

From 2018, the “Major Review” replaced the “Transfer” process. The Major Review is an important milestone, normally mid-way through a PGR’s enrolment to ensure they are on track to complete their PhD in a timely and successful manner. Full guidance is provided in the *Code of Practice for Research Degrees*. The Major Review process is being monitored to ensure that it meets the needs of all PGRs. As such, the guidance has been enhanced to support those PGRs who wish to benefit from the new Integrated Thesis format.

What is the purpose of the Major Review?

The Major Review is a key milestone in the PGR’s research degree which will:

- assess the **quality** and **timeliness** of their work to date
- **confirm that the scope of the research project** will fulfil the requirements of a PhD
- **confirm the PGR’s capability** to complete their PhD in a satisfactory and timely manner.

Undertaking the Major Review will allow the PGR to:

- bring together the **research activities and outputs** they have undertaken since enrolment
- have someone outside their supervision team review and offer **constructive feedback**
- **defend** the approach to their research (so far)
- **practice** for their final *viva voce* examination.

Key Aspects of the Major Review

The key aspects of the Major Review are as follows:

Major Review	
Expected submission date	Up to 14 months (FT) post-enrolment Up to 28 months (PT) post-enrolment
Assessment	Verbal presentation & discussion with Faculty Panel
Expected completion date	Up to 18 months (FT) post-enrolment Up to 36 months (PT) post-enrolment

What should the Major Review Briefing Paper include?

PGRs should discuss with their Supervisory Team the content and structure of the Briefing Paper as this may differ depending on the PGRs discipline and progress at the point of Major Review.

The **Standard Major Review Briefing Paper**, which should be 3000 words \pm 10%, sets out evidence of progress to date and may include:

- **abstract**¹
- evidence of **progress to date**
- outline of **proposed original contribution** to knowledge likely to emerge from final thesis
- statement of **intended further work**
- **timeline** for successful completion:
 - detailed plan for the next six months
 - measurable targets
 - plan to completion of the thesis.

Examples of progress to date may include brief summaries of:

- academic literature and its context to the research
- methodology and approach used in the research
- findings, results and discussions to date.

Other material should be included to provide evidence of progress to date but will not be formally assessed. This may include draft chapters “or equivalent” to provide flexibility for practice-based research including non-textual evidence if appropriate.

The **Integrated Major Review Briefing Paper** is aimed at PGRs who have already produced work of publishable standard (published, submitted or ready for submission). The publishable work should be sufficient to provide the evidence of progress to date and will not need to be rewritten for the

¹ Not included in the word limit

purposes of the review. However, this should be accompanied by a narrative of 1000 words \pm 10% that sets out the overall context for the research and outlines future work. Submitting the Major Review Briefing Paper in this format is likely to be seen as an indicator of the PGR's intention to submit an integrated thesis.

What should my presentation include?

The Major Review also provides PGRs with the opportunity to give a brief presentation (maximum 10 minutes) to the Panel prior to the discussion. The Panel will have already read the PGR's Briefing Paper so the presentation should not just repeat the content but should also highlight key aspects of the PGR's research, demonstrating the scope of the project and how the PGR will complete it in a timely fashion. The presentation may include visual aids, if required.

What is the process for assessing the Major Review?



What happens at the Panel meeting?

The Briefing Paper will be read by the Panel in advance of the assessment meeting. At the meeting, the PGR will make a brief presentation to introduce their research project and highlight key aspects.

The PGR will be asked questions by the Panel and will have to defend their work to date and demonstrate how they will complete their research degree in a successful and timely fashion.

What are the outcomes of the Major Review?

The Major Review outcomes are as follows:

- Pass
- Resubmission (within 1 month)
- Resubmission with re-assessment Panel discussion (within 3 months)
- Transfer to MRes / MPhil
- Withdrawal.

The PGR must successfully complete the Major Review in order to progress.

Further Information

Further information can be obtained in the *Code of Practice for Research Degrees*.

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