

6 October 2010

Request for Exemption from Specified Regulations for the PhD with Integrated Study in Physical Science of Imaging in the Biomedical Sciences

Purpose of Paper

1. APRC is asked to **consider**, and if thought appropriate, **approve** an exemption from regulations for the PhD with Integrated Study in Physical Science of Imaging in the Biomedical Sciences (PSIBS) for implementation in 2010/11.

Proposal

2. That the PhD with Integrated Study PSBIS shall be granted an exemption from regulation 7.3.2 (a) (iii) in order to allow a student to graduate, but not progress, with a MSc having achieved a proportional number of credits at Level M, i.e. two-thirds of the 90 taught credits available
7.3.2 (a) (iii) states:
A registered student must:
Have gained at least 80 credits at Level M in modules taken as part of the taught component on the programme; and
Have gained credit in dissertation components with a total credit value of 60 credits at level M taken during the course of the programme and
Have gained a weighted mean mark of at least 50 in the taught component of the programme; and
Have achieved a mark of 40 or more in all taught modules.
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3. That the duration of this exemption run alongside the two other Exemptions from Regulations (five years in the first instance) that have already been approved.

Background

4. The PhD with Integrated Study in Immunology and the PhD with Integrated Study in the Physical Science of Imaging in the Biological Sciences are the only doctoral programmes within the University that offer a masters degree in addition to a doctoral award. This reflects the unusual structure of both programmes, as they use the first year of the four-year programme to train students to a level where they are capable of undertaking doctoral research, a level of training which is practically identical to the requirements of a taught master's degree.

5. The MSc programme structure differs from that of a standard MSc course at Birmingham in that it has 90 credits of taught material and 90 credits of research material rather than the standard MSc split of 120:60 taught modules to dissertation. The programme was granted approval by APRC for this exemption from regulations (see APRC.09.05.15).
6. When regulation 7.3.2 (a) (iii) is applied to the PSIBS programme, students can be disadvantaged. A PSIBS student only has 90 taught credits, and applying the regulation would mean that the student can fail only one 10 credit taught module to gain 'at least 80 credits at level M in modules taken as part of the taught component', rather than the 40 credits for standard MSc programmes.

Argument to Support Proposal

7. That the programme be exempted from regulation 7.3.2.(a) (iii) but that the principle of proportionality be applied to those students wishing to exit the PSIB programme after one year with an MSc, i.e. that students on the PSIB programme should
 - Have gained at least **60** credits at Level M in modules taken as part of the taught component on the programme; and*
 - Have gained credit in dissertation components with a total credit value of **90** credits at level M taken during the course of the programme and*
 - Have gained a weighted mean mark of at least 50 in the taught component of the programme; and have achieved a mark of 40 or more in all taught modules.*

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