**This document contains guidance on the Upgrade Process from MPhil to Phd for students who enrolled before 1 August 2015.**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Code of Practice paragraphs 70-79.

(<http://www.calendar.soton.ac.uk/sectionV/code-practice.html>)

**Timing of the Upgrade**

Initially you will be registered for the degree of MPhil/PhD and must apply to upgrade your candidature if you wish to submit for a PhD.

**Students enrolled as a starter before 1 August 2015:** The upgrade process must occur at least six months before submission, but normally occurs within the second year of full-time candidature or at the equivalent point (years 3/4) for part-time candidature.

The application for upgrading should be made by you after full discussion with your supervisor. The main supervisor will complete an Upgrade Arrangements Form and submit this to the Graduate School Office as soon as these arrangements have been made but no later than two months prior to the upgrade viva. It is the responsibility of the main supervisor to inform the student of the date, time and location of the upgrade viva. It is the responsibility of the student to submit four weeks prior to the scheduled upgrade viva, to each panel member a copy of the upgrade material and to upload the upgrade material to the University SafeSend (<https://safesend.soton.ac.uk/>) addressed to Humanities Graduate School and email address [fah-gradschool@soton.ac.uk](mailto:fah-gradschool@soton.ac.uk).

**Upgrade Panel**

The Code of Practice states that the recommendation to upgrade from MPhil to PhD will be made by an upgrade panel or committee constituted for that purpose. The upgrade panel/committee will normally consist of at least two members of staff who have had no direct involvement in the research and can take the role of independent assessors. One of these members of staff should act as chair of the transfer/upgrade panel.

In addition a member of the supervisory team will normally be invited to attend as an observer. However, the supervisor should not engage in the discussion during the upgrade viva. You can request the opportunity to meet the transfer/upgrade panel without a supervisor being present. If this request is made this should be done through the Humanities Graduate School Office.

In exceptional circumstances where an agreement with an external organisation (e.g. National Trust) states that an external supervisor is required to attend, permission should be sought from the Graduate School Director and the student should be notified well in advance of the viva.

**Please note**: An independent chair will only be appointed in exceptional cases.

**Upgrade Criteria**

In order to be upgraded you must meet the following **criteria** set out in the Code of Practice (paragraph 73):

1. You must demonstrate the ability to manage your research project, that you have become proficient in the special field of research you are studying and show that you have adequate motivation and perseverance to achieve success at PhD level.
2. Your project must be of sufficient scope, originality and theoretical interest to constitute a genuine contribution to the subject in the form of the understanding of a problem, the advancement of knowledge or the generation of new ideas.

**Upgrade Material** **and Viva** [Paragraphs 74 and 75 of the Code of Practice.]

The University requires the upgrade panel/committee making the recommendation to have reviewed a sufficient body of written work in order to make a judgement on the above criteria.

This will typically be between 20,000 and 30,000 words depending upon the field of study and at what point in your period of candidature you are upgrading. It is important that you establish in advance how long your material should be – arrange a supervision session to discuss it.

Typically, the material which you present will include:

1. an overview of the research problem and a rationale for the project
2. a substantial literature review establishing the current state of knowledge within your field, or a draft chapter of the thesis in which the current state of knowledge in the student’s area of research is discussed.
3. one or two further draft chapters based upon original research/field work/data analysis for the thesis;
4. a working bibliography of primary and secondary sources; please clearly indicate which sources you have read and which ones you still need to consult;
5. a well-developed chapter plan of the thesis and a schedule for completion.

Creative Writing students should submit:

1. 16,000 words, which may be divided into several chapters, of a second draft of the proposed work
2. a thesis bibliography of primary and secondary sources; please clearly indicate which sources you have read and which ones you still need to consult;
3. a 4–5,000 word account of the research process

Music students studying composition should discuss with their supervisor in advance how much of the work submitted should be composition or performance and how much should be a written account of the research process.

The Viva will include a detailed discussion of the subject matter of the thesis, the material supporting the application and any other relevant issues, at a formal meeting (the upgrade viva) between you and the Panel.

**The Recommendation** [Paragraph 76-79 of the Code of Practice.]

The Panel shall agree and then submit a reasoned report containing a summary of the discussion and the recommendation to the Graduate School which will then be signed off by the Director of the Graduate School.

There are four possible outcomes from the 1st attempt:

1. Pass and upgrade to PhD
2. Submit revised written work (if the assessors do not find the revised written work to be sufficient to allow progression a 2nd viva will be required)
3. Re-viva only
4. Submit revised written work and re-viva (Re-viva date should be four weeks after due date for submission of written work)

In the event of outcomes 2-4 you will be advised by your supervisor as to how to proceed.

There are three possible outcomes from the 2nd attempt:

1. Pass
2. Fail – change programme to MPhil
3. Fail – terminate candidature (As per procedures for circumstances that may lead to withdrawal or termination (point 1) <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/quality/pgr/research_degree_candidature/termination_withdrawal.page>

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