

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

Academic Year: 2026/2027

**These regulations apply to continuing students that are registered for a version of the
programme that has not completed curriculum review.**

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These regulations apply to students that are registered for a version of the programme that has not completed curriculum review. For confirmation of which regulations apply, please see the [academic regulations](#) webpages or contact the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team in Registry.

General

1. The postgraduate taught degrees (see below) will be awarded to any student who has completed the appropriate programmes of study and passed the associated assessment as a student at the Imperial College London (hereafter “the university”) in accordance with the following Regulations and with such other Regulations for students of the university as may be applicable.

Definition

2. The Master’s degree is intended for award on the satisfactory completion, including associated assessment, 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.
3. Where individual Programme Requirements provide, a Postgraduate Diploma is intended for award on the satisfactory completion, including associated assessment, 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.
4. Where individual Programme Requirements provide, a Postgraduate Certificate is intended for award on the satisfactory completion, including associated assessment, 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.

Programmes of Study and Methods of Assessment

5. Programmes of study and their assessment shall be so organised as to fall into one or both of the following categories:
 - a. 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 assessment being completed by the end of that period;
 - b. 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 assessed in accordance with the individual Programme Requirements;
 - c. a period of study principally by distance learning of between two and four years for a Master’s degree.
6. 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 university may require individual students to

pursue the programme for a period longer than the minimum period prescribed in the Requirements.

7. A student who registers for a Postgraduate Certificate in the first instance is normally required to successfully complete and pass the Postgraduate Certificate programme before progressing to a Postgraduate Diploma or full Master programme. Likewise, a student registered for a Postgraduate Diploma programme is normally required to successfully complete and pass the Postgraduate Diploma before progressing to a Master's programme.
8. 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.
9. Where a candidate is pursuing a programme of study leading to a Master's degree and extending over not less than one calendar year they may be allowed, at the discretion of the university 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 university 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 university, save where the university has made explicit provision for a programme to be delivered in part or in full at another institution specifically agreed for the purpose.
10. Schemes of assessment 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.
11. 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 paragraphs 31-32 below and where the university has exceptionally approved a different arrangement for individual programmes.
12. An essay/report/dissertation, where indicated in the scheme of assessment will be examined on one occasion only in each year and the date for submission will be specified in the Programme Requirements.
13. 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 university for restriction of access for a period not exceeding two years on the grounds of commercial exploitation or patenting or other very exceptional circumstances.

Entrance Requirements

14. The normal minimum entrance requirement for registration for a Master's degree, Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate is:
- 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
 - 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
 - a professional or other qualification obtained by written examinations and approved by the university.
15. Candidates possessing alternative qualifications obtained by written examination may also be considered by the university for registration for a Master's degree, Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate. The university 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.
16. Where a suite of associated programmes (Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma and Master's) exist students will normally register directly for the award they wish to exit with.
17. A candidate may be granted credit towards the award of a Master's degree for study undertaken at the university or another institution, subject to the following conditions:
- applications for credit transfer will only be considered for part-time students;
 - acceptability for credit transfer of work undertaken at the university or another institution does not confer right of entry to any programme;
 - 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;
 - a candidate granted credit transfer may be exempted from not more than 30 ECTS credits of the programme of study;
 - a candidate may not be granted exemption from the research project or dissertation element of the programme.
18. 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 university 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.

19. 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.
20. An applicant for registration will also be required to meet any additional entrance requirements specified in the relevant Programme Requirements.
21. English language and other tests may be prescribed by the university.

Registration

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

Assessment

24. Candidates are bound by the Regulations in force at the time of their entry.
25. To be eligible for the award of a Master's degree, Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate a candidate must satisfy the examiners in the programme assessment 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.
26. 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.
27. A candidate shall enter the assessment 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.
28. 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.
29. If a candidate fails to satisfy the examiners in their assessment, the examiners may determine that they 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.

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

Re-entry

31. A candidate who does not at their first entry successfully complete their assessment may, subject to the agreement of the Head of the Department when such re-entry would involve further attendance at the university, re-enter on one occasion. Such re-entry will be at the next following assessment point except where the university has granted permission for a candidate to defer re-entry until the subsequent year. The dates of the assessment shall be as specified in the individual Programme Requirements.
32. A candidate re-entering any assessment will normally only be credited with a bare pass mark if successful.

Mitigating Circumstances

33. Where a candidate has had mitigating circumstances accepted, the Examination Board may determine the extent of discretion to be applied at module, progression or award with due reference to the Mitigating Circumstances Policy and relevant academic regulations.

Notification of Results

34. 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 their assessment including marks obtained, under the authority of the Academic Registrar.
35. A diploma under the Seal of the university 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.

Posthumous Award Provisions

36. A Posthumous Award may be made to a student who has died before completing the full period of study or the requirements for an award. A Posthumous Award may be conferred at the discretion of the Board of Examiners and may be awarded with or without classification.
37. Where the university has been notified of the death of a student, the Board of Examiners will be informed in order to consider conferring a Posthumous Award in recognition of the study undertaken.

Reporting

38. The Board of Examination Minutes should fully record the basis on which a Posthumous Award has been made.

Document Control

Document title:	Regulations for the award of Taught Master's Degrees, Postgraduate Diplomas and Postgraduate Certificates 2026/2027		
Version:	1.0	Date:	August 2026
Location:	R:\7.Quality Assurance\2. Regulations\01. Academic Regulations\Academic Regulations 2025-26 \Regs B		
Initially approved by and date:	Senate October 2007		
Version approved by and date:	Senate June 2026		
Version effective from:	October 2026		
Originator:	Academic Registrar		
Contact for queries:	Assistant Registrar (Academic Standards)		
Cross References:	General Regulations Examination Regulations Terms and Conditions of enrolment Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures Mitigating Circumstances Policy and Procedures Academic Appeals Policy and Procedures Unsatisfactory Engagement Policy		
Notes and latest changes:	Updated July 2024 to meet new brand standard No further changes to be made until rescinded in 2025/2026 or 2026/2027 beyond updating year of application.		