

Imperial College London

Regulations for the award of Taught Master's Degrees, Postgraduate Diplomas and Postgraduate Certificates

1 General Regulations

1.1 Definition

1.1.1 The Master's degree is intended for award on the satisfactory completion, including formal examination, of a prescribed programme of full-time study beyond the Bachelor's degree level of at least one calendar year or its equivalent in part-time study, such that the credit rating of the programme normally totals 90 ECTS.

1.1.2 Where individual Programme Requirements provide, a Postgraduate Diploma is intended for award on the satisfactory completion, including formal examination, of a prescribed programme of full-time study beyond the Bachelor's degree level of at least six months or equivalent in part-time study such that the credit rating of the programme normally totals at least 60 ECTS.

1.1.3 Where individual Programme Requirements provide, a Postgraduate Certificate is intended for award on the satisfactory completion, including formal examination, of a prescribed programme of full-time study beyond the Bachelor's degree level of at least three months or equivalent in part-time study such that the credit rating of the programme totals at least 30 ECTS.

1.2 Programmes of Study and Methods of Examination

1.2.1 Programmes of study and the examinations associated with them shall be so organised as to fall into one or both of the following categories:

- i) a period of full-time study, the length of which shall be prescribed in the individual Programme Requirements but which shall be not less than one calendar year for a Master's degree, six months for a Postgraduate Diploma and three months for a Postgraduate Certificate, the examination being completed by the end of that period;
- ii) a period of part-time study of between two and five years for a Master's degree, one and three years for a Postgraduate Diploma, and six months and two years for a Postgraduate Certificate, during which candidates will be examined in accordance with the individual Programme Requirements;
- iii) a period of study principally by distance learning of between two and four years for a Master's degree.

- 1.2.2 The minimum length of the period of study is prescribed in the individual Programme Requirements, but at the start of the programme or at a later stage the College may require individual students to pursue the programme for a period longer than the minimum period prescribed in the Requirements.
- 1.2.3 A student who registers for a Postgraduate Certificate is normally required to successfully complete and pass the Certificate programme before progressing to a Diploma programme. Likewise, a student registered for a Diploma programme is normally required to successfully complete and pass the Diploma before progressing to a Master's programme.
- 1.2.4 Students progressing from Postgraduate Certificate to Postgraduate Diploma and Master's awards will normally be required to complete the programme for a Postgraduate Certificate in no more than two years after initial registration, the Diploma programme in no more than four years after initial registration for the first qualification and the Master's programme in no more than five years after initial registration for the first qualification, except where individual Programme Requirements specifically allow longer periods of study.
- 1.2.5 Where a candidate is pursuing a programme of study leading to a Master's degree and extending over not less than one calendar year he/she may be allowed, at the discretion of the College and provided that the individual Programme Requirements so permit, to spend a maximum six months (twelve months in the case of a programme lasting two academic years) or, in the case of students pursuing a part-time programme, an equivalent period, on project work under appropriate supervision at an organisation or institution approved by the College as having a function relevant and suitable to the field of study. Where a candidate is pursuing a programme of study leading to a Postgraduate Diploma or Certificate that study must be centred on the College, save where the College has made explicit provision for a programme to be delivered in part or in full at another institution specifically agreed for the purpose.
- 1.2.6 Schemes of examination shall be prescribed in the individual Programme Requirements and shall, for Master's degrees, include the submission of a significant piece of individual work in the form of an essay, report or dissertation, which may be based on a project or fieldwork, unless the Senate has otherwise determined.
- 1.2.7 The examination for each written paper shall take place on one occasion each year and the time will be specified in the individual Programme Requirements, other than as provided in paragraph 1.5.8 below and where the College has exceptionally approved a different arrangement for individual programmes.
- 1.2.8 An essay/report/dissertation, where indicated in the scheme of examination, will be examined on one occasion only in each year and the date for submission will be specified in the Programme Requirements.
- 1.2.9 Each programme shall determine the acceptable and appropriate formats for the submission of essays, reports or projects required under their individual requirements so that they are generally available for public reference where appropriate. A candidate may apply to the College for restriction of access for a period not exceeding two years on the grounds of commercial exploitation or patenting or other very exceptional circumstances.

1.3 Entrance Requirements

1.3.1 The normal minimum entrance requirement for registration for a Master's degree, Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate is:

- a) a Second Class Honours degree or a taught Master's degree awarded by a UK university institution or a degree of an equivalent standard awarded by a university institution overseas, in a subject appropriate to that of the programme to be followed; or
- b) a registrable qualification appropriate to the programme to be followed awarded in Medicine by a UK university or a qualification of an equivalent standard awarded by a university institution overseas; or
- c) a professional or other qualification obtained by written examinations and approved by the College.

1.3.2 Candidates possessing alternative qualifications obtained by written examination may also be considered by the College for registration for a Master's degree, Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate. The College may require such a candidate to pursue the programme for the period of at least one year longer than the minimum period prescribed in the individual Programme Requirements and/or may prescribe a qualifying examination for such a candidate.

1.3.3 Where a suite of associated programmes (Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma and Master's) exist, full-time students will normally register directly for the Master's programme. Part-time students will normally register for the initial award and progress to the other awards should they so wish. In such cases credit gained will contribute towards the higher degree. Students cannot accumulate all three awards and will normally be required to surrender the associated Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma as appropriate.

1.3.4 A candidate may be granted credit towards the award of a Master's degree for study undertaken at the College or another institution, subject to the following conditions:

- (a) applications for credit transfer will only be considered for part-time students;
- (b) acceptability for credit transfer of work undertaken at the College or another institution does not confer right of entry to any programme;
- (c) the work accepted for credit must be appropriate in range, quality and currency to, and form a coherent whole with, the proposed programme of study;
- (d) a candidate granted credit transfer may be exempted from not more than 30 ECTS credits of the programme of study;
- (e) a candidate may not be granted exemption from the research project or dissertation element of the programme.

- 1.3.5 A candidate may similarly be granted credit towards the award of a Postgraduate Diploma in accordance with the above provisions save that a candidate may be granted exemption from no more than 20 ECTS credits of the programme of study [or exceptionally no more than 30 ECTS credits if the candidate is presenting a College Postgraduate Certificate in the same field]. A candidate may be granted credit towards the award of a Postgraduate Certificate in accordance with the above provisions save that a candidate may be granted exemption from no more than 10 ECTS credits of the programme of study.
- 1.3.6 A candidate granted credit transfer under 1.3.4–1.3.5 will not be eligible for any fee remission in respect of the credit granted and will be required to pay the full tuition fee prescribed for the individual programme of study.
- 1.3.7 An applicant for registration will also be required to meet any additional entrance requirements specified in the relevant Programme Requirements.
- 1.3.8 English language and other tests may be prescribed by the College.

1.4 Registration

- 1.4.1 Application for admission to a programme and registration for that programme shall be undertaken in accordance with the procedures specified by the College.
- 1.4.2 A student will not be granted credit towards the award of a Master's degree, Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate for work which he/she chooses to undertake for continuing professional development purposes whilst registered for a Master's degree, Postgraduate Diploma or Certificate award of the College, whether undertaken in the College or in any other university or other institution.

1.5 Examination

- 1.5.1 Candidates are bound by the Regulations in force at the time of their entry to the examination.
- 1.5.2 To be eligible for the award of a Master's degree, Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate a candidate must satisfy the examiners in the examination prescribed for the programme within a period of two years from the satisfactory completion of the prescribed period of study. This period of two years may be extended at the discretion of the Graduate School.
- 1.5.3 Examiners shall have the discretion to award a result of merit or distinction to candidates who have fulfilled the requirements for the award of the Master's degree as specified in the Examination Regulations. Postgraduate Diplomas and Postgraduate Certificates are unclassified and are pass/fail only.
- 1.5.4 A candidate shall enter the examination in accordance with the provisions of the individual Programme Requirements. Deferment of any part of the examination, including submission of the essay/dissertation, may be granted for reasons judged adequate in the particular case at the discretion of the Graduate School. Subject to such exemption being granted, candidates will be informed of the marks they obtained in those elements in which they have been examined.

1.5.5 If the essay, report or dissertation is otherwise adequate but requires minor amendments, the examiners may require the candidate to make within one month amendments specified by them and approved by them or one of their number nominated by them.

1.5.6 If a candidate who has been examined in all elements of the examination or of part of the examination for which he/she has entered fails to satisfy the examiners, the examiners may determine that he/she may on re-entry be exempt from one or more of the following:

- a) one or more of the written papers;
- b) essay/report/dissertation;
- c) assessment of coursework;
- d) practical examinations;
- e) clinical examinations;
- f) oral examination.

1.5.7 Where associated programmes (Certificates or Diplomas) exist, students who are unsuccessful on a Master's or Diploma programme may however be awarded the qualification for which they have satisfied the outcomes and assessment criteria.

1.5.8 **Re-entry**

A candidate who does not at his/her first entry successfully complete the examination or part of the examination for which he/she has entered may, subject to the agreement of the Head of the Department when such re-entry would involve further attendance at the College, re-enter that examination on one occasion. Such re-entry will be at the next following examination except where the College has granted permission for a candidate to defer re-entry until the examination in a subsequent year. The dates of the written examination and for the submission of an essay/report/dissertation (where required) shall be as specified in the individual Programme Requirements.

A candidate re-entering any part of the examination will normally only be credited with a bare pass mark if successful. Re-entry candidates may also not normally be considered for a merit or distinction classification. However, where illness has affected a candidate's performance at an examination, or there are other mitigating circumstances, the Board of Examiners has discretion to credit the candidate with the actual marks achieved in his/her re-entry examination.

1.5.9 **Illness**

A candidate who is prevented owing to their pregnancy or illness or the illness or the death of a near relative or other cause judged sufficient by the Graduate School from completing at the normal time the examination or part of the examination in those elements in which he/she has entered may, at the discretion of the examiners, a) enter the examination in those elements in which he/she was not able to be examined on the next occasion that the examination is held in order to complete the examination;

OR

b) be set a special examination in those elements of the examination missed as soon as possible and/or be permitted to submit any work prescribed (e.g. report) at a date specified by the Board of Examiners concerned. The special examination shall be in the same format as specified in the Programme Requirements for the element(s) missed and subject to the approval of the external examiners in the usual way.

1.5.10 Where a candidate has failed to complete the examination for one of the reasons specified in 1.5.9 above, the course organiser should make an application on his/her behalf accompanied by the medical certificate or other statement of the grounds on which the application is made, direct to the Board of Examiners within seven days of the last day of the written examination or for the submission of the essay/report/dissertation.

1.5.11 When a candidate who is prevented by his/her own illness, or by the death of a near relative or other cause judged sufficient by the Graduate School, from taking all or part of the written examination, submits his/her report etc. at the time originally prescribed, the candidate may apply to have the examination entry fee paid credited to the next following occasion on which the examination is held, provided he/she is not seeking immediate re-examination by means of special papers.

1.6 Notification of Results

1.6.1 After the examiners have reached a decision through a meeting of the Board of Examiners for the programme, every candidate will be notified of the result of his/her examination including marks obtained under the authority of the Academic Registrar.

1.6.2 A diploma under the Seal of the College shall be subsequently delivered to each candidate who has been awarded a Master's degree, Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate. A candidate shall only be entitled to receive a diploma in respect of the award for which they are registered at graduation.