

Integrated PhD Framework

1. Introduction

1.1 The University of Southampton Integrated PhD programme is a structured research degree which combines a taught phase with research, professional and transferable skills training with a research phase which culminates in the production of a thesis to be submitted for the award of Doctor of Philosophy. Section 5 of the [Regulations for Research Degrees](#) (Additional Requirements for Integrated PhDs) set down the following expectation:

“Integrated PhDs are typically structured as follows, with any specific exemptions, variations or additional requirements detailed in the [Academic Regulations](#):

- *The early stage of the programme (the taught phase), requires research students to complete a prescribed set of modules which are assessed under the [Progression, Determination and Classification of Results: Postgraduate Master’s Programmes](#) regulations. Students who complete these modules and pass the required assessments at the specified standard will be permitted to proceed to the research phase of the programme. On occasion, and where defined in the relevant [Academic Regulations](#), and interim award of MA, MSc or MRes may be given. In the event of failure 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.”*

- 1.2 All Integrated PhD programmes are governed by the [Student Regulations](#) and the [General Academic Regulations for Research Students](#).
- 1.3 This Framework sets out the requirements associated with the development, approval, and operation of an Integrated PhD programme at the University of Southampton.

2. Recruitment, admission, and selection

- 2.1 An Integrated PhD programme may be developed following a successful Centre for Doctoral Training/Doctoral Training Partnership (CDT/DTP) funding bid, or as a stand-alone programme that is not tied to a specific project or funding source. As such, the Integrated PhD may attract applicants who are specialists in the discipline or those who are returning to study.
- 2.2 Only suitably qualified and prepared applicants will be admitted to an Integrated PhD programme. The requirements of admission as set out in the [Regulations for Research Degrees](#), and those for the selection and admission of research students as specified in the [Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision](#), should be applied.
- 2.3 Applicants satisfying the requirement for candidature may be admitted provided the Faculty Director of the Graduate School is satisfied with their chosen subject for research, that there is access to appropriate resources and facilities, and that there are satisfactory supervisory arrangements in place.
- 2.4 A PhD applicant's proposed research project is usually identified and agreed during the application process, however, such an expectation may be unreasonable for an Integrated PhD applicant as their project may not be fully defined until the taught phase of their programme has commenced. However, it is essential that during the application process, applicants are advised that their research project should align with the interests of existing University of Southampton staff and must be considered by the University to be viable as a piece of stand-alone

research. This information should also be communicated within the offer letter.

3. Programme duration

3.1 The standard duration of an Integrated PhD programme, and the minimum and maximum length of candidature for full-time or part-time study, are specified in the [Regulations for Research Degrees](#) as follows:

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 Within its Doctoral Degree Characteristics Statement, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) 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.*” However, “*Credit may be awarded to candidates for successful completion of assessed structured elements as part of research skills and training*”

The taught phase and the prescribed programme of modules

4.2 An Integrated PhD programme requires a student to follow a prescribed programme of modules in semester 1 and semester 2 during their first year of candidature¹ as follows:

- 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 Should the design of the programme be structured in such a way as to permit the achievement of credit from FHEQ Level 6 modules, students must be notified to the potential impact on their ability to exit the

¹ For a part-time student, the prescribed programme of modules will be undertaken during the first and second year of candidature.

Integrated PhD programme with a Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) or Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip), or to transfer to a Master's programme. See section 6 of this Framework for further information.

- 4.4 The modules undertaken during the first year¹ of the programme should generally focus on research training modules and/or content-specific modules in the subject-specific or inter-disciplinary area. The prescribed programme of modules can be modelled on an existing master's level programme; indeed, it is advisable to do so if an intermediate or exit award is to be made available.

The transitional research project

- 4.5 The student should commence work on a non-credit bearing Transitional Research Project during the first year¹ of their Integrated PhD programme. The Project should be designed to support the student in their transition from the taught phase to the research phase of the programme.
- 4.6 The Project should be submitted following the completion of the prescribed programme of modules and at a point deemed appropriate by the Head of Teaching Programmes that will enable the student to start the research phase of their programme at the same time as new entrants to a standard-route PhD programme. It may be feasible to schedule the submission to utilise the same submission deadline as that for postgraduate taught dissertations (e.g. mid-September).
- 4.7 Formative feedback on the Transitional Research Project should be provided to the student within two months of their submission.
- 4.8 The Project and the formative feedback should be part of the documentation submitted by the student for their First Progression Review and reviewed by the Assessment Panel.
- 4.9 As the student 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 is submitted for examination.

The research phase

4.10 The remaining years of the programme integrate research training and professional and transferable skills training with the process of research and thesis preparation. As with a student on a standard research degree, a student on an Integrated PhD programme is encouraged to continue their personal and professional development by engaging with the Doctoral College's professional development programme throughout their candidature.

5. Progression (from the taught phase to the research phase of the programme)

- 5.1 The principles of the [Progression, Determination and Classification of Results: Postgraduate Master's Programmes](#) regulations apply to all Integrated PhD programmes and will form the standard baseline to assess a student's academic performance at the end of the first year of candidature¹. As such, the Module Pass Mark for all Integrated PhD programmes should be set at 50, the Qualifying Mark set at 35 and an Average Mark of 50 across the 60 ECTS (120 CATS) credit points of prescribed modules will be required.
- 5.2 Additional information regarding the Average Mark: To ensure equivalency between the requirements placed upon an applicant for direct entry to a standard-route PhD (where overall degree classification, not the average mark, determines acceptability for entry) and the requirements placed on a student on an Integrated PhD programme (who must achieve a defined academic standard in the taught phase of the programme to determine eligibility for progression to the research phase), the imposition of a requirement that an Integrated PhD student must achieve an Average Mark higher than the standard (see paragraph 5.1 above) could be perceived as unfair. The only exception to this would be if a detailed academic rationale for a higher Average Mark is accepted by the Programme Approval Panel at the time of the Integrated PhD programme being proposed.

- 5.3 Compensation should be permitted in accordance with the [Progression, Determination and Classification of Results: Postgraduate Master's Programmes](#) regulations.
- 5.4 Although a funder may impose conditions on funding that require the student to successfully progress between the taught and research phase of their programme at the first attempt, Southampton's guiding principle is that all failed assessment should be redeemable and a student's right to refer and repeat should be a separate matter to a student's funding arrangements. As such, all students should be granted the right of referral and repeat in with the [Progression, Determination and Classification of Results: Postgraduate Master's Programmes](#) regulations.
- 5.5 Should a funder impose a condition whereby a student's funding would be discontinued or restricted in the event of failure to progress between the taught and research phase of their programme at the first attempt, the funding offer letter must clearly specify this constraint to ensure that the applicant is notified appropriately and is then able to make an informed decision about taking up the offer of a place to study on an Integrated PhD programme.
- 5.6 As the Transitional Research Project is non-credit bearing, it should not be considered as a dissertation for assessment and, as such, section 7 (Dissertation) of the [Progression, Determination and Classification of Results: Postgraduate Master's Programmes](#) regulations should not apply to any Integrated PhD programme.
- 5.7 A student who passes the required assessments at the specified standard will be permitted to progress to the research phase of an Integrated PhD programme.

6. Transfer and final, intermediate and exit awards

Transfer

- 6.1 A student who has completed the prescribed programme of modules and has successfully met the requirements for progression to the research phase of the Integrated PhD programme but who elects to exit

the Integrated PhD at that point, may be permitted to transfer to a named Master's programme (where appropriate and feasible) to complete a dissertation in support of a Master's level award (e.g. Master of Science). Upon transfer, the 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 the student in support of their Integrated PhD studies, a student who transfers may be required to repay some or all of their studentship to the funder. This possibility should be communicated to the student and investigated by them before any decision is made to transfer.

Final award

- 6.3 A student who satisfactorily completes the taught element of the Integrated PhD programme and who satisfies the examiners in both the thesis and the *viva voce* will be eligible for the award of Doctor of Philosophy.

Intermediate award

- 6.4 An intermediate award, as defined within this Framework, is a separate qualification which can be awarded at a specific stage or level partway through a longer programme of study. However, in accordance with Southampton's guiding principle that the same credit cannot be counted twice in the same disciplines/subjects², a Southampton Integrated PhD programme does not typically provide for an intermediate award. The only exception to this would be if a detailed rationale for an intermediate award is accepted by the Programme Approval Panel at the time of the Integrated PhD programme being proposed.

Exit award

- 6.5 A student who fails to progress to the research phase of the Integrated PhD programme (or a student who elects to exit the Integrated PhD

² Recognition of Prior Learning Policy, University of Southampton, October 2018

upon completion of the taught phase of the programme) 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).

6.6 In accordance with the [Regulations for Research Degrees](#), a student 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.

7. Programme approval and review

7.1 Programme approval is the process by which new postgraduate research degree programmes are checked against academic quality and standards expectations.

7.2 The [Programme Approval and Review: Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes](#) policy applies to:

- New Integrated PhD programmes that require students to follow a prescribed programme of modules in the early stages of the degree, with the remainder of candidature devoted to supervised research and preparation of a thesis. Integrated PhDs may sometimes be delivered through a Centre for Doctoral Training (CDT) or a Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP).

7.3 All Integrated PhD programmes are expected to accord with the principles of this Framework. It is only in exceptional circumstances, and when permitted by the Programme Approval or Review Panel, that exemptions, variations, or additional requirements to these expectations and to the [regulations](#) named herein will be approved.

7.4 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 AQSS and Senate. Any such rationale is usually based on developing University education strategy or requirements or external bodies.

- 7.5 All exemptions, variations or additional requirements to the regulations must be clearly set out and published within the relevant [Academic Regulations](#), as must any restrictions placed upon students that by their funder (see paragraph 5.4) of this Framework.

Document Information	
Author	Quality Standards and Accreditation Team
Owner (committee)	Academic Quality and Standards Subcommittee
Approved Date	November 2022
Last Revision	August 2024
Type of Document	Policy