

CORE REGULATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATES

DEFINITIONS

1. In these Regulations, the following definitions apply:

A Programme of Study is an approved pathway of study leading to a particular named award of the University consisting of a defined combination of study at an appropriate Level or Levels.

An Integrated Programme of Study is an approved pathway of study leading to a particular named award of the University consisting of a defined combination of modules at an appropriate Level or Levels, preceded by a period of intensive English Language instruction normally of 4, 8 or 12 weeks in duration.

A Module is a defined course of study which is self contained and which receives a specified number of Credits. A single module at Level 4 is worth 15 or 20 credits; larger modules are worth multiples of 15 or 20 credits. A double or triple module cannot be divided into single modules and must be taken and assessed as a whole. A single module cannot be sub-divided. Credits are gained when a student has satisfied the Board of Examiners in respect of the assessment requirements for the module concerned.

A student who takes a mixture of 15- and 20-credit modules in his/her programme must take at least the minimum number of credits required for the qualification for which he/she is registered. In some cases it may be necessary to take slightly more credits than the minimum number to accommodate a mixture of module valencies.

Each module is set at a given Level of study appropriate to its learning outcomes and is assessed against criteria appropriate to that Level. Certain modules may be defined in Programme Regulations as prerequisites for study of certain other modules at a higher or equivalent level. Not all modules listed in the Programme regulations for a given degree programme may be available in any one year.

Students are not permitted to register for the same module on more than one occasion.

Modules may be assessed using a variety of methods. The mode(s) of assessment of each module shall be as agreed by the Board of Studies and as approved by the appropriate Faculty Education Committee

A Level refers to the stage of study and indicates the intellectual challenge of a module or a year of study within a programme of study. The University's Level Descriptors provide a common framework for this. The following numbering is used in relation to Levels of study:

Level 3 = third year full-time undergraduate, typically equivalent to Honours degree level (*FHEQ Level 6*).

Level 4 = first year full-time postgraduate, typically equivalent to Masters degree level (*FHEQ Level 7*).

Level 5 = typically equivalent to Doctoral degree level (*FHEQ Level 8*).

PRE-CONDITIONS FOR THE AWARD OF A PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE

2. To qualify for the award of a Professional Doctorate of the University, a student must:

- (a) be approved by the department concerned as a candidate for the degree;
- (b) present a satisfactory thesis after completing a course of taught modules and independent research in accordance with these Core Regulations and the Programme Regulations of the degree for which they are registered;
- (c) satisfy the examiners in a written examination and in a thesis or in such other assessment requirements as prescribed in the Programme Regulations of the degree for which he/she is registered.

3. **The Professional Doctorate shall not normally be awarded until after the completion of the minimum required period of supervised study.**

ADMISSION

4. Applicants must be graduates of this or another approved University or possess some other qualification approved by the Education Committee. Normally an upper second class Honours degree or equivalent in a subject relevant to the proposed course of study is required, unless otherwise specified in the Programme Regulations.

5. Students admitted to a Professional Doctoral programme not already matriculated in the University must matriculate during the first term of the course. As a matriculation requirement, students whose first language is not English must have shown evidence of their general proficiency in the English language.

INTEGRATED PRE-SESSIONAL PROGRAMME

6. Any programme of study may begin with a period of intensive English Language study, normally of 4, 8 or 12 weeks duration, as part of an integrated programme of study. Students undertaking this pre-sessional provision as part of an integrated programme of study will be required, at the end of the 4, 8 or 12 week period, to meet the agreed English Language progression requirements as defined for their main academic programme and agreed by Education Committee. Any student who does not meet this requirement will be required to withdraw. A student who meets the progression requirements at threshold level may be required to undertake a further period of English Language instruction as outlined in paragraph 12.

RESIDENCE

7. **Students are required to be members of a College/Society of the University.**

PROGRESS AND ATTENDANCE

8. Each programme shall last from the start date of the programme for the period of study required for the award. **All students are required to fulfil their academic commitments as provided in paragraph 1 of Section V of the University General Regulations. Failure to do so will render a student liable to be required to withdraw from the University under the provisions of that section.**

9. **The Board of Studies may permit the interruption of a candidate's programme of study for a period to be specified by the Committee in each instance. This period may not be more than 12 months in any one instance, and extensions to a 12 month suspension of study will not normally be granted. A student will only be permitted to suspend for more than 24 months consecutively in exceptional circumstances. Students who wish to suspend studies beyond this point will be required to withdraw, and advised to re-apply to the University (if they so wish) when they are in a position to do so.**

10. During a period of study, students shall maintain such contact with the Programme Director or his/her nominee, and provide the Programme Director or his/her nominee with such evidence of progress, as he/she may require.

11. **Students undertaking full-time study may accept paid teaching, demonstrating and other research work in the University if the time given thereto, including time required for preparation, does not exceed six hours per week.** Students are required to comply with any additional requirements of any sponsor of their programme of study.

12. Students wishing to spend a period away from Durham for the purposes of their programme of study or for other good reason must obtain permission from the appropriate Board of Studies. When the nature of the research requires that work be undertaken at an institution outside Durham, the Board of Studies may appoint an additional supervisor. Students shall maintain such contact with their supervisors and provide them with such evidence of progress as they may require.

13. If it should appear during the first term of his/her programme of study that a student's attainment in the English language is not fully adequate for his/her study, the student may be required by the Board of Studies to undertake, at his/her own expense, an approved course of instruction in the English language or to withdraw. At the end of such a course the Committee will then either satisfy itself that the student has become competent to proceed with his/her study or require that his/her registration be terminated. If the student is deemed competent to proceed, the Board of Studies shall determine in each individual case whether any of the period spent in receiving English language instruction may be counted towards the requirements for the programme for which he/she is registered.

14. Candidates registered for the thesis and their supervisors must submit reports on progress each year to the Academic Office. The procedures for these reports will be communicated by the Academic Office.

PROGRAMME REGULATIONS

15. Each programme shall be as specified in the Programme Regulations.

16. A student's choice of modules shall be subject to the approval of the Board of Studies responsible for the programme. In the case of a module chosen from another Board of Studies, the approval of that Board of Studies will also be required.

17. The professional doctorate consists of taught modules to the value of 180 credits and independent research to the value of 360 credits.

18. A student must gain credits as follows subject to the requirements of the relevant programme regulations:

- a) **for the award of a Professional Doctorate: a total of at least 540 credits, including at least 180 credits from taught modules (including at least 150 credits at level 4) and at least 360 credits of independent research at level 5.**
- b) **for the award of a Master of Philosophy: a total of at least 540 credits, including at least 180 credits from taught modules (including at least 150 credits at level 4) and at least 360 credits of independent research at level 4.**
- c) **for the award of a Masters degree: a total of at least 180 credits including at least 150 credits at level 4.**
- d) **for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma: a total of at least 120 credits including at least 90 credits at level 4.**
- e) **for the award of a Postgraduate Certificate: a total of at least 60 credits, including at least 40 credits at level 4.**

19. A student may be awarded a named award at a lower level than the award for which he/she is registered provided that the student has gained the necessary credits for the lower level award as per regulation 18 above. Unless otherwise stated in the Programme regulations all named Professional Doctorates may be awarded at MPhil, Masters, Diploma or Certificate level.

20. Credits may only be counted towards one award and on one occasion only.

ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

THE TAUGHT MODULES

21. The taught modules to be studied for a given programme and their credit weighting shall be as defined in the Programme Regulations of the programme.

22. Students shall undertake the assessments for the taught modules as required for a programme at the times specified in the Programme Regulations.

23. Each taught module shall be marked according to the table outlined below:

Marking Levels for Each Unit of Assessment	
PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATES, MASTERS DEGREES, POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATES AND DIPLOMAS	
% Mark	
70-100	Distinction
60 – 69	Merit
50-69	Pass
0-49	Fail

24. Students taking a Professional Doctorate programme in part-time mode must normally take the dissertation/thesis proposal/major project module in the final year of taught study, any research methods module before the final year of taught study, and as equal a division of credits between the years of study as possible.

25. The pass mark for Professional Doctorates, Masters programmes, Postgraduate Diplomas and Postgraduate Certificates is 50% which must be achieved overall in each of the taught modules. A student wishing to progress to the research phase of a Professional Doctorate degree must obtain an overall average mark of at least 60% in the assessment of their taught modules, after resits if necessary as set out below. Any student who does not obtain an overall average mark of at least 60% will be required to withdraw from their Professional Doctorate.

26. Notwithstanding the requirements detailed in paragraph 25 above up to 45 credits for a Professional Doctorate or Masters degree, up to 30 credits for a Postgraduate diploma and up to 20 credits for a Postgraduate Certificate will be gained compensation provided that:

- a) a mark of not less than 40% has been obtained in each of the modules to be compensated, and the overall average for all the modules taken including the module(s) to be compensated is at least 50%;
- b) the achievement of the learning outcomes of the programme is not compromised by failure in the module(s) concerned. The regulations for each programme indicate which module(s) may not be passed by compensation because failure in those modules would compromise the achievement of the learning outcomes of the programme.
- c) the module(s) to be compensated are not identified as pre-requisite(s) for progression. The regulations for each programme indicate which module(s) may not be passed by compensation because failure in those modules would prevent progression.
- d) the actual mark received for modules passed by compensation will be taken forward to the averaging process for the classification of the degree and will be entered on the student's transcript.

27. All work submitted for assessment must be in a form suitable for assessment by external examiners and shall be available to the external examiners on request.

28. A student who is unable due to illness or other good cause to submit course work, other than the thesis, for assessment by the required date may apply to the Chair of the Board of Examiners or his/her nominee for an extension of that date. A student who is unable to present a thesis may similarly apply to the appropriate Faculty Education Committee for an extension of that date, to be determined by the Committee in the light of the known circumstances.

29. A Board of Examiners has the power to exercise discretion to take account of particular circumstances if it considers it right to do so in the proper discharge of its duties. Such circumstances shall include, but not be restricted to, personal mitigating circumstances. Boards

of Examiners may also take into account academic factors such as the overall pattern of marks gained by a student and the relative significance of various modules for the learning outcomes of the programme. The views of an External Examiner must be particularly influential in the case of disagreement within the Board of Examiners on the mark to be awarded for a particular unit of assessment, or on the final level of award to be derived from the array of marks of a particular student.

30. **Where a student is being considered for the award of a masters degree, postgraduate certificate or postgraduate diploma, if the student's arithmetic means falls no more than 2% below a classification boundary, the board of examiners must consider whether to award the higher classification by exercise of discretion. In order to be considered for the award of distinction by discretion a student must have obtained either a mark of 70% in their dissertation or an arithmetic mean of 70%, and a mark of at least 68% and less than 70% in relation to the other criteria for the award of a distinction. In order to be considered for the award of a merit by discretion, a student must have obtained either a mark of 60% in their dissertation or an arithmetic mean of 60%, and a mark of at least 58% and less than 60% in relation to the other criteria for the award of a merit. Boards of Examiners may only consider exercising discretion to raise a classification for a student whose arithmetic mean falls outside this 2% range where there are personal mitigating circumstances, or a combination of personal mitigating circumstances and academic factors, that warrant such consideration.**

Re-examination

31. **Students who achieve an average mark of less than 50% in any taught module are allowed one further attempt to pass the module. The total number of taught modules which a student may resit must total no more than half the total credit value of their programme's taught modules, excluding the dissertation/thesis proposal/major project module. Students who achieve a mark of less than 50% in the dissertation/thesis proposal/major project module at the first attempt are allowed one further opportunity to resubmit. The resit or resubmission (without repeating the module itself) shall normally be at the time of the next normal assessment of the module component(s) concerned. Any alternative arrangements for re-examination shall be as specified in the Programme Regulations of the programme.**

32. **The mark for any module following a resit shall be capped at 50%.**

THE RESEARCH THESIS

33. Candidates must complete all assessments for the taught modules satisfactorily before submitting their thesis.

34. Candidates are required to complete a thesis as specified within the programme regulations. The thesis will be worth at least 360 credits at level 5.

35. A thesis may be presented at any time within one calendar year from the date on which the candidate completed the required period of study.

36. The assessment criteria for professional doctorates are as follows: **Candidates are required to demonstrate the ability to analyse, test and criticise ideas in an independent study of literature related to a specific theme and understand how the special theme is related to a wider field of knowledge. Candidates must also demonstrate mastery of the special theme, the ability to evaluate ideas within it, and present a body of independent research which has the potential to enhance an area of professional practice. The thesis should contain an original contribution to knowledge. It should include matter worthy of publication, though it need not be submitted in a form suitable for publication.**

SUBMISSION OF THESIS

37. A student who is unable due to illness or other good cause to submit their thesis for assessment by the required date, may apply to the appropriate Deputy Executive Dean (or their nominee) for an extension to that date, to be determined by the Committee in the light of the known circumstances.

38. The thesis must be submitted in accordance with the "Rules for the Submission of Work for Higher Degrees". The appropriate forms which must accompany the submission of a thesis must be obtained from the Academic Office.

ORAL EXAMINATION

39. **The thesis will be assessed by an internal and an external examiner in an oral examination.** In exceptional circumstances, the appropriate Deputy Executive Dean (or their nominee) may, on sufficient grounds submitted by the examiners, dispense the candidate from the oral examination.

Re-examination

40. **Candidates who have not satisfied the examiners for the degree may be permitted by the appropriate Deputy Executive Dean (or their nominee), on the recommendations of the examiners, to submit their thesis in a revised form on only one occasion. Such candidates will be required to submit their thesis in a revised form within one calendar year. If both examiners find the revised thesis acceptable no further oral examination is required. If the examiners do not find the revised thesis acceptable a second oral examination must be held.**

41. Candidates who at the first examination submit a satisfactory thesis but who fail to satisfy the examiners in the oral examination may be permitted by the appropriate Deputy Executive Dean (or their nominee), on the recommendation of the examiners, to submit themselves for a second oral examination or a written examination within six months.

42. A candidate who has failed to satisfy the examiners that he/she has achieved the standard required for the degree which he/she is registered but who, in the opinion of the examiners, has reached the standard required for the award of an appropriate alternative degree may be permitted by the appropriate Deputy Executive Dean (or their nominee), on the recommendation of the examiners proceed to that degree. Candidates permitted to proceed to a research degree shall arrange for their thesis to be bound for presentation for the appropriate degree in accordance with the "Rules for the Submission of Work for Higher Degrees" before a pass list may be issued.

RIGHT OF APPEAL

43. In accordance with the Academic Appeals Regulations contained in Section VII of the General Regulations in the University Calendar, a student registered for a professional doctorate may appeal against academic decisions relating to his/her candidature.