UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

POLICY DOCUMENT

Policy on PhD Stage 1 Transfer Assessment

Approved by Academic Council 12th April 2007

Version 1.5

1. INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

The *Policy on PhD Stage 1 Transfer Assessment* provides a framework for Schools, Institutes and Thematic Doctoral Programmes to define specific guidelines and set-out locally-defined criteria for the transfer assessment process for students on the Structured PhD programme. Each School, Institute and Thematic Doctoral Programme must document their specific guidelines and criteria and inform students and supervisors of these requirements. The policy recognises good practice in monitoring PhD student progression where it currently exists and establishes common norms and procedures designed to support the Structured PhD programme and all those involved with it.

The aim of the *Policy on PhD Stage 1 Transfer Assessment* is to provide a framework supplemental to the General Regulations which articulates the practices and procedures associated with the progression of students from Stage 1 of the doctoral programme to Stage 2. It defines the mode of assessment, identifies the role and responsibilities of the Assessment Panel in managing and facilitating the process of transfer assessment, and describes the implementation of assessment panel decisions.

Further support for students and supervisors involved with the Structured PhD is provided by a range of instruments, including the *General Regulations on Modularisation and Semesterisation*, the *General Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy*, the *Code of Practice for Supervisors and Students* and the constitution of Doctoral Studies Panels which underpin student supervision.

2. SCOPE & STRUCTURE OF POLICY

The Policy on PhD Stage 1 Transfer Assessment is structured across the following categories:

- **Roles and Responsibilities of the Assessment Panel** – details on the constitution of the Assessment Panel, the relationship between the Doctoral Studies Panel and the Assessment Panel, the process for adjudication on the transfer assessment, and the relationship of the Assessment Panel and its decision-making processes to Schools, Institutes or Thematic Doctoral Programmes;

- **Mode of Assessment** – guidelines on the type of assessment undertaken by students at the point of transfer from Stage 1 to Stage 2 and the timeframe within which such assessment takes place;

- **Implementation of Assessment Panel Decisions** – procedures for managing student progression and methods for reporting on successful/unsuccessful transfer assessment to the School, College Graduate School Board and relevant University academic and administrative units.

3. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

The Assessment Panel is responsible for formally assessing the progress of a student through their Structured PhD programme. Membership of the Assessment Panel is defined by the School, Institute or Thematic Doctoral Programme and may overlap with the Doctoral Studies Panel. Each School, Institute, or Thematic Doctoral Programme may establish either a single Assessment Panel for all students at the end of Stage 1 of the Structured PhD Programme, or multiple Assessment Panels as and where appropriate, and nominate a Chair of the Panel. The Assessment Panel must have the experience and disciplinary expertise to conduct the assessment, and will normally consist of three members of the permanent academic staff of the University. The Assessment Panel may include a member of the adjunct or visiting staff of the University whose name has been entered on the Register of Approved Adjunct, Visiting and Affiliated Supervisors. Where a Thematic Doctoral Programme spans multiple institutions, the Assessment Panel may incorporate academic staff from participating institutions.

The Principal Supervisor, and any Co-Supervisors, shall not normally be members of the Assessment Panel, but shall play a major role in the transfer assessment process through the submission of a written report containing a recommendation on the student's progression from Stage 1 to Stage 2.

It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Assessment Panel to notify the Principal Supervisor of the timeframe within which the transfer assessment must take place. The Principal Supervisor, in consultation with the student and the Assessment Panel, will define a date on which the student must submit material for consideration of the transfer assessment. The student and Principal Supervisor will be notified of the outcome of the transfer assessment and the recommendation made to the College Graduate School Board within one month of the date of submission of material.

The PhD Stage 1 Transfer Assessment Report (see Appendix 1) will be made available to the student, Principal Supervisor, Head of School, Institute Director and/or Director of Thematic Doctoral Programme.

4. MODE OF ASSESSMENT

To accommodate the academic diversity throughout the University, and the different types of research undertaken within the Structured PhD programme, the mode of assessment for the transfer from Stage 1 to Stage 2 must be flexible enough to capture and accommodate this range of diversity. At the same time, it is also essential that a standard of quality be maintained to ensure that the student is making satisfactory progress in pursuit of the aims and objectives of their research as agreed between themselves, the Principal Supervisor and the Doctoral Studies Panel and documented in the Research and Professional Development Plan (RPDP).

The following written reports are required by the *General Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy* for submission to the Assessment Panel at the point of the transfer assessment, and will form the basis of the decision of the Assessment Panel:

- *Progress Report to be submitted by the Principal Supervisor*: a short statement on progress of the student within Stage 1 and recommendation on their progression to Stage 2;
- *Statement of Progress and Research Plan to be submitted by the candidate*: supporting documentation, as determined and documented by the School, Institute or Thematic Doctoral Programme, may include one or more of the following: written work, oral presentation, portfolio, evidence of successful completion of taught modules as required or recommended by the School, Institute or Thematic Doctoral Programme;
- An interview and/or the Research and Professional Development Plan (RPDP) may also form part of the process.

All relevant documentation should be kept on record by the relevant School and/or Institute office(s) for 13 months after the PhD completion date.

The transfer assessment will normally take place 12 months from the date of registration, and no later than 18 months from the date of registration for full-time students, and from 24 months to 36 months from the date of registration for part-time students.

5. IMPLEMENTATION OF ASSESSMENT PANEL DECISIONS

Upon completion of the transfer assessment, the PhD Stage 1 Transfer Assessment Report shall be circulated to the student, Principal Supervisor, Head of School, Institute Director and/or Director of Thematic Doctoral Programme.

As stipulated in the *General Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy*, the Assessment Panel will make one of the following recommendations to the College Graduate School Board using the appropriate template for PhD Stage 1 Transfer Assessment Recommendation (see Appendix 2):

(i) that the student should progress to Stage 2 doctoral studies;
(ii) that the student should transfer to another graduate programme utilising, where appropriate, the credits accumulated in Stage 1 of the Structured PhD;
(iii) that the student should graduate with a Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma or Masters degree;
(iv) that the student's registration be terminated and that the student be awarded a certificate of credit for any modules for which credit has been awarded;

The PhD Stage 1 Transfer Assessment Recommendation shall be signed by the Chair of the Assessment Panel and Head of School, Institute Director and/or Director of Thematic Doctoral Programme, and the Chair of the Assessment Panel shall forward the recommendation to the relevant Graduate School Office.

The College Graduate School Board will formally approve the recommendation of the Assessment Panel. When the recommendation has been formally approved, the Graduate School Office will inform the student, the Principal Supervisor, the Chair of the Assessment Panel, the Head of School, Institute Director and/or Director of Thematic Doctoral Programme. The Graduate School Office will also inform the Assessment and Logistics Unit of the outcome of the transfer assessment, who will ensure that the student's record is updated accordingly. It is the responsibility of the Graduate School Office to maintain a record of the relevant documentation for 13 months after the PhD completion date.

The Assessment Panel or College Graduate School Board, as per PhD Regulation 5.4, "may recommend a second formal assessment of progress and competence within Stage 2 of the structured PhD, or such an assessment may be a normal element of a structured PhD. This will most often occur where there are substantial taught and research training elements in Stage 1, and insufficient opportunity for the candidate to demonstrate capacity to pursue original doctoral research. The Doctoral Studies Panel will recommend the nature and timing of any such assessment at the time of the candidate's Stage 1 assessment." (PhD Reg. 5.4)

A candidate will also have the right to appeal a decision of the Assessment Panel. In the first instance, an informal appeal should be made in writing to the Head of School, Institute Director or Director of Thematic Doctoral Programme. In the second instance, an informal appeal should be made in writing to the College Graduate School Board. In the event of an unsuccessful appeal at this level, the student may apply to the Assessment Appeals Office to formally appeal the outcome of the transfer assessment.

The Policy on PhD Stage 1 Transfer Assessment will be reviewed in January 2008.

Appendix 1

An Coláiste Ollscoile, Baile Átha Cliath
University College Dublin

PhD STAGE 1 TRANSFER ASSESSMENT REPORT

This form should be completed following the transfer assessment and should be made available to the student, Principal Supervisor, Head of School, Institute Director and/or Director of Thematic Doctoral Programme.

Candidate: Student Number:

Graduate School: School and/or Institute:

Thematic Doctoral Programme:
(if applicable)

Principal Supervisor:

Provisional Title of Thesis:

Date of Assessment:

Supporting Documentation: ☐ **Progress Report** *(to be submitted by Principal Supervisor)*

Statement of Progress and Research Plan

☐ Written work ☐ Oral presentation
☐ Interview ☐ Portfolio
☐ Taught modules ☐ Other_____

Supervisor Recommendation for Transfer to Stage 2: ☐ yes ☐ no

Report (approximately 200 words):

The Assessment Panel approves / does not approve *(circle one)* **Transfer to Stage 2**

Print Name _____ Signed _____
Chair of the Assessment Panel

Print Name _____ Signed _____
Assessment Panel Member 1

Print Name _____ Signed _____
Assessment Panel Member 2

Date:_____

Appendix 2

An Coláiste Ollscoile, Baile Átha Cliath
University College Dublin

PhD STAGE 1 TRANSFER ASSESSMENT RECOMMENDATION

This form should be signed by the Chair of the Assessment Panel and Head of School, Institute Director and/or Director of Thematic Doctoral Programme and forwarded to the relevant Graduate School Office.

Candidate: Student Number:

Graduate School: School and/or Institute:

Thematic Doctoral Programme:
(if applicable)

Principal Supervisor:

Provisional Title of Thesis:

Date of Assessment:

Recommendation: ☐ **Progress to Stage 2 doctoral studies**

☐ **Transfer to another graduate programme (please list: _____)**

☐ **Graduate with Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma, Masters (please circle one)**

☐ **Termination of registration**

Please attach to this recommendation a copy of the PhD STAGE 1 TRANSFER ASSESSMENT REPORT.

Signed _____ Date Recommended: _____
Chair of the Assessment Panel

Signed _____ Date Recommended: _____
Head of School, Institute Director and/or Director of Thematic Doctoral Programme

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GRADUATE SCHOOL BOARD APPROVAL

Signed _____ Date Approved: _____
Graduate School Director

Role	Name	e-mail	tel
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Version History

Version	Date	Summary of Changes	Changed by
1.0	2 Mar 07	First draft	Michael Kennedy
1.1	5 Mar 07	Revision incorporating comments of Policy Working Group	Michael Kennedy
1.2	9 Mar 07	Further revision incorporating comments of Policy Working Group	Prof Julie Berndsen Michael Kennedy
1.3	26 Mar 07	Further revision incorporating comments of UGPB and Policy Working Group	Prof Julie Berndsen Michael Kennedy
1.4	28 Mar 07	Further revision incorporating comments of Policy Working Group	Prof Julie Berndsen Michael Kennedy
1.5	5 Apr 07	Further revision incorporating comments of ACEC	Michael Kennedy

Consultation and Approvals Plan

Committee/Group	Date		Version	Action	Decision
	Meeting	Circulation			
Policy Working Group on PhD Stage 1 Transfer Assessment	2 Feb 07			Discussion	Suggestions made
Policy Working Group on PhD Stage 1 Transfer Assessment	2 Mar 07	1 Mar 07	1.0	Discussion	Changes recommended
Policy Working Group on PhD Stage 1 Transfer Assessment	9 Mar 07	5 Mar 07	1.1	Discussion	Changes recommended
Graduate School Directors & Dean of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Training		9 Mar 07	1.2	Review	Changes recommended
University Graduate Programmes Board (UGPB)	14 Mar 07	9 Mar 07	1.2	Review	Changes recommended
Policy Working Group on PhD Stage 1 Transfer Assessment	26 Mar 07		1.3	Review	Changes recommended
Academic Council Executive Committee (ACEC)	5 April 07	29 Mar 07	1.4	Review	Changes recommended
Academic Council	12 April 07	5 April 07	1.5	Approval	**Policy Approved**

Dissemination Plan

Output	Deadline	Dissemination	Responsible
Draft Policy document	2 Mar 07	Distributed to members of the Policy Working Group	Michael Kennedy
Policy document v1.1	5 Mar 07	Distributed to members of the Policy Working Group	Michael Kennedy
Policy document v1.2	9 Mar 07	Distributed to Graduate School Directors & Dean of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Training	Prof Julie Berndsen
Policy document v1.2	9 Mar 07	Distributed to members of the University Graduate Programmes Board	Michael Kennedy
Policy document v1.3	26 Mar 07	Distributed to members of the Policy Working Group	Michael Kennedy
Policy document v1.4	29 Mar 07	Distributed to members of the Academic Council Executive Committee	Siobhan Curran