UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

REGULATIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

SECTION 6 - PROGRAMMES OF STUDY

Executive Brief

Sets out the requirements, such as credit requirements and minimum / maximum duration, for all categories of Programmes of Study offered by the University.

Section 6. Programmes of Study

6.1. Programmes of Study

6.1.1 Programme Approval

6.1.1 (a) The Senate or delegated authority shall approve the introduction of all programmes of study.

6.1.1 (b) The University shall normally recruit and admit Students to a programme of study only once the programme has been approved; however, in circumstances where a programme has not yet received the approval of Senate, and enrolment has already commenced, this may be approved by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Quality and Students), with the decision being communicated to Senate by circulation.

6.1.2 Taught Programmes

Introduction

6.1.2 (a) A programme consists of a set of modules, which together have a defined set of learning outcomes including intellectual and practical skills, and which a Registered Student must complete to the satisfaction of a Board of Examiners in order to be eligible for the Award. Certain programmes may also include clinical training and other elements, which a Registered Student must complete to the satisfaction of the Board of Examiners.

6.1.2 (b) A Registered Student may be awarded only one University qualification following completion of a programme.

6.1.2 Modules

6.1.2 (c) Modules shall only be advertised and have Registered Students registered upon them once they have been approved by the Senate or delegated authority.

6.1.2 (d) All modules must be defined by level and credit value. The level of a module is an indicator of the relative complexity, depth of study and the learner autonomy involved in the module, and the demands made by the module. It does not necessarily coincide with the stage or year of the programme in which the module is taken. Level criteria shall be approved by the Senate or under delegated authority.

6.1.2 (e) The University defines levels on the following progressive scale:

- Level 0/F Foundation Level
- Level 1/C Certificate Level Equivalent to undergraduate year 1
- Level 2/I Intermediate Level Equivalent to undergraduate year 2
- Level 3/4/H Honours Level Equivalent to undergraduate year 3
- Level M Masters Level
- Level D Doctoral Level

6.1.2 (f) Only one level may be assigned to a module, although there may be occasions when it is possible for some or all of the content to be delivered in common for modules at different levels. In these instances, the modules will be clearly differentiated by separate learning outcomes and assessment and will be identified by separate module code numbers.

6.1.2 (g) The credit values of modules shall be expressed in multiples of 10 credits up to a maximum of 60 credits, unless otherwise permitted by the Senate or under delegated authority. As an exception, study undertaken as a year abroad/in industry may be defined in terms of a single module of 120 credits.

6.1.2 (h) All modules shall have a module description which shall include: the Principal Academic Unit and member(s) of staff responsible for the module; its title, code number, level and credit value; any co-requisites, pre-requisites and/or prohibited combinations; the form of delivery and where applicable the semester in which it is delivered; the objectives and learning outcomes; an overview of the content; the key texts and means of assessment.

6.1.2 (i) Programme Specification and Requirements

A programme shall have a programme specification which shall include the information prescribed by the Senate or by a delegated authority.

6.1.2 (j) The specific requirements for every Award of the University approved by the Senate or under delegated authority are detailed in the programme requirements. Programme requirements must include, as appropriate, the reference number, title, level and credit value of the modules to be completed, clearly indicating which modules are compulsory or optional, together with any information about other additional elements which may be required for the award. The programme requirements shall specify the duration of the programme. Where a programme is to be delivered in several different modes, the programme duration for each mode shall be specified.

6.1.2 (k) In certain circumstances, as detailed in the programme requirements, Registered Students may be permitted or obliged to take a module outside the main discipline chosen from a list of such modules.

6.1.2 (l) The programme requirements may indicate specific modules which must be passed and any other requirements for progression between stages and/or for successful completion of the programme.

6.1.2 (m) All requirements for an Award of the University will normally bear credit. Where exceptions are necessary (e.g. for reasons of professional accreditation) they must be specifically approved by the Senate or under delegated authority.

6.1.2 (n) Programmes may include modules consisting wholly or in part of work-based learning. Such modules shall be specified in programme requirements.

6.1.2 (o) Availability of Programmes

Details of the programmes and modules available to Registered Students, the programme requirements, and methods of assessment shall be published annually by Academic Services on the University website.

6.1.2 (p) Specific Provisions

The following provisions apply to undergraduate programmes of study.

(i) For each Award of the University, a Registered Student shall attempt the full number of credits as outlined below:

Award	Number of credits to be attempted
University Certificate; University Diploma; Advanced Certificate	60 credits
Certificate of Higher Education; BPhil	120 credits
Diploma of Higher Education; Foundation Degree, LLB for Graduates, BD	240 credits
Bachelors degrees	360 credits
Bachelors with an additional year in industry or year abroad; Undergraduate Masters (to include at least 120 credits at level M)	480 credits
Undergraduate Masters with additional year in industry or year abroad (to include at least 120 credits at level M)	600 credits

The credit numbers listed are exclusive of any foundation year taken as part of the award.

(ii) Exceptions to the credit values listed shall be agreed by the Senate or under delegated authority and shall be specified in the programme requirements.

(iii) For single honours degree programmes credits shall be predominantly in the main subject discipline but, unless the Senate or delegated authority agrees otherwise, all such programmes must include the opportunity for Registered Students to take at least 20 credits from outside the main subject.

(iv) For joint honour degree programmes the credits shall normally be distributed on an equal basis to the two subjects at each level. I.e. Registered Students shall attempt 180 credits in total in each of the two subjects split in equal proportions across the levels.

(v) For Major/Minor degree programmes the credits shall normally be distributed on the basis of two thirds to the major subject and one third to the minor subject at each level. i.e. Registered Students shall attempt a total of 240 credits in the Major subject and 120 credits in the

Minor subject split in equal proportions across the levels.

(vi) Each programme comprises a number of stages, at the completion of which a formal decision is taken as appropriate on progress to the next stage or on the award of the qualification. Each stage normally consists of modules amounting to 120 credits (taken, in the case of full-time Registered Students, within a single University session) except stage 3 of undergraduate master's programmes, which consists of 240 credits (taken, in the case of full-time Registered Students, over two University sessions).

(vii) Subject to programme requirements approved by the Senate or under delegated authority, modules taken for a bachelors degree with honours (360 credits or 480 credits) or an undergraduate master's degree (480 credits) shall normally:

- at stage 1 be at level C;
- at stage 2 be at level I, but may include up to 20 credits at level C;
- at stage 3 of a bachelors degree with honours be at level H, but may include up to 20 credits at level I;
- at stage 3 of an undergraduate masters degree be at level H (120 credits) and level M (120 credits), but may include up to 20 credits at level I, substituted for level H modules.

(viii) Where an additional year of study abroad/in industry is included in the programme to which a Registered Student has been admitted, the year abroad shall be regarded, for purposes of credit and progression, as an additional stage between stages 2 and 3. This element of the programme will normally be assessed and contribute to the final degree classification. Where exceptions are necessary (e.g. for years leading to separate qualifications) they must be specifically approved by the Senate or delegated authority. The additional year abroad/in industry shall comprise 120 credits in order to denote the notional learning hours undertaken.

(ix) All Bachelors degree programmes should include at least 20 credits of independent learning (e.g. dissertation, project work) at level I or higher. With joint honours degree programmes the dissertation or project may be in either or both subjects. With Major/Minor degree programmes, a dissertation or project should be taken in the major subject.

(x) Programmes leading to a Foundation Degree qualification should normally include work-based or experiential learning modules of at least 20 credits at each of levels F, C and I.

(xi) Modules which are available on a full-time basis will be taught within a University Session. Where two modules are linked across adjacent semesters within a single University Session they will have an integrated assessment, which generates a single mark unless the Senate or delegated authority agrees otherwise.

6.1.2 (q) The following provisions apply to postgraduate taught and graduate taught programmes.

(i) For each Award of the University, a Registered Student shall attempt at least the full number of credits as outlined below:

Award	Number of credits to be attempted
Taught Postgraduate Degree	180 credits
Postgraduate Diploma; Graduate Diploma	120 credits
Graduate Certificate	60 credits
Postgraduate Certificate	60 credits

(ii) The programme requirements for a programme leading to a taught postgraduate degree shall provide for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate upon completion of appropriate modules, unless the Senate or delegated authority permits an exception.

(iii) Programmes shall consist wholly or mainly of level M modules but may consist partly of credit at levels C, I or H. The maximum total number of credits from modules at levels C, I or H which may contribute to a taught postgraduate degree, postgraduate diploma or postgraduate certificate shall be as follows:

- Taught Postgraduate Degree - 30 credits
- Postgraduate Diploma - 30 credits
- Postgraduate Certificate - 20 credits

(iv) The programme requirements for a programme leading to a Taught Postgraduate Degree shall designate one or more Level M modules to be “dissertation components” which shall (individually or as a collection of related modules with a total credit value of 60) consist of a research project and a substantial piece of written work or such other work as may be accepted by the Senate or delegated authority as equivalent.

6.1.3 Research Degree Programmes

6.1.3 (a) The University defines its research degree programmes as follows:

(i) One-year Master of Philosophy (MPhil)

Either

(Mode A): A programme, normally of one year's duration, in which the key activity is undertaking research, combined with appropriate training. Registered Students must produce a thesis containing research work of merit. Any training is expected to involve no more than the equivalent of 10 to 30 credits from a notional 180 credits for the programme; or

(Mode B): A programme, normally of one year's duration, of training in

research with an emphasis on the acquisition of research skills. The programme of 180 credits comprises between 30 and 70 credits of training in research and generic skills, together with between 110 and 150 credits in the form of one or more research report(s) and/or a thesis. Any remaining credits may be allocated to research or taught modules.

(ii) MMus

A programme, normally of one year's duration, of training in research with an emphasis on the acquisition of research skills. The programme of 180 credits comprises 60 credits of training in research and generic skills, together with 120 credits in the form of a research project.

(iii) One year Master of Research (MRes)

A programme, normally of one year's duration of training in research with an emphasis on the acquisition of research skills. The programme of 180 credits comprises between 30 and 70 credits of training in research and generic skills, together with between 110 and 150 credits in the form of one or more research report(s) and/or a thesis. Any remaining credits may be allocated to research or taught modules.

(iv) Two-year Master of Philosophy (MPhil)/Master of Letters (MLitt)

A programme, normally of two years' duration, in which the key activity is undertaking research, combined with appropriate training. Registered Students must produce a thesis containing original work of merit, worthy of publication. The training is expected to involve no more than the equivalent of 20 to 50 credits spread over the two years from a notional 360 credits for the programme.

(v) Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

A programme, normally of three years' duration, in which the key activity is undertaking research, combined with appropriate training. Registered Students must produce a thesis which makes an original contribution to knowledge, worthy of publication in whole or in part in a learned journal. The programme may include the equivalent of up to 120 credits of research training spread over a notional 540 credits for the three years of the programme.

(vi) Doctor of Philosophy with Integrated Study (PhD with Integrated Study)

A programme, normally of four years' duration, which integrates research with taught postgraduate work in a range of skills and subject focused courses, up to a maximum of 120 credits. Registered Students must produce a thesis which makes an original contribution to knowledge, worthy of publication in whole or in part in a learned journal.

(vii) Professional Doctorate (ClinPsyD, EdD, ThD, EdPsychD, SocSciD, Foren.Psy.D, HScD, HScD(Clin), DBA, DPT)

A programme, normally of three years' duration, which integrates taught postgraduate work and/or professional practice with research within a

programme of 540 credits. Registered Students are assessed by a combination of written examinations, project report(s), dissertation or thesis which collectively make an original contribution to knowledge, worthy of publication. The programme comprises research related work (training and thesis or dissertation) and no more than 120 credits of subject-focused taught courses spread over the three years of the programme.

(viii) Doctor of Engineering (EngD)

A programme, normally of four years' duration which integrates research with taught postgraduate work up to a maximum of 180 credits. Registered Students must produce a thesis which makes an original contribution to knowledge, worthy of publication in whole or in part in a learned journal.

(ix) Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS)

A part-time programme, normally of two years' duration which may include taught postgraduate work up to a maximum of 180 credits. Registered Students must produce a thesis which makes an original contribution to knowledge, worthy of publication in whole or in part in a learned journal or equivalent.

(x) Doctor of Medicine (MD)

A part-time programme, normally of two years' duration which may include taught postgraduate work up to a maximum of 180 credits. Registered Students must produce a thesis which makes an original contribution to knowledge, worthy of publication in whole or in part in a learned journal.

(b) All Registered Students shall be required during their research programme to undertake training in research methods and/or skills relevant to their needs, which may include discipline-based courses. The nature, timing and extent of training which the Registered Student is to undertake will be determined by agreement with the supervisor(s) within the range specified for each programme above.

(c) Principal Academic Units may grant exemption from specified research training where a Registered Student is able to demonstrate relevant prior experience or acquisition of expertise.

6.1.4 Research Degree Programmes with Taught Elements

6.1.4 (a) The Professional Doctorate (including the EngD), PhD with Integrated Study, MMus, MRes and MPhil (B) are programmes consisting of a set of modules and a set of one of more reports. The modules have a defined set of learning outcomes including intellectual and practical skills which a Registered Student must complete to the satisfaction of a Board of Examiners in order to be eligible for the Award.

6.1.4 (b) For these programmes the following regulations in relation to modules and

programme specifications shall apply: 6.1.2 (b) to 6.1.2 (o), above.

6.1.4 (c) Programmes may include modules consisting wholly or in part of work-based learning. Such modules shall be specified in programme requirements.

6.1.4 (d) All modules should be at level M or above, unless there are specific elements of the programme which make lower level study relevant. In this instance, the number of credits below level M should not exceed 20 credits at Level H or in exceptional circumstances at lower levels. Where any lower level credits are incorporated into a programme this should be added to the programme requirements and a rationale given for inclusion.

6.1.4 (e) The programme requirements for programmes leading to a Professional Doctorate (including the EngD), PhD with Integrated Study, MMus, MRes and MPhil(B) may provide for the award of a Postgraduate Certificate or a Masters degree upon completion of appropriate modules, unless Senate or delegated authority permits an exception.

6.2. Duration of Programmes

6.2.1 Undergraduate Programmes of Study

6.2.1 (a) The minimum and maximum periods of study permitted for programmes prescribed for Undergraduate awards of the University shall be as follows. The maximum period

Award	Minimum period	Maximum period
Bachelors (unless otherwise stated below)	3 years	9 years
BPhil	1 year	3 years
LLB for Graduates, BA in Community Justice (Probation Studies), BD	2 years	6 years
BNurs, Bachelors, including year in industry or additional year abroad	4 years	12 years
BDS, MBChB	5 years	12 years
Undergraduate Masters	4 years	12 years
Undergraduate Masters including year in industry or additional year abroad	5 years	12 years
Foundation Degree	2 years	6 years

Certificates of Higher Education	1 year	3 years
Diploma of Higher Education	2 years	6 years
University Certificate, University Diploma, Advanced Certificate	1 semester (or equivalent).	3 years

6.2.1 (b) Foundation years, when taken, shall extend the minimum period of prescribed study by a period of at least one year beyond the periods listed in (a) above.

6.2.1 (c) The period of study required in the University of individual Registered Students may be reduced in accordance with any Regulations which the Senate or delegated authority may approve from time to time.

6.2.1 (d) The maximum period within which a Registered Student may complete an award is calculated from the date of first registration to the date of the final award and is three times the minimum period stated in (a) above, subject to an overall maximum of 12 years, except in the case of the University Certificate, University Diploma and Advanced Certificate for which the maximum is 3 years.

6.2.1 (e) Notwithstanding the above, there may be occasions where these time limits are necessarily reduced as a result of the requirements for registration imposed by professional bodies. It is the responsibility of the individual Registered Student to keep informed of the time limits set by the relevant professional body.

6.2.2 Postgraduate and Graduate Taught Programmes of Study

6.2.2 (a) The minimum and maximum periods of study permitted for prescribed for postgraduate and graduate Award shall be:

Award	Minimum period	Maximum period
Taught Postgraduate Degrees	1 year	6 years
Postgraduate Diploma	8 months	4 years
Postgraduate Certificate	4 months	2 years
Graduate Diploma	9 months	4 years 6 months
Graduate Certificate	4 months	3 years

6.2.2 (b) Registered Students are normally expected to complete an Award within the period specified in the programme requirements.

6.2.2 (c) The maximum period within which a Registered Student may complete an award is calculated from the date of first registration to the date of the final Award and is six times the minimum period stated in (a) above except in the case of the Graduate Certificate for which the maximum is 3 years.

6.2.2 (d) Periods of leave of absence are included in the calculation of the maximum period of registration.

6.2.2 (e) In individual cases, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Quality and Students) may approve applications to extend the maximum period of registration to reflect part of or all periods of leave of absence, even when the end date is not specified.

6.2.2 (f) Notwithstanding the above, there may be occasions where these time limits are necessarily reduced as a result of the requirements for registration imposed by professional bodies. It is the responsibility of the individual Registered Student to keep informed of the time limits set by the relevant professional body.

6.2.3 Research Degree Programmes

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

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

6.2.3 (b) The maximum period within which a Registered Student must submit all research elements required for the degree for examination and by which all taught elements must have been completed is calculated from the date of first registration.

6.2.3 (c) In the case of Registered Students studying on a part-time basis these periods should be extended on a pro-rata basis.

6.2.3 (d) The Senate or a delegated authority may at its discretion in individual cases reduce at the time of admission the period of full-time or part time study required of a Registered Student on a research programme by up to one third of the designated full time period of study or the equivalent part time.

6.2.3 (e) The following shall apply in cases where an applicant is currently registered for a research degree at another UK institution and wishes to apply to transfer his or her registration:

(i) The Senate or a delegated authority may normally approve a reduction of up to a maximum of two thirds of the minimum period of registration to take account of the registration period already completed.

(ii) Registration for less than one third of the minimum period of registration will not normally be permitted.

(iii) Requests for transfers from applicants who are at the 'writing up' stage will not be permitted.

(iv) Where an applicant wishes to transfer registration to a research degree programme with taught elements regulation 5.1.2 (b) (ii) will apply.

6.2.3 (f) A full-time Registered Student may be granted permission by the Senate or a delegated authority to study on a part-time basis, or on a full-time basis over a number of separate periods. The Registered Student may combine either or both of these forms of study with full-time study during the programme. When aggregated, the total period of study (including a pro-rata equivalent for part-time study) must equate to at least the minimum period of full-time study as stated in 6.2.3 (a), above and must not exceed the maximum period of time prescribed for the full-time programme.

6.2.3 (g) The Senate or a delegated authority may allow a Registered Student who shows good cause to withdraw temporarily from registration for a period not exceeding twelve months. The Senate or a delegated authority may in exceptional circumstances permit an intermission of one or more further periods not exceeding twelve months each. Such periods shall be excluded when calculating the time limit for the submission of the thesis.

6.3 Delivery

6.3.1 Quality Assurance and Enhancement

6.3.1 All programmes shall be subject to the University's quality assurance system.

6.3.2 Monitoring of Progress and Support/Supervision Arrangements

6.3.2 (a) Registered Students following taught programmes of study

All Registered Students shall be monitored and informed of their individual academic progress as per the Code of Practice for Student Development and Support in Principal Academic Units.

6.3.2 (b) All Registered Students, irrespective of the number of credits completed within a University session, shall have their academic performance formally reviewed by a Board of Examiners at least once within every University Session.

6.3.2 (c) Provision for Registered Student development and support within Principal Academic Units/Colleges shall be as described in the Code of Practice for Student Development and Support in Principal Academic Units/Colleges.

6.3.3 Registered Students Following Research Degree Programmes

6.3.3 (a) Heads of Principal Academic Unit or his or her nominee shall be responsible for the co-ordination of arrangements for supervision of Registered Students on research degree programmes.

6.3.3 (b) A lead supervisor shall be appointed for each Registered Student and Registered Students shall have access to additional academic supervisory support.

6.3.3 (c) It shall be the responsibility of the Head of Principal Academic Unit or his or her nominee, in consultation with the supervisor, to ensure that arrangements are put in place for the supervision of Registered Students during the supervisor's study leave or other periods of absence from the University, or if the supervisor leaves the institution.

6.3.3 (d) A mentor responsible for pastoral support must normally be appointed for each Registered Student. Mentors must normally be appointed from the same or cognate discipline and must be independent of the supervisory team.

6.3.3 (e) Registered Students registered under provision for split location postgraduate research study (see the Code of Practice on Split Location of Postgraduate Research Studies) shall be supervised and monitored by a University supervisor.

6.3.3 (f) Supervision arrangements, including eligibility criteria for supervisors, shall be as specified in Code of Practice on Supervision and Monitoring Progress of Research Students.

6.3.3 (g) Registered Students and supervisors are required to keep in regular and sufficient contact by arrangement, in accordance with the Code of Practice: Supervision and Monitoring Progress of Research Students.

6.3.3 (h) Principal Academic Units/Colleges shall have clear and transparent procedures for monitoring and reviewing the progress of research Registered Students in accordance with the Code of Practice on Supervision and Monitoring progress of Research Students. Registered Students shall be informed in writing of these arrangements.

6.3.3 (i) Principal Academic Units shall establish a Research Progress and Awards Sub-Panel that shall have overall responsibility for monitoring and reviewing

the progress of research Registered Students.

6.3.3 (j) The academic progress of every Registered Student shall be formally monitored at least once in each University session. A formal report of these progress reviews shall be forwarded to the Research Progress and Awards Sub-Panel.

6.3.3 (k) Each School Progress Panel shall meet at least once in each University session to discuss Registered Students' progress and make recommendations as appropriate. These recommendations shall be transmitted via the Head of Principal Academic Unit or his or her nominee to the Senate or a delegated authority for ratification.

6.3.3 (l) If concerns about a Registered Student's lack of progress arise at any time these shall be conveyed to the Chair of the relevant Research Progress and Awards Sub-Panel and Head of Principal Academic Unit or his or her nominee immediately, without waiting for a formal meeting of the Sub-Panel. The Chair of the Sub-Panel and Head of Principal Academic Unit or his or her nominee shall then instigate action as deemed appropriate.

6.3.4 Student Demonstrators and Student Teaching Assistants

6.3.4 The delivery of learning and teaching by Student Demonstrators and Student Teaching Assistants shall be governed by the Code of Practice on the Teaching and Academic Support of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Students by Postgraduate Teaching Assistants and Undergraduates.

6.4 Collaborative Provision

6.4.1 Collaborative arrangements for institutions or organisations offering programmes of study leading to awards of the University or dual or joint awards with other institutions or organisations are subject to these Regulations, but may be subject to separate programme regulations approved by Senate or its delegated authority. In the event of conflict between these Regulations and the separate programme regulations, the separate programme regulations applicable to the collaborative arrangements shall apply. Such institutions or organisations shall not be involved in establishing Regulations for the University of Birmingham, but will be kept informed of any changes.

6.4.2 Any programme regulations should be recorded in the programme specifications. These may only be amended with the consent of Senate or its delegated authority. All quality assurance processes will examine programme-specific regulations.

6.4.3 Those institutions or organisations offering programmes leading to University Awards must ensure their regulations are broadly comparable to those of the University. Senate or its delegated authority will determine whether such regulations are comparable to those of the University.

6.4.4 Registered Students on programmes leading to University Awards have the right to make one final appeal to the University on the grounds of procedural or administrative irregularity in the operation and implementation of the programme regulations on the part of institutions or organisations concerned. Such an appeal may only be undertaken after the appeal procedure of the institution or organisation offering the programme of study has been exhausted.