Integrated PhD Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 Integrated PhD programmes provide a route into doctoral level study by combining a Master's level taught phase with a Doctoral level research phase, culminating in the production of a thesis which is submitted for the award of Doctor of Philosophy. In common with all Southampton research degrees, students registered on the Integrated PhD are given access to a range of research, transferable and professional skills training activities, designed to support their research and help them prepare for their subsequent career.

1.2 The [Regulations for Research Degrees](#) further explain:

> "*Integrated PhDs are typically structured as follows, with any specific exemptions, variations or additional requirements detailed in the [Academic Regulations](#):*
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> - *The early stage of the programme (the taught phase), requires students to complete a prescribed set of modules which are assessed under the [Progression, Determination and Classification of Results: Postgraduate Master's Programmes](#) regulations and, regarding progression to the research phase of the programme, under the relevant [Academic Regulations](#) for the programme.*
>
> - *Students' attainment of the academic requirements to progress to the research phase of the Integrated PhD will be considered at the relevant Board of Examiners and those who complete the prescribed set of modules and pass the required assessments at the specified standard will be permitted to proceed to the research phase of the programme. Where the Board of Examiners determines that a student has not met the requirements to progress, they will have such options for Referral and Repeat as set down in the [Progression, Determination and Classification of Results: Postgraduate](#)*

Master's Programmes and the relevant *Academic Regulations* for the programme.

- *On occasion, and where defined in the relevant* Academic Regulations *an interim award of MA, MSc or MRes may also be given. In the event of failure to achieve the required standard to progress to the research phase of the programme, and where stated in the* Academic Regulations*, students may be eligible for an exit award of a Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) or Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip), subject to the completion of further academic work.*

- *The research phase of the student's programme will be devoted to supervised research and preparation of a thesis and may include the completion of further modules, training and development activities.*"

1.3 Integrated PhD programmes are governed by the Student Regulations and the General Academic Regulations for Research Students.

1.4 This Policy sets out the requirements associated with the development, approval, and operation of an Integrated PhD programme at the University of Southampton (referred to from hereon as an iPhD).

2. Recruitment, admission, and selection

2.1 An iPhD programme may be developed following a successful Doctoral Training Award funding bid, or as a stand-alone programme that is not tied to a specific project or funding source.

2.2 The development of an iPhD programme must align to the requirements of the rules and regulations of the University of Southampton and any relevant external body (e.g.: a funding body; UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI)). Mindful of the above, care should be taken to ensure that any refinement to taught module content and delivery is considered and approved through relevant quality assurance processes.

2.3 Only suitably qualified and prepared applicants will be admitted to an iPhD programme. Minimum entry requirements and information about

selection and admission processes are set down in the [Regulations for Research Degrees](#).

2.4 The University expects that students' research projects align with the interests of current members of staff and that each project is deemed to be viable as a piece of stand-alone research. As such, and, as a minimum, the area of research should be identified and agreed during the admissions process. It is recognised, however, that the projects of iPhD applicants may not be fully defined until after the taught phase of the iPhD has commenced. Advice and guidance must be sought from the [VISAS Team](#) in cases where UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI)) regulations apply and/or where the student's research project requires an Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate.

3. Programme duration

3.1 The minimum and maximum length of candidature for full-time or part-time study is set down in the [Regulations for Research Degrees](#):

Degree	Minimum Length of Candidature		Maximum Length of Candidature	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
PhD Integrated Route	36 months	48 months	60 months	108 months

4. Programme and credit structure

4.1 The [Quality Assurance Agency's Doctoral Degree Characteristics Statement](#) (February 2020) indicates that:

> "*Credit is not normally assigned to a doctoral degree because of the importance and diversity of the individual research project, which is at the heart of all doctorates.*" but that "*Credit may be awarded to candidates for successful completion of assessed structured elements as part of research skills and training ….*".

Paragraphs 4.2 to 4.9 of this Policy set down Southampton's requirements.

The taught phase and the prescribed programme of modules

4.2 An iPhD programme requires a student to follow a prescribed programme of credit-bearing taught modules during their first year of candidature[1]:

- 60 ECTS (120 CATS) credit points.
- A minimum of 45 ECTS (90 ECTS) credit points must be at FHEQ Level 7 and a maximum of 15 ECTS (30 CATS) credit points may be at FHEQ Level 6.

4.3 The Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme sets down the minimum credit requirements for University awards. Should the design of the iPhD programme be structured in such a way as to permit the achievement of credit from FHEQ Level 6 modules, students must be advised of the potential impact on their eligibility to exit the programme with a Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) or Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip), or to transfer to a Master's programme. .

4.4 The credit-bearing taught modules undertaken during the first year[1] of the iPhD should generally focus on research training modules and/or content-specific modules in the subject-specific or inter-disciplinary area. It may be appropriate to model the prescribed programme of modules on an existing Master's level programme; indeed, it is advisable to do so if an exit award is to be made available.

The transitional research project

4.5 Students should commence work on a Transitional Research Project during the first year[1] of their iPhD programme. The Project is non-credit bearing and should be designed to both develop the student's research project proposal and to support them in their transition from the taught phase to the research phase of the iPhD.

4.6 Schools are required to agree and document internal processes which advise students on the format and deadline for submission of the

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[1] Part-time students will undertake the prescribed programme of modules during the first and second year of their candidature.

Project. Processes for resolving issues (e.g. in cases of non-submission) must also be agreed and documented.

4.7 Schools are required to define the responsibilities of supervisory teams in reviewing the Project submission and in providing formative feedback within the defined timescale (reference to paragraph 4.9 of this Policy). The Regulations Governing Academic Responsibility and Conduct apply to the Transitional Research Project and supervisors are responsible for referring any suspected breach to their School's Academic Conduct Officer for investigation.

4.8 Following the completion of the prescribed programme of taught credit-bearing modules, the Project should be submitted at a point deemed appropriate by the Head of Teaching Programmes that enables students to start the research phase of their programme at the same time as new entrants to the discipline's standard-route PhD programmes. It may be feasible to schedule the submission to utilise the same submission deadline as that for postgraduate taught dissertations (i.e. mid-September) with consideration given to timelines for full-time and part-time students.

4.9 Formative feedback on the Project should be provided to students within two months of their submission.

4.10 The Project and the formative feedback should be part of the documentation submitted by students for their First Progression Review and should be reviewed by the Assessment Panel.

4.11 As students will not receive credit or a numerical mark for the Transitional Research Project, they may elect to include it (or where appropriate, a modified version) in the PhD thesis that they submit for examination.

The research phase

4.12 The research phase of an iPhD programme integrates research, transferrable and professional skills training with the process of research and thesis preparation. In common with all Southampton research degrees, students registered on an iPhD programme are

encouraged to continue their personal and professional development by engaging with the Doctoral College's professional development programme, and with Faculty, School and disciplinary training activities, throughout their candidature.

5. Progression from the taught phase to the research phase of the iPhD programme

5.1 Where iPhD programmes are delivered, there must be clearly defined arrangements in place to ratify the marks achieved by iPhD students for taught credit-bearing modules, and for approving and communicating progression, referral and repeat decisions to students. Consistent with the expectations of the [Policy and Procedures for Boards of Examiners for Taught Programmes – Membership, Responsibilities and Operation](#), each School shall be responsible for ensuring that there are Boards of Examiners which are appropriately constituted and which ensure the annual consideration and confirmation of module and year results contributing to all iPhD programmes that are under the remit of that School.

5.2 The principles of the [Progression, Determination and Classification of Results: Postgraduate Master's Programmes](#) regulations apply to the taught phase of all iPhD programmes and form the standard baseline for assessing students' academic performance at the end of their first year of candidature[1]:

- a **Module Pass Mark** of 50;
- a **Qualifying Mark** of 35;
- a **Standard Average Mark** of 50 across the 60 ECTS (120 CATS) credit points of prescribed modules.
- **Compensation** is permitted.
- **Referral** is permitted.
- **Repeat** is permitted

Additional information regarding the average mark

5.3 Where additional entry criteria beyond bachelor's degree attainment is required for entry to the School's standard-route PhD programme (for example, where applicants are required to possess a Master's degree with merit or higher achieved in the taught component), it is reasonable for the School to require its iPhD students to demonstrate an equivalent level of attainment at the end of the taught phase of their programme. To ensure that these students are adequately prepared for the research phase of the programme, a **Higher Average Mark** may be imposed by the School to determine progression (for example, a mark of 60 across the 60 ECTS (120 CATS) credit points of prescribed modules). Where the School wishes to impose a Higher Average Mark (considered to be a variation to the Standard Average Mark set down in paragraph 5.2 of this Policy), this must be stated in the relevant programme-specific Academic Regulations, in induction material and in printed material available to students

Additional information regarding referral and repeat

5.4 Southampton's guiding principle is that all failed assessment should be redeemable and students' eligibility to refer and to repeat should be a separate matter to their funding arrangements. Although a funder may impose conditions that require students to successfully progress between the taught and research phase of their iPhD programme at the first attempt, all students should be granted the right of referral and repeat in accordance with the expectations of the Progression, Determination and Classification of Results: Postgraduate Master's Programmes regulations.

5.5 A funder may impose a condition whereby students' funding would be discontinued or restricted in the event of failure to progress between the taught and research phase of their iPhD programme at the first attempt. Where such constraints exist, the studentship offer letter must clearly specify this constraint so the applicant is able to make an informed decision about taking up the offer of a place to study.

5.6 Students who complete a repeat year and subsequently progress to the research phase of their iPhD programme will have their candidature duration adjusted to provide a maximum period of study equivalent to that for a standard-route PhD programme.

5.7 Students who pass the required assessments at the specified standard will be permitted to progress from the taught phase to the research phase of their iPhD programme.

Additional information regarding repeat for visa and ATAS students

5.8 Students required to undertake a repeat year may elect to do so either internally or externally. The repeat will involve an extended period of study.

5.9 Students who are subject to UK visa and immigration rules (and/or whose programme of study requires Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) clearance) must seek advice from the [VISAS Team](#) to ascertain the impact of a repeat year on the conditions of their student visa and ATAS certificate.

6. Transfer

6.1 Students who have completed the prescribed programme of taught modules and successfully met the requirements for progression to the research phase of their iPhD programme may elect to exit at the end of the taught phase. Such students may be permitted to transfer to a relevant Master's programme where appropriate and feasible and to complete a dissertation in support of a Master's degree award. Upon transfer, an additional tuition fee for the relevant Master's level award will become due.

6.2 Depending on the terms and condition of any funding already provided to students in support of their iPhD studies, exiting or transferring students may be required to repay some or all of their studentship to the funder.

7. Final and exit awards

Final award

7.1 Students who satisfactorily complete the taught phase of their iPhD programme and who satisfies the examiners in both the thesis and the *viva voce* will be eligible for the award of Doctor of Philosophy.

Exit award

7.2 Students who fail to progress to the research phase of their iPhD programme (or who elects to exit the iPhD upon successful completion of the taught phase) may, in accordance with the Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme, be eligible for one of the following:

- A Postgraduate Certificate may be awarded on the achievement of 30 ECTS/60 CATS credit points (to include 20 ECTS/40 CATS credit points at FHEQ Level 7).
- A Postgraduate Diploma may be awarded on the achievement of 60 ECTS/120 CATS credit points (to include 40 ECTS/80 CATS at FHEQ Level 7).

7.3 In accordance with the Regulations for Research Degrees, students who, following submission and examination of their thesis, fail to satisfy the examiners may be invited to apply for the award of Master of Philosophy.

8. Programme approval and review

8.1 Programme approval is the process by which new postgraduate research degree programmes are checked against academic quality and standards expectations. New iPhD programmes are subject to the programme approval process.

8.2 Programme review is the quinquennial process of reflecting on existing research degree programme delivery and student experience, and planning for the next cycle of programme enhancement. Existing iPhD programmes are subject to programme review.

8.3 Detailed advice and guidance is available in the Programme Approval and Review: Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes policy.

8.4 All iPhD programmes are expected to accord with the principles of this Policy. It is only in exceptional circumstances, and when permitted by a Programme Approval or Review Panel, that exemptions, variations, or additional requirements will be permitted.

8.5 It is generally understood that any such approved exemption, variation or additional requirement may remain in place for a maximum of five years (until the next scheduled review of the named programme) and the programme should then harmonise with the standard Regulations. For exemptions, variations, and additional requirements to persist beyond the next review, there must be a sound rationale accepted by the Academic Quality and Standards Subcommittee (AQSS) and by Senate. Any such rationale is usually based on developing University education strategy or requirements or external bodies.

- Any exemption, variation or additional requirement to the regulations must be published within the relevant programme-specific [Academic Regulations](#), in induction material and in printed material available to students.

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