



RCSI

RCSI DEVELOPING HEALTHCARE LEADERS WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE WORLDWIDE

Transfer Policy for Postgraduate Research Programmes

Policy/Regulation History

Document Title		SPGS Transfer Policy			
Rev	Status	Author(s)	Reviewed By	Approved By	Issue Date
1	Approved	Dr Róisín Moriarty ^a	SPGS Committee	AC/MHSB 28 May 2019	February 2019
2	Approved	Dr Deirdre Fitzgerald Hughes ^b	ARC Committee and SPGS Committee	AC/MHSB 23rd February 2022	February 2022
3	Approved	Dr Deirdre Fitzgerald Hughes	SPGS Committee	AC/MHSB 29 th September 2022	September 2022
4	Approved	Lisa Maye-Gregory	SPGS Committee	AC/MHSB 24th November 2023	November 2023

^{a b} In consultation with Prof Niamh Moran, Dr Emer Reeves, Dr Deirdre Fitzgerald-Hughes, Dr Anthony Chubb and Ms. Lisa Maye-Gregory.



RCSI

1. Introduction

The School of Postgraduate Studies (SPGS) currently offers research programmes at level 9 and level 10 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ): MSc, MCh, PhD, MD and DProf.. There has been an increase in requests for transfers to level 10 programmes from scholars registered at level 9, requests to transfer between level 10 programmes and requests for advanced transfer into level 10 programmes from outside RCSI. There has also been an increase in requests from scholars to transfer from a level 10 programme to a level 9 programme when they wish to withdraw from the level 10 programme, but have enough data to write up a thesis for a level 9 award. Hence it is important to formalise and facilitate scholar transfers between and to programmes where applicable and within the scope of the regulations and statutory guidance of Quality and Qualifications Ireland.

2. Purpose

This policy aims to provide guidance to scholars and their supervisors regarding the correct procedure for transferring registration between the research programmes, MSc, MCh, MD and PhD. It is not currently permitted to transfer from, or to, the Professional Doctorate programme. Thus, the Professional Doctorate programme is out of scope for this policy. The policy is designed to ensure that the scholar and their supervisory team understand that there may be differences between the academic expectations of each programme.

3. Stakeholders

- Postgraduate scholars
- Postgraduate scholars' supervisory team
- SPGS Operations Team
- MD Programme Director
- PhD Programme Director
- MSc and MCh Programme Director
- SPGS Academic Review Committee (ARC)
- Student Fees
- RCSI Registry

4. Policy

4.1. Transfer Deadlines

The SPGS must be made aware of the intention to request a transfer in or before the third quarter of the year in which the scholar wishes to transfer. This is so the annual review can be conducted according to the requirements of the programme into which the scholar wishes to transfer.

Transfers will only be permitted at the end of an academic year. October registered scholars must apply for their transfer before the 1st August; April registered scholars must apply for a transfer before the 1st February. This gives sufficient time for transfers to be approved before the scholar is due to re-register. Generally the duration of a PhD is 4 years and an MD 2 years, which may include time on the MSc/MCh register. PhDs may be completed within 3 years but this is the exception. For example, scholars transferring from MD to PhD may complete their PhD within 3 years. If the intention is to complete a PhD in less than 4 years, scholars and their supervisors, must be fully aware of the time commitment needed to achieve this and how this will be achieved should be explicitly indicated on the transfer application.



RCSI

4.2. Eligibility

Scholars must meet the entry requirements of the programme into which they wish to transfer. In some cases, if the candidate does not meet the academic standard for eligibility to a PhD/MD, Recognition of Prior Learning can be considered (as detailed in the RPL Policy available [here](#)). All other requirements for eligibility must be met (e.g. English language competence if transferring from a non-English speaking location).

The scholar must complete at least one full year of registration on their original programme. The scholar must have passed all programme-specific progress reviews/assessments to date and be on track to complete their original programme in a timely manner. The body of work that the transfer scholar is working on must be of sufficient quality and quantity for the programme into which they wish to transfer. Scholars must meet the specific academic requirements for transfer between programmes as outlined in sections 5 and 6 below.

4.3. Fees and Funding

All scholars must be in good financial standing with the university before a transfer request can be considered. Scholars / supervisors must provide evidence that funding is available to complete the project under the timelines of the programme into which they wish to transfer, including fees, consumables and a stipend/salary (if appropriate). Where the fees for the programme into which the scholar wishes to transfer are greater than those of the programme in which the scholar is currently registered, the scholar is liable for the fee-differential for the full duration of the new programme. For RCSI registered scholars transferring to level 10 programmes, this means they will be liable for the fees for the new programme for the year(s) they have been registered on their original programme.

5. Transfer from MD to PhD register

To apply for transfer between NFQ level 10 programmes:

- The scholar must complete the transfer request form and submit it to postgraduateschool@rcsi.ie
- The scholar must complete an annual review and indicate to the reviewers that the review is a transfer review
- Scholars must complete the compulsory taught modules associated with year one of the PhD programme
- Scholars must pay the fee differential for the PhD programme for the time spent on the MD register
- Scholars must provide evidence of the additional work that will be delivered for the PhD, being mindful that it is a 4-year programme and their original research proposal was approved for a two year MD.

6. Transfer from MSc/MCh to PhD/MD register

To apply for transfer from an NFQ level 9 research programme to an NFQ level 10 MD/PhD:

- The scholar must complete the transfer request form and submit it to postgraduateschool@rcsi.ie
- The scholar must complete an annual review and indicate to the reviewers that the review is a transfer review
- The scholar must complete the compulsory taught modules associated with year one of the PhD/MD programme
- The scholar must provide evidence of the additional work that will be delivered for the PhD/MD, being mindful that it is a 4 year, NFQ level 10 programme and their original research proposal was approved for a one year NFQ level 9 programme.



RCSI

7. Transfer from PhD/MD to MSc/MCh register

To apply for transfer from NFQ level 10 to NFQ level 9 research programme:

- The primary supervisor and scholar must agree that this is the best decision for the scholar
- The scholar must have completed at least one full year of research towards a PhD
- The primary supervisor must deem the work to be of a sufficient standard and quantity for submission as an MSc/MCh
- A transfer request form must be completed and submitted to postgraduateschool@rcsi.ie
- A thesis completion plan must be submitted
- Fees paid for the level 10 programme cannot be refunded or transferred to the level 9 programme
- The scholar will be withdrawn from the PhD/MD and enrolled onto the MSc/MCh by research register by the SPGS Operations team.

8. Documentation and Assessment

Scholars must make a case for their transfer by submitting the following documents by email to postgraduateschool@rcsi.ie:

- A completed application form (See appendix)
- A revised and completed ARC Project Proposal Form (specifically indicating deviation from the original research plan and extra work that will be carried out as part of the new programme)
- A letter of support from the primary supervisor outlining why the transfer is merited
- MDs transferring to the PhD registry must show evidence of completing all their 6 monthly reviews
- An up-to-date CV
- A completed RPL form (if applicable)
- Language competency evidence (if applicable)
- Evidence of withdrawal from previous programme (if applicable)
- Gantt Chart/Thesis Completion Plan (if applicable)

The submission will be reviewed by the RCSI Academic Review Committee (ARC). ARC will establish whether there are grounds for transfer and identify whether there are potential risks to project completion for the scholar. For example, ARC will consider:

- That a sufficient body of work will be completed for the programme into which the scholar wishes to transfer. This may include work already completed if this work is of an appropriate standard
- That a sufficient budget for the extended programme of work is in place
- That the scholar is eligible and aware of the financial implications and academic expectations of the new programme
- That sufficient protected time for research is verified and demonstratable.



Application to Transfer between Postgraduate Research Courses

This form should be completed by the scholar and their primary supervisor. The primary supervisor should also sign the form and it should then be submitted to the School of Postgraduate Studies by email: postgraduateschool@rcsi.ie.

Please note that transfers will only be permitted at the end of an academic year. October registered scholars must apply for their transfer before 1st August; April registered scholars must apply for a transfer before 1st February. If there are any stipend implications with this transfer please ensure payroll@rcsi.ie and hrqueries@rcsi.ie are contacted and informed of the transfer.

Section 1 Please complete for all transfer requests	
Name of scholar	
Name of primary supervisor, email address and department	
Name of co-supervisor/s, email address(es) and department(s)	
If any changes to supervisory team, please explain.	
Scholar RCSI ID number	
Date of registration	
Expected submission date	
Address of research group (Where the majority of the work has taken place)	
Degree currently being undertaken: Requested transfer to:	MSc <input type="checkbox"/> MCh <input type="checkbox"/> MD <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> Full time <input type="checkbox"/> or Part time <input type="checkbox"/> MSc <input type="checkbox"/> MCh <input type="checkbox"/> MD <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> Full time <input type="checkbox"/> or Part time <input type="checkbox"/>
Title of thesis	
Objectives of research/ Hypothesis statement	
Did you undertake an overseas placement during your studentship?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, please include dates and location of placement. Please indicate which chapter(s) this research was relevant to.
If transfer is approved, what date do you plan to submit your thesis?	___/___/___



RCSI

Has a Gantt chart showing completion timelines been attached?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you and your supervisors agreed a mutually suitable timetable to review drafts of your thesis during preparation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Does this include consideration for holiday periods and does it allow appropriate times for the supervisors to review the submitted work?

Section 2.A.	
Please complete this section if you intend on submitting your thesis via the traditional format	
Chapter 1 • Work remaining • Target dates for completion	
Chapter 2 • Work remaining • Target dates for completion	
Chapter 3 • Work remaining • Target dates for completion (Please add for further chapters as required)	
Please provide details of publications &/or patents (<i>in preparation, submitted, published etc.</i>)	



RCSI

Section 2.B.

Please complete this section if you intend to submit your thesis using the PhD/MD thesis by Publication route (This route is strongly encouraged for candidates wishing to transfer from MD to PhD).

*Use this Scopus Journal rank tool to identify the quartile ranking of the journals indicated below.

<http://www.scimagojr.com/journalrank.php>

<p>Results Chapter 1 – (Paper 1)</p> <p>Manuscript details</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Title of Journal:• Title of manuscript:• Author list (list authors in order of appearance on published paper) <p>Manuscript status</p>	<p>Published <input type="checkbox"/> In press <input type="checkbox"/> Submitted <input type="checkbox"/> In preparation <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Impact factor _____</p>
	<p>SciVal subject category _____</p> <p>SciVal* Quartile Q1 <input type="checkbox"/> Q2 <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Results Chapter 2 – (Paper 2)</p> <p>Manuscript details</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Title of Journal:• Title of manuscript:• Author list (list authors in order of appearance on published paper)• <p>Manuscript status</p>	<p>Published <input type="checkbox"/> In press <input type="checkbox"/> Submitted <input type="checkbox"/> In preparation <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Impact factor _____</p> <p>SciVal subject category _____</p> <p>SciVal* Quartile Q1 <input type="checkbox"/> Q2 <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/></p>



RCSI

Results Chapter 3 – (Paper 3)

Manuscript details

- Title of Journal:
- Title of manuscript:
- Author list (list authors in order of appearance on published paper)

Manuscript status

Published In press Submitted In preparation

Impact factor _____

SciVal subject category _____

SciVal* Quartile Q1 Q2 Other

(cut & paste for further chapters as required)

Section 3

All scholars must complete this section

Summary of planned MSc/MCh/MD/PhD work-packages (300 word limit)

If transferring to an MD or PhD, please explain how the work completed to date will be extended and developed.

If transferring to an MSc or MCh, please explain how the work completed to date will be developed for submission of an MSc/MCh thesis.



RCSI

Section 4
Please describe the steps you have taken to ensure that you have protected time for your additional research

Section 5 (to be completed by the supervisor)
Please comment on the scholar's progress to date and justification for this transfer (500 word limit)

Section 6
Please provide any further information in support of this application

Signatures

Scholar Signature	Supervisor Signature
Print Name	Print Name
Date	Date

Please note that this transfer request will be submitted to the Academic Review Committee (ARC) for approval. Please submit this form with supporting documents to postgraduateschool@rcsi.ie. If there are any stipend implications with this transfer please ensure you contact payroll@rcsi.ie and hrqueries@rcsi.ie. It is the scholar and supervisor's responsibility to ensure the correct funding is in place.