Integrated PhD Programmes Guidance

1. Programme content and structure

1.1 An Integrated-route PhD is a programme of study that is typically conducted over 48 months of full-time study or 84 months of part-time study. Full-time research students are expected to submit their thesis for examination no later than at 60 months of candidature (96 months for part-time research students), the maximum length of candidature as defined in the [Regulations for Research Degrees](#).

1.2 The programme has three basic elements:

- A taught element, incorporating assessable modules in research skills (e.g. research methodologies, technical research skills), subject-specific or inter-disciplinary topics;
- Professional and transferable skills training, designed to broaden and deepen students' knowledge and skills; and
- A research element during which students undertake research and write a PhD thesis.

1.3 Approximately one-third of the programme is taken up by the taught element and professional / transferable skills training, with the subsequent two-thirds devoted to the research element. Schools are required to specify the specialisations and options available to students under the taught element in the programme specification, as well as indicate how the professional / transferable skills and research elements are integrated. The design of the programme should be sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of individual students, particularly in Years 2 to 4.

1.4 The following credit structure of 270 ECTS credit points has been adopted (in line with other universities offering Integrated PhD programmes):

- 60 ECTS credit points may be undertaken at FHEQ Level 7 during Year 1;
- 30 ECTS credit points must be undertaken at FHEQ Level 8 by the end of Year 3;
- 180 ECTS credit points are notionally allocated to thesis preparation at FHEQ Level 8.

1.5 The benefits of specifying credit for the programme as a whole are that it gives a clear indication of the balance of the different elements of the programme and simplifies provision of a transcript showing the amount and nature of the course work and training undertaken.

1.6 Year 1 of the programme generally focuses on research training modules and/or content-specific modules in the subject-specific or inter-disciplinary area. It can be modelled on existing graduate diploma and master's level programmes; indeed, it is advisable to do so if interim exit awards are to be clearly specified.

1.7 Years 2 and 3 integrate professional and transferable skills training with the process of research and thesis preparation, which extends into Year 4. Professional skills development is a distinctive feature of the programme. Students are also encouraged to continue their personal and professional development by participating in seminars and workshops throughout the programme. Examples of professional/transferable skills training include modules in:

- Use of communication and information technology in the field;
- Writing for research journals;
- Presenting at research conferences;
- Engineering for scientific purposes;
- Management/business training;
- Training to teach in higher education.

2. Entry requirements

2.1 Entry requirements are the same as for a standard-route PhD programme. Applicants must demonstrate that they have the motivation and potential to complete a sustained piece of

research and to produce a thesis. Applicants will normally be expected to have one or more of the following:

- a degree, normally with at least class 2(i) or equivalent, in a relevant subject;
- a relevant master's qualification or equivalent;
- evidence of prior professional practice or learning that meets the University's criteria and good practice guidelines for accreditation of prior experiential and/or certificated learning.

3. Progression

3.1 Only those students who pass the taught element of the programme will be allowed to progress. Progression from Year 1 to Year 2 is typically dependent on passing all modules (60 ECTS credit points) and provision of a satisfactory thesis proposal. The regulations applying to progression for each programme are published in Section VI of the Calendar.

3.2 Thereafter, progression to confirmation of doctoral candidature is dependent upon satisfactory completion of assessed modules in professional and transferable skills. Successful completion of these modules will need to be noted formally in progression reports before confirmation may be considered.

3.3 The thesis element is examined by an internal and an external examiner and includes a *viva voce*. Examiners' recommendations are specified in the Regulations for Research Degrees (*Outcomes of the Examination*).

4. Intermediate exit awards

4.1 Students who do not wish to progress beyond the taught element, or have failed to meet the standard necessary for progression to the research phase of the programme, may be permitted to transfer to a relevant postgraduate diploma or master's level programme. An intermediate exit award may be offered to students who have successfully completed the appropriate number of credit points at level 7. The award available is typically a postgraduate diploma (60 ECTS credits) or a Master's degree (90 ECTS credits). In the case of exit with a Masters award, a dissertation is required.

4.2 Students who wish to exit with the award of Master of Philosophy (FHEQ level 7) should complete the taught element and submit a thesis (normally not exceeding 50,000 words). The difference between an MPhil and PhD is outlined in the Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision.

4.3 Students who progress to the end of Year 3 but fail to complete the taught element (including professional/transferable skills training) may submit a thesis at the MPhil level or transfer to an appropriate Master's-level programme. A PhD candidate who fails to satisfy examiners, and where a Master of Philosophy is available as an exit award, may be invited to apply for that award in accordance with the specific requirements of the Regulations for Research Degrees.

5. Quality assurance considerations

5.1 Schools and supervisors of Integrated PhD students are asked to consult the Regulations for Research Degrees and the Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision in order to familiarise themselves with quality assurance considerations for the programme and higher degree programmes in general.

5.2 Information on the transferable (generic) skills training expected of postgraduate research students may be found in the vitae website.

6. Programme validation and review

6.1 The procedure for validating a new Integrated PhD programme is detailed in the University's Programme Validation Policy and Procedure.

6.2 Year 1 of the programme is externally assured by external examiners of taught modules (60 ECTS). The professional/transferable skills training modules (30 ECTS credits in Years 2 and 3) would not be externally examined but are internally assessed. Periodic review of the programme

must cover the taught element and its integration with the professional/transferable skills training and research elements of the programme. This may be done in conjunction with periodic review of the master's level programme(s) that contribute taught elements to the Integrated PhD programme.

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