

## University of Birmingham

### Paper outlining proposed amendments to the Degree of MD

#### Topic and Purpose of the Paper

1. APRC is asked to **consider**, and if thought appropriate, **approve** an amendment to Regulations 6.2.3 (a), governing the maximum period of study permitted for programmes prescribed for research degrees of the University, and 7.4.8 (b), governing transfer from Masters by Research to PhD.

#### Consultation

2. The amendments were requested by the Graduate School Committee in the College of Medical and Dental Sciences in order to regularise existing procedure.

#### Proposals/Recommendations

3. That the period of normal registration will remain as 2 years (part-time). However, it is recommended that the length of the write-up period is reduced from 4 years to 2 years thereby making the maximum period of registration 4 years instead of 6 years. The Graduate School Committee proposes that the changes to write-up period should affect only new students from the 2011 intake. Current students should remain on the maximum write-up period of 4 years (with the maximum period of registration at 6 years). As Regulations are not cohort specific, an exception would need to be made to ensure that current students remain on the maximum registration period of 6 years, and are therefore not disadvantaged by the changes. Regulation 6.2.3 (a) would then need to be amended as follows:

*6.2.3 (a) The minimum and maximum periods of study permitted for programmes prescribed for research degrees of the University shall be:*

<i>Award</i>	<i>Minimum period</i>	<i>Maximum period</i>
<i>One-year MRes</i>	<i>1 year (full-time)</i>	<i>2 years (full-time)</i>
<i>One-year MPhil (Mode A)</i>	<i>1 year (full-time)</i>	<i>2 years (full-time)</i>
<i>One-year MPhil (Mode B)</i>	<i>1 year (full-time)</i>	<i>2 years (full-time)</i>
<i>MMus</i>	<i>1 year (full-time)</i>	<i>2 years (full-time)</i>
<i>Two-year MPhil</i>	<i>2 years (full-time)</i>	<i>3 years (full-time)</i>
<i>Professional Doctorate</i>	<i>3 years (full-time)</i>	<i>4 years (full-time)</i>
<i>PhD</i>	<i>3 years (full-time)</i>	<i>4 years (full-time)</i>
<i>PhD with Integrated Study</i>	<i>4 years (full-time)</i>	<i>5 years (full-time)</i>
<i>EngD</i>	<i>4 years (full-time)</i>	<i>5 years (full-time)</i>
<i>DDS</i>	<i>2 years (part-time)</i>	<i>6 years (part-time)</i>
<i>MD</i>	<i>2 years (part-time)</i>	<i><del>6</del> 4 years (part-time)</i>

4. That applicants are registered on the MPhil/MD from the date of first registration rather than the MD. Regulation 7.4.8 (b) to be amended as follows:

*7.4.8 (b) Transfer from Masters by Research to a PhD Doctoral programme*

*Transfer to a PhD Doctoral programme may be permitted:*

- (i) *After the award of the Masters by Research degree.*  
*In such cases Registered Students may apply for admission to a ~~PhD~~ Doctoral programme after being awarded the Masters by Research degree. If the proposed area of research for the ~~PhD~~ Doctoral degree is deemed by the Senate or a delegated authority to be sufficiently closely related to the research done by the Registered Student for the Masters by Research degree, then the period of study taken for the degree of Masters by Research will be deducted from the time required for the ~~PhD~~ Doctoral programme. In such cases, the Masters by Research degree must be returned to the University before the ~~PhD~~ Doctoral degree may be awarded;*
- (ii) *After successful completion of the Masters by Research programme but before the degree has been awarded.*  
*Provided the Registered Student has passed any taught modules, the examiners, when recommending the award of the degree of Masters by Research, may also recommend that a Registered Student should have the option of proceeding to further work for the Doctoral degree of ~~PhD~~. If the Registered Student opts to transfer to the ~~PhD~~ Doctoral programme, then the Masters by Research will not be awarded. The time limit for the ~~PhD~~ Doctoral programme will be calculated from the initial date of registration for the Masters by Research;*
- (iii) *or after a minimum of nine months' full-time study for the Masters by Research programme:*  
*Transfer to the Doctoral degree of ~~PhD~~ may be permitted by the Senate or under delegated authority, provided that the Registered Student has passed any taught elements and produced a satisfactory report or detailed research proposal in accordance with the Principal Academic Unit or College's requirements. The time limits for the ~~PhD~~ Doctoral programme will be calculated from the initial date of registration for the Masters by Research*
- 7.4.8 (c) *A Registered Student who has transferred to ~~the PhD~~ a Doctoral programme and subsequently withdraws or fails to reach the required standard for the Award of the ~~PhD~~ Doctoral degree will be entitled to the Award of the degree of Masters by Research, provided that the Registered Student has satisfied the requirements for the Masters by Research degree.*

### **Arguments to Support Proposals**

5. The write-up period of 2 years is broadly consistent with practice in other Medical Schools (see Appendix 2). It is unclear from the original discussions why a write-up period of 4 years was recommended and this is too long a time period when considering that many of the registrants will have returned to full-time clinical duties on completion of the 2 years of normal registration. A write-up period of 2 years allows for the research work undertaken for the thesis still to be current at the point of submission.
6. It is of key importance that the 1<sup>st</sup> year is seen as a qualifying year by the student and progress to MD is not an automatic right unless recommended by the supervisors and the School. At the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> year of registration, students will be permitted to transfer to MD subject to the demonstration of satisfactory academic progress by completion of GRS3 form and substantial

continuation report. The continuation report should demonstrate the student's understanding of the subject and ability to pursue MD-level research. Should sufficient progress not be made, students will be encouraged to submit for MPhil, or else to demonstrate significant improvement over the subsequent 12 months. Mechanisms by which there can be integration with the relevant Deanery/Specialty School regarding yearly ARCP will be explored.

### **Appendix 1: Summary of current regulations and eligibility**

Registration for the degree of MD is open to all applicants holding an MBChB or equivalent primary medical qualification recognised for full registration by the GMC (UK) and in possession of an honorary or substantive appointment of the University of Birmingham. Candidates should be carrying out their research in the Birmingham or one of its associated hospitals. External Registration (ie: when the research is being carried out outside of Birmingham and/or its associated hospitals) is not permitted.

The period of registration is a minimum of two years and a maximum of six years and is examined by research and thesis. Registration is only permitted on a part-time basis. The degree is awarded to a successful candidate after a period of research normal in clinical medical sciences. The study must culminate in the completion of an original work of merit, all or a significant part of which must be worthy of publication in a learned journal. The examiners will conduct a viva voce examination of the candidate based on the thesis.

The word limit for an MD thesis is 50,000 words (excluding footnotes, appendices and bibliography).

**Appendix 2: Summary of Other HEIs Medical School MD minimum/maximum registration**

Institution	Degree	Minimum Period	Maximum Period	Full/Part time
University of Aberdeen	MD	24 months	66 months	Part-time
University of Edinburgh	MD	18 months	60 months	Part-time
Imperial College London	MD	24 months	48 months	Full-time
Imperial College London	MD	48 months	72 months	Part-time
University of Leicester	MD	24 months	60 months	Part-time
University of London	MD (Res)	24 months	48 months	Full-time
University of London	MD (Res)	36 months	72 months	Part-time
University of Manchester	MD	24 months	48 months	Part-time
University of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne	MD	24 months	Not known	Full-time
University of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne	MD	48 months	Not known	Part-time
University of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne	MD	12 months	24 months	Combined Full-/Part time
University of Nottingham	DM	48 months	96 months	Part-time
University of Sheffield	MD	24 months	36 months	Full-time
University of Sheffield	MD	48 months	72 months	Part-time

**Information Sources for Appendix 2**

University of Aberdeen:

<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/~wmm024/prospective/mdchm.php>

Imperial College London:

<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/registry/proceduresandregulations/regulations#regstud>

University of Leicester:

<http://www2.le.ac.uk/colleges/medbiopsych/teaching/postgraduate/md>

University of London:

[http://www.london.ac.uk/research\\_degrees.html?&no\\_cache=1&sword\\_list\[\]=regulations](http://www.london.ac.uk/research_degrees.html?&no_cache=1&sword_list[]=regulations)

University of Manchester:

<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=5684>

University of Sheffield:

<http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/medicine/prospectivepg/md>

University of Edinburgh

[http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/09-10/regulations/mvm\\_postgrad.php](http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/09-10/regulations/mvm_postgrad.php)

University of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/research/degreeoptions/md.htm>

University of Nottingham

<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/quality-manual/QAstructures/UNQF.htm>

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