

Guidelines for DGSs in Selection of Transfer Assessors

General Notes

Transfer Assessors do not necessarily need to be expert in the precise field of research of the student. The aim is to **assess progress and likelihood of completion of the proposed degree in the relevant time** (maximum 9 terms for MSc by Research, 12 terms for DPhil), plus as a sounding board for science conducted/proposed

The deadline for completion of transfer is the last day of the vacation following Term 4. No student should submit for transfer later than the end of full term of Term 4 of their studies.

DGSs should try to educate supervisors of the purpose of the transfer process, and the benefits for conducting it promptly and rigorously, both in the case of successful students and particularly in the case of struggling students.

DGS should ensure that supervisors are aware that **no member of the supervisory team may be present when candidates are interviewed**. Furthermore, supervisors must not attempt to contribute to or modify the report prepared by the assessors. This does not preclude the assessors seeking clarification from the supervisor(s) but this must be initiated by the assessors. To clarify, 'supervisors', in this context, means anyone in the supervisory team i.e. including secondary supervisors.

Guidelines for Selection of Assessors:

- Two assessors are required
- Neither assessor should have acted in a supervisory capacity to the student. This includes use of the student's college advisor, DGS*, or Graduate Advisor.
- Both assessors should be internal to Oxford, although an honorary contract (for NHS employees) would be sufficient. Likewise, a contract research (post-doctoral) staff member who is employed by Oxford University would be acceptable.
- It may be desirable for one of the assessors to be external to the student's department, where this can be achieved.
- At least one assessor should have supervised a student in Oxford to completion.

Transfer assessors may subsequently be invited as degree examiners for the student, provided they have not given further help/assistance to the student between Transfer of Status and final submission of MSc/DPhil thesis.

As agreed by GSC¹, DGS have delegated authority to approve, where they wish to do so, transfer assessor nominations which fall out-with the rules above. When a DGS receives a GSO.2.MSD (Application for Transfer of Status) on which the assessor nominations are out-with the rules, they may:

- (a) return the form to the candidate with a request that they nominate alternative assessors; or
- (b) if they support the nominations, complete the relevant section of the GSO.2.MSD form with a brief justification; or
- (c) if they prefer to refer the decision to the Board, refrain from signing the form and email the Divisional Graduate School Assistants² with a brief case supporting the use of an assessor/s out-with the rules. The Divisional Graduate School Assistants will relay the case to members of the Board with delegated authority to decide on such matters and report the decision back to the DGS at which point the DGS may sign the form. It is imperative that the transfer interview does not proceed prior to the DGS receiving the Board's decision – as the Board may not approve the nominated assessors.

*If the DGS is nominated as an assessor, their appointment can be approved by the Head of Department (without reference to the Board) in which case, the Head of Department should complete the relevant section of the GSO.2.MSD form in place of the DGS, providing a brief justification.

Assessors' Transfer Report:

Assessors should jointly meet the candidate (in person), and should produce a written report which

- Expands on areas where they feel there are concerns

¹ 15.10.15

² Graduate.Studies@medsci.ox.ac.uk

- Provides scientific feedback
- Describes any suggestions for future work.

The guidance notes approved by the Graduate School Committee should be provided to appointed assessors (Guidelines for Transfer of Status Assessors in the Medical Sciences Division).

April 2017