

Imperial College London

Regulations for the award of the degrees of Bachelor of Science (BSc) and Master in Science (MSci) in the Faculty of Natural Sciences [for students registering in and after October 2008]

[These Regulations do not apply to the intercalated or integrated BSc degree for candidates registered for the MBBS degrees.]

1 General

- 1.1 The degree of Bachelor of Science or Master in Science will be awarded to any student who has completed the appropriate course and passed examinations as a student at the College in accordance with the following Requirements and in accordance with such other Regulations for Students of the College as may be applicable.
- 1.2 The same courses and examinations are taken for the degree and for the Associateship of the Royal College of Science (ARCS). Both the degree and the Associateship will be awarded to successful students provided they have satisfied the requirements of the College.
- 1.3 The College provides programmes of study for the BSc and MSci degrees in main fields of study as determined by the Senate.
- 1.4 To obtain a BSc degree under these Regulations a student must complete to the satisfaction of the examiners courses valued at a minimum of 180 credits in the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)¹. Where a BSc degree programme extends over more than three years, additional credits may be awarded.
- 1.5 To obtain an MSci degree under these Regulations students must complete to the satisfaction of the examiners courses valued at a minimum of 240 ECTS credits, including not less than 60 ECTS credits at Master's level. Where an MSci degree programme extends over more than four academic years, additional credits may be awarded.
- 1.6 Some exemptions from courses and corresponding examinations may be granted under paragraphs 2.3, 2.5 and 2.6.
- 1.7 Students who successfully complete the requirements for a BSc degree will receive an award classified in one of the following ways: First Class Honours, or Second Class Honours (Upper Division), or Second Class Honours (Lower Division), or Third Class Honours.
- 1.8 Students who successfully complete the requirements for the MSci degree will receive an award classified in one of the following ways: First Class Honours, or Second Class Honours (Upper Division), or Second Class Honours (Lower Division), or Third Class Honours.

¹ The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) was introduced in 1989 within the framework of Erasmus, now part of the Lifelong Learning Programme. Originally set up as a credit transfer system, it is now developing into an accumulation system, in line with the Bologna Declaration in 1999. From the EU Lifelong Learning website, "ECTS is a student-centred system based on the student learning outcomes and competences to be acquired". The accepted range of hours/ECTS is between 25-30.

2 Entrance Requirements

- 2.1 All students, before admission to the course, must satisfy the general entrance requirements of the College.
- 2.2 In addition to the general entrance requirements, students will normally be required to satisfy certain individual programme requirements, specified by the Senate, for admission to the first year programme; these requirements are expressed in terms of passes at a recognised General Certificate of Education examination or equivalent.
- 2.3 The following categories of students (Transfer Students) may, subject to the approval of the College, be admitted direct to the second year of a BSc or MSci degree programme in the College, with exemption from the admission conditions specified in paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2:
- (a) Students who have completed to a satisfactory level as determined by the College at least one year of a first degree programme, or its equivalent as determined by the College, in science or engineering;
 - (b) Holders of an award at the Intermediate level of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- 2.4 The admission conditions specified in paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2 may be waived, with the approval of the College, in the case of a student (Transfer Student) who has completed part of the first year of a full-time first degree programme in science or engineering.
- 2.5 The following categories of students (Advanced Students) may, with the approval of the Senate, be admitted to the second year of a BSc or MSci degree programme in the College, with exemption from the admission conditions specified in paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2:
- (a) Graduates of another university;
 - (b) Holders of a Diploma in Technology awarded by the National Council for Technological Awards;
 - (c) Holders of a degree awarded by the Council for National Academic Awards;
 - (d) Holders of a Higher National Diploma, or a Higher National Certificate (together with at least one Supplementary Certificate).
- 2.6 The following categories of students (Transfer and Advanced Students) may, with the approval of the Senate, be admitted direct to the third year of a four-year MSci degree programme in the College, with exemption from the admission conditions specified in paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2:
- (a) Students who have completed to a satisfactory level as determined by the College at least two years of a first degree programme, or its equivalent as determined by the College, in science or engineering;
 - (b) Graduates of another university;

(c) Holders of a degree awarded by the Council for National Academic Awards.

3 Period of Study

- 3.1 The minimum period of study for the BSc degree is three academic years, except where the Senate has determined that a main field of study shall have a minimum period of study of four or five years. The minimum period of study for the MSci degree is four academic years. For students admitted under paragraph 2.3 (Transfer Students) or 2.5 (Advanced Students) the minimum period of study may be reduced to two years for three-year programmes and to three years for four-year programmes. For students admitted to the third year of the MSci degree under paragraph 2.6 (Transfer and Advanced Students) the minimum period of study may be reduced to two years.
- 3.2 For the Associateship, the minimum period of study at the College is two years in the case of three year programmes and must include the second and third years of the appropriate programme; in the case of four year or five year programmes the minimum period of study is three years or four years respectively and must include the second, third and fourth year of a four year programme and the second, third, fourth and fifth year of a five year programme.
- 3.3 The period of study must be continuous except by special permission.
- 3.4 Students may be required to spend a period of study following an academic programme at an approved university abroad, or on approved project work away from the College or a period of industrial placement as an integral part of the degree programme under arrangements approved by the Senate.
- 3.5 Students admitted under paragraph 2.3 or 2.5 who successfully complete the second and third year examination requirements after a programme of study extending over two years, or who successfully complete the second, third and fourth year examination requirements after a programme of study extending over three years, or who successfully complete the second, third, fourth and fifth year examination requirements after a programme of study extending over four years, will be eligible for the immediate award of the Degree and Associateship.
- 3.6 Students registered for the MSci degree under paragraph 2.6 who successfully complete the third and fourth year examination requirements after a programme of study extending over two years will be eligible for the immediate award of the Degree and Associateship.
- 3.7 Students admitted under paragraph 2.4 may, with the approval of the College, be granted remission of the prescribed period of study not exceeding the period spent in study for their degree elsewhere.
- 3.8 Students transferring their degree registration under paragraphs 4.8 or 4.9 who subsequently complete the programme of study and satisfy the examiners in the relevant examinations will be eligible for the immediate award of the Degree and Associateship.

4 Programmes of Study

- 4.1 The programme of study in each subject shall be specified in the publication *Undergraduate Syllabuses*; alterations and additions to programmes of study must be authorised by the Senate or Committee acting on its behalf.
- 4.2 Students must complete to the satisfaction of the examiners all the courses in a given year of study in order to qualify to proceed to the next year of the programme.
- 4.3 Additionally, students registered for the MSci degree must normally obtain the minimum aggregate mark as specified in the scheme for the award of honours in the second year of the programme in order to qualify to proceed to the third year of the programme.
- 4.4 Students who fail to meet the requirement in paragraph 4.2 may re-enter the examinations for failed courses in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 5.9.
- 4.5 Students will not be permitted to take courses valued at more than 60 ECTS credits in any one academic year without the special approval of the College. Where a student follows a course during the long vacation, the value of that course shall be assigned to either the previous or next calendar year as appropriate. In assessing degree requirements in accordance with paragraph 1.4 the College may designate certain courses or fractions of courses as introductory.
- 4.6 Students whose registration is transferred from a degree at another University may, if the College approves, be credited with some ECTS credits on account of the work which they have done and the examinations which they have passed in that other degree. Such students will be credited with the marks which they obtained in the examinations which they passed for the previous degree subject to any adjustments necessary to align them with the marking scheme of the College degree.
- 4.7 Students who are admitted to the College under paragraph 2.3, 2.5 or 2.6 may, if the College approves, be exempted from courses and the corresponding examinations normally to a maximum value of 60 ECTS credits per year.
- 4.8 Students who are registered for the BSc degree at the College, and who are qualified to proceed to the second or third year of the programme (as appropriate), may apply for transfer of registration to the MSci degree provided that such a programme is available in the same subject, and that their academic performance is of sufficient standard. Transfer between the BSc and MSci will be possible up to 31 March of the third year of full-time study so far as respective curricula make this practicable.
- 4.9 Students who are registered for the MSci degree at the College, and who are qualified to proceed to the second or third year of the programme (as appropriate), may apply for transfer of registration to the BSc degree provided that such a programme is available in the same subject. Transfer between MSci and BSc will be possible at any time up to 31 March of the third year of full-time study so far as respective curricula make this practicable.
- 4.10 Students registered for the MSci degree who fail to meet the requirement in paragraph 4.3, will normally be required by the Head of Department to transfer at the end of the second year to the third year of the BSc degree programme provided that such a programme is available in the same subject.

4.11 At the end of the third year of study, a student registered for the MSci degree must have completed to the satisfaction of the examiners courses valued at a minimum of normally 180 ECTS credits and have achieved a sufficient standard to qualify for admission to the final year. Students who do not satisfy these conditions will be expected:

- either (a) to remain registered for the MSci and re-enter failed courses on not more than one further occasion;
- or (b) to be considered for the award of BSc, where this is available, if all conditions of the award have been satisfied, passes in any MSci courses not included in the BSc programme having been discounted;
- or (c) to transfer to the BSc, where this is available, and to sit the final year BSc examinations on not more than one occasion in an attempt to satisfy the conditions of the award of a BSc.

4.12 Students who by the end of the programme of study for the MSci fail to satisfy the examiners in the minimum number of requirements within the degree programme may opt:

- either (a) to re-enter failed elements on not more than one further occasion;
- or (b) to be considered for the award of BSc, where this is available, if all the conditions of the award have been satisfied, passes in any MSci courses not included in the BSc programme having been discounted;
- or (c) to transfer to the BSc, where this is available, and to sit the final year BSc examinations on not more than one occasion in an attempt to satisfy the conditions of the award of a BSc.

4.13 Students opting for 4.11 (a) or 4.12 (a) above, who fail to satisfy the MSci examiners after the repeat of failed courses may be considered for the award of the BSc degree under 4.11 (b) and (c) and 4.12 (b) and (c) above, although in the case of 4.11 (c) and 4.12 (c) only one further attempt to satisfy the BSc examiners will be allowed.

5 Examinations

5.1 The overall responsibility for the conduct of the examinations for the degree and the Associateship lies with the Science Studies Committee. Boards of Examiners are appointed, and joint Boards as appropriate may be appointed, to deal with the examinations in each main field of study specified in paragraph 1.3.

5.2 There will be one course examination for each course. The examination may be conducted by a variety of examining methods including one or more of the following: written examination(s) taken at appropriate times during the year; assessment(s) of coursework; practical examination(s); assessment(s) of field work; multiple-choice question examination(s); and oral examination(s). A course will not normally be examined for more than one year after it ceases to be taught.

- 5.3 Students entering an examination for a course must be examined in all parts of the examination prescribed for that course. Unless prevented by illness or other adequate cause for which certification must be provided students must take each prescribed test and must submit sufficient work to enable them to be examined. Students who have passed a course examination may not repeat the examination, nor enter a course examination which is deemed to overlap a course-unit examination already taken and passed.
- 5.4 The pass mark for a course for a BSc degree and for a course at Honours level for an MSci degree is normally 40%. The pass mark for a course at Master's level for an MSci degree is normally 40%.
- 5.5 No books, notes or other material relevant to the examination may be introduced into any examination room by a student unless specifically authorised by the examiners. Reports and records of laboratory or field work submitted by a student as part of the examination assessment may be returned to the student at the discretion of the examiners.
- 5.6 Examiners may set comprehensive papers intended to test a student's knowledge of the whole or part of his/her field of study. Such papers will cover fields appreciably wider than the examinations on individual courses. Examiners may also test any candidate by means of an oral examination which may cover the candidate's entire field of study.
- 5.7 When students are credited with any ECTS credits under the provisions of paragraphs 2.3, 2.5 and 2.6, the examiners will assess their class of Honours entirely upon their performance in the course examinations in which they are required to be examined at Imperial.
- 5.8 Students who are prevented from attending any course examination in any year other than the final year of their programme through illness, or other cause judged sufficient by the Board of Examiners, may apply to the Academic Registrar to be alternatively assessed for the examinations missed by any of the examination methods indicated in paragraph 5.2, and selected at the discretion of the examiners. Any such alternative assessment shall take place at a time to be determined by the examiners concerned but not later than six months from the date of the examination missed. No students shall be credited during the whole period of their programme with more than 30 ECTS credits on the basis of alternative assessment. Where a course is alternatively assessed the total marks obtained for the course may be credited to the student.
- 5.9 First and second year students, third year students on four year degree programmes and third and fourth year students on five year degree programmes may, at the discretion of the examiners, be permitted to resit first, second, third or fourth year examinations in which they have failed on no more than two occasions. Resit examinations may be taken in September or at the prescribed time during the session immediately following the failure. Students cannot proceed to the next year of a degree programme until they have passed all the examination requirements of their current year. Finalists may, at the discretion of the examiners, and only where they have not qualified for the award of a degree, be permitted to resit final year examinations, in which they have failed, on no more than two occasions but resits for final year examinations are not available in September.

- 5.10 Before students may proceed to the next year of their programme of study they must have complied with all requirements of the College, including the payment of all due sessional fees, and must have satisfied the examiners at the appropriate course examinations.

6 Field of Study

- 6.1 The examiners shall determine the field of study in accordance with the guidelines laid down in paragraph 6.2 below.
- 6.2 Except where a single subject is appropriate, the subjects named in the field shall be determined as follows:
- (a) where appropriate, comprehensive titles will be used, for example, Biological Sciences;
 - (b) where two subjects studied have approximately equal importance and the subject mentioned second has a minimum value of one-third of the curriculum the conjunction 'and' will be used;
 - (c) where a subject has been taken with an essential supporting subject, 'with' will be used; the supporting subject will be expected to have a minimum value of one-quarter of the curriculum, the main subject in this case will have a minimum value of one-half of the curriculum;
 - (d) where it is inappropriate to describe a curriculum in terms of one or two subjects or by a comprehensive title as in (a) above, the degree will be awarded without reference to a field.

7 Award of Associateship and Degree

- 7.1 The Associateship of the Royal College of Science (ARCS) will be awarded to successful students who have complied with the requirements of the College, including the payment of all due sessional fees. A diploma of Associateship will be sent to each successful student.
- 7.2 A degree diploma will be sent to each successful student who is awarded the degree, together with a transcript stating the courses successfully completed and the value in ECTS credits and the main field of study.

8 Aegrotat Provisions

- 8.1 Students may be considered for the award of an Aegrotat or classified degree under these Provisions if
- (i) through illness or the death of a near relative or other cause judged sufficient by the Senate, they have been absent from examinations during their final year.
- OR
- (ii) though present at the whole of the examination during their final year, they consider that their performance has been adversely affected by any of the causes referred to in sub-clause (i).

The students must have completed their full programme of study for the degree and have satisfied the requirements of the College as described in the General Regulations.

- 8.2 An application for consideration to determine eligibility for the award of a degree under the Aegrotat Provisions must be made to the Academic Registrar within six weeks from the last day of the final year examination and must be accompanied by a medical certificate or other statement of the grounds on which application is made.
- 8.3 If students have satisfied the requirements for the award of a degree as laid down in paragraph 1.4, the examiners shall recommend the award of a degree with an Honours classification and shall not consider the candidate for the award of an Aegrotat degree.
- 8.4 In the case of students not deemed eligible to be recommended for a classified degree under paragraph 8.3 the Science Studies Committee, having considered a report from the examiners on the work submitted for such examinations as they attended (if any), together with records of the students' performance during the programme of study and assessments provided by the students' teachers, will determine whether evidence has been shown to their satisfaction that, had they completed the examination in normal circumstances, the students would clearly have reached a standard (and completed the necessary ECTS credits) qualifying them for the award of the degree. If so, the students will be notified accordingly and asked whether they wish to proceed formally with the Aegrotat degree application or to re-take the examination(s) at the next normal time.
- 8.5 If the award of an Aegrotat degree is conferred on students they will not be eligible thereafter to re-enter for the examination for the classified degree.
- 8.6 Students who re-enter for the examination for the classified degree, having previously been informed, under paragraph 8.4, that they are eligible to apply for the award of an Aegrotat degree, cease to be eligible so to apply.
- 8.7 An Aegrotat degree will be awarded without distinction or class.
- 8.8 Holders of an Aegrotat degree may not subsequently enter for examinations for a first degree of the College in the same field of study, but they may apply for permission to proceed to a first degree in a different field, or to a higher degree, on complying with the appropriate Regulations for such degrees.
- 8.9 Students who have been awarded an Aegrotat degree after complying with the relevant Regulations will also be awarded an Aegrotat Associateship of the Royal College of Science (ARCS). The procedures, described in paragraphs 8.1 to 8.6, will apply, as appropriate, to students who are candidates for the award of the Associateship only.