient quantity and quality to suggest that he or she can achieve the standard required for a PhD. In particular they will consider if the student a) understands the research question(s) b) has an appropriate understanding of the relevant scholarly literature c) has demonstrated capability to conduct the research d) has a realistic research plan and schedule and e) can deliver at PhD level.

The transfer process is intended to be a 'formative' process for the student. That is, the transfer panel should aim to use the process to help students develop and improve their thesis and professional skills, rather than simply to sit in judgment. The viva voce is in particular an opportunity for students to experience speaking about and defending their work in front of an academic panel, in preparation for their final viva voce.

Upgrade Timing
In SSIS it is intended that students should normally seek to upgrade in the early part of their second year of full-time study or beginning of fourth year part-time.
Students are allowed two possible attempts at upgrade, the period between the first and second attempt should normally be no more than 3 months. A second attempt at the upgrade must have taken place by the end of the second year of full-time study or the fourth year of part-time study.
 This document outlines the College procedures, which are in line with the TQA Code of Practice:
http://admin.exeter.ac.uk/academic/tls/tqa/Part%207/7Gpgrregproc.pdf

Upgrade Process
Disciplines have agreed to conduct upgrades usually at fixed times so they tend to take place either in March/April or September/October each academic year.

Process Overview
• An email will be sent in July / August to all students who are due to sit for upgrade in the upcoming Autumn Term, or in December / January for those due in the Spring Term. This will explain the process, its purpose and the deadlines and will also be copied to supervisors.
• Students submit their portfolio of work online via MyPGR. The material required for upgrade is specific to each discipline.
• The supervisors are asked by the Doctoral College PGR Support team to complete a Supervisor Upgrade Report Form and email it back to: ssis-grs-

streatham@exeter.ac.uk or ssis-grs-stlukes@exeter.ac.uk for Education Upgrades prior to the interview process.

• The Discipline, with input from the Doctoral College PGR Support team, is responsible for the arrangements of the upgrades. In advance of the interview the Doctoral College PGR Support team will provide the following:
  o The material as submitted by the student
  o The supervisor's upgrade report form
  o The Upgrade Interview Report Form for completion
• After interview, the Upgrade Interview Report Form, including comments that can go to the student, is returned to the Graduate Research School by email

• The Doctoral College PGR Support team sends the report to the Director of PGR for approval. • The Doctoral College PGR Support team will formally write to the student with the outcome of the interview and any corrections required and upload the report on MyPGR.

Panel Composition

Upgrade requests should be considered by a College Upgrade Committee comprising the Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean of College (or his or her nominee) and at least one other member of staff, none of whom should be (or have been) a supervisor, PGR Pastoral Tutor or mentor of the student. One member of the panel will be the designated lead or Chair of the committee.

The student's lead supervisor should attend the Committee as an observer. To allow the student to make any comments they wish to the Committee without their supervisor being present, the student shall always be invited to talk with the Committee after the supervisor is asked to leave.

Politics have appointed a fixed panel to represent each research cluster and with the Director of Doctoral Studies (DDS) as Chair.
IAIS appoint the panel depending upon the research cluster with the DDS as Chair.
Law have two Professors along with the DDS as Chair.
SPA appoint the panel depending upon the research cluster.
GSE have an allocated expert academic in the field along with the PGR Progression Officer.

List of Upgrade Documents
In total, 15-20,000 words should be submitted and each discipline has a specific list of documentation required as below:

Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies (IAIS):
1) A short statement of the aims of the thesis
2) A research proposal including:
    a) title of the thesis
    b) central research question of the thesis and research hypotheses
    c) hypothesis/hypotheses (what is your hypothesized answer to the research question)
    c) outline of the literature you aim to contribute to and the gap you aim to address
    d) context for research and justification for case study
    e) methodology: how you intend to undertake the research and the methods you will use to test your hypothesis(es)

   f) a chapter breakdown + general structure of the thesis
   g) a bibliography.

3) A draft timetable for completion of the thesis.
4) Two substantial pieces of written work. The first should locate the research question in a body of literature (the literature review) as well as identification of your own position in relevant debates. The second should represent a substantive chapter demonstrating analysis of your subject matter. Each chapter should be at least 7, 000 words excluding bibliography.

These requirements should be discussed with your supervisors.

Law:
1. A concise summary statement (max 500 words) of the thesis including-
   a. Title
   b. A statement of the aims, objectives and methodology
   c. A statement of how you expect the final thesis to form a contribution to the knowledge of the subject
2. A contents page, indicating the word count and deadline for each chapter
3. Two substantial pieces of written work totalling a maximum of 20,000 words. (For example, two chapters or the introduction and one chapter.)

Please ensure that you submit four separate files to reflect the list above.

Education:
- A statement of aims and objectives
- A statement of how the candidate expects the final thesis to "form a distinct contribution to knowledge of the subject";
- Submission of one or more substantial pieces of written work of 20,000 words, as directed by the supervisor, in good presentational order. Typically it may comprise part of a literature review, research-based draft chapter or other extract from the draft thesis.
- A draft timetable for completion of the thesis within the candidate's period of study

Politics / SSI:
1. A short statement of the aims of the thesis – 1 paragraph (max 300 words) on a separate page (we ask this because many funding bodies require this in addition to the proposal)
2. A fully developed research proposal which should include:
     a) the title of the project;
     b) a statement of the research question/ problem that the thesis is seeking to address;
     c) a more elaborate re-statement of the aims of the thesis
     d) the rationale of the thesis – why is your question an important one academically and what contribution to knowledge are you trying to make?
     e) your methodology – a discussion of the theoretical and/ or analytical framework (based on relevant literature) and the methods you will use;
     f) a chapter breakdown and
     g) a bibliography. These requirements should be discussed with your supervisor.
3. Submission of two substantial pieces of written work. The first should locate your research question in a body of literature as well as identify your own position in relevant debates (ie, who you are arguing against/ with/ for?) The second should represent a

substantive chapter demonstrating analysis of your subject matter. Each chapter should be at least 7, 000 words excluding bibliography.
4.   A draft timetable for completion of the thesis.

Sociology, Philosophy and Anthropology (SPA):
1. A statement of aims and objectives and a statement of how the candidate expects the final thesis to "form a distinct contribution to knowledge of the subject"
2. A brief synopsis of, and an outline of work completed, against each chapter heading
3. A work-plan /schedule for completion of the thesis
4. Roughly, (within 10%) 20,000 words of the thesis (one or two chapters, depending on length) in good draft.

Outcome of Upgrade interview
- The upgrade report form should be completed stating the recommendations of the panel.
- The three possible outcomes at the first attempt are that the candidate be:
  - A. Allowed to transfer their registration to PhD
  - B. Be allowed to transfer their registration to PhD subject to the completion of the identified corrections and/or amendments by the following date *(to be within two months)
  - C. Asked to retake the upgrade interview on the following *date*. Note that this is subject to the deadline for upgrade not having been reached.

- If the outcome is a second attempt (C) the form must indicate the conditions to be assessed by the re-sit upgrade process.
- Please note that it is expected that the upgrade panel membership remain the same for the first and second attempts, unless circumstances necessitate a change. Any proposed change to membership of the panel should however be discussed with the Doctoral College PGR Support team in the first instance.
- The upgrade report is then submitted to the Doctoral College PGR Support team who then seek approval from the College Director of PGR.
- The Doctoral College PGR Support team informs the student of the outcome, via MyPGR.
- If the student is recommended to pass unconditionally the student will be notified via email of their official transfer to PhD and their supervisors will be copied in on this correspondence. The official student record will also be updated.
- Where a re-sit is required, the student will be informed by email by the Doctoral College PGR Support team and a copy will be sent to the supervisors.
- The three possible outcomes at a second attempt are that the candidate be:
  - A.   Allowed to transfer their registration to PhD
  - B.   Be allowed to transfer their registration to PhD subject to the completion of the identified corrections and/or amendments by the following date * (to be within two months)
  - C.   Remain registered as an MPhil student.

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