

Imperial Recognised Locations (IRL)

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The PhD, MPhil and MD(Res) degrees are normally full-time residential programmes. Therefore it is the expectation that students will spend the vast majority of time conducting their research on an Imperial College campus.
- 1.2. The College permits exceptions to this under the following arrangements:
 - PRI scheme in which the students spend the majority of time in a campus that is approved by the Registry and the Graduate School. The students spend approximately 2 months per year based at Imperial. The approval of PRI locations is based on the academic environment, the research need, welfare and safety issues. The students have a primary Imperial supervisor, and have to fulfil College regulations (e.g. attendance at professional skills development courses).
 - Joint degrees in which students spend time at the alternative institution. In all cases there is a minimum period that they need to spend at Imperial (normally at least 1 year of a 3 or 4 year programme).
 - 'True' part-time students who are usually employed elsewhere but attend Imperial on a regular basis, usually weekly or fortnightly.
 - Students registered under the split PhD scheme.
- 1.3. However, there are specialist research institutions where Imperial staff are based full-time. These include the Diamond Light Source and Harwell Science Campus in Oxfordshire and CERN in Geneva. These staff may supervise students who will be based full-time at these sites.
- 1.4. The Senate has agreed [February 2012] a procedure for recognising locations which have an Imperial staff and student presence but which are not official campuses of the College; such locations are known as Imperial Recognised Locations (IRL) so that students can spend all their research time in these campuses. In many cases these locations offer particular research opportunities that are not available elsewhere, and are the only place that the research can be done.
- 1.5. It is expected that this will be a relatively rare procedure. It is designed to accommodate research at centres of excellence¹ where Imperial staff are

¹ Such as Diamond Light, CERN, Francis Crick Institute, where strategic approval for the partnership has already been approved at College Level.

based on a full-time basis. It is not designed for students doing research with isolated staff – this would be better covered by the PRI scheme.

2. Considerations

- It is important that all students are aware of where they will be primarily based at the time of recruitment.
- The research should be supervised by an Imperial member of staff.
- There should be a serious commitment from Imperial to research on that site.
- That there is a suitable critical mass of research on that site (which may include other universities) to ensure a quality research experience.
- That the location is a centre of excellence in the appropriate research.
- That the students have appropriate welfare provision.
- That the students undertake the necessary Graduate School professional skills development courses.
- That the students have full access to resources (social and academic) at any Imperial College campus, and are treated as full Imperial students (with Imperial email, library and ICT access).
- That the Registry, and thus the College, is aware of where the students are located.
- That there be a MoU or similar agreement with the institute covering welfare, health and safety and access to research facilities.

3. Procedures

- 3.1. If a Department wishes to nominate an institution as an IRL for the full-time placement of students, then they should write to the Academic Registrar covering the points above.
- 3.2. The Quality Assurance Team will undertake due diligence checks to confirm that there will be an appropriate and safe learning environment for students at the location. Consideration will be given to the research facilities available to students, to the welfare and pastoral support available to students, and to the IT and Library support, student accommodation and social/sports facilities available to students.
- 3.3. The proposal will then be considered by the Academic Registrar together with the Director of the Graduate School.

- 3.4. Once a location has been approved then further students may be placed there, though the Registry should be informed as to their location as part of the admissions and enrolment process, and will code them appropriately.
- 3.5. Students studying at an Imperial Recognised Location will follow the same admissions, enrolment, progression and examination arrangements as students based solely at the College.
- 3.6. Any approval of an institution will last 5 years before renewal. Every five years the Quality Assurance Team will undertake a paper based internal review to ensure that the research facilities, student resources and welfare support mechanisms remain appropriate. The Director of the Graduate School and the Academic Registrar will make the decision to renew or to terminate the IRL status.
- 3.7. The PRQC will receive a report each year, prepared by the Quality Assurance Team, outlining and new IRLs approved, terminated IRLs, and the outcome of any reviews which have taken place. This will also be reported to Senate for information.

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