Graduate School Accreditation of Doctoral Professional Skills Courses

1. Policy statement
1.1 The College requires all doctoral students to complete their minimum Professional Skills attendance requirement using one of the following options:

**Option One:**
- a minimum of 2 professional skills workshops plus the online plagiarism awareness course by the Early Stage Assessment (ESA)
- a further 2 Graduate School workshops or a Global Postgraduate Retreat or Global Fellows International Programme by the Late Stage Review (LSR)

**Option Two:**
- A Graduate School Global Postgraduate Retreat plus the online plagiarism awareness course by the ESA
- 1 further Graduate School workshop or an additional Global Postgraduate Retreat or a Global Fellows International Programme by the LSR

**Option Three:**
- A Global Fellows International Programme plus the online plagiarism awareness course by their ESA

1.2 The Graduate School provides a broad range of courses for students to choose from but it is recognised that some departments, and in particular the College’s CDTs and DTPs, also provide professional skills training to students. Such courses may be delivered internally by members of academic staff, academic staff within partner HEIs, external consultants, funding bodies, employers of Imperial Graduates or industry representatives.

1.3 Where students undertake professional skills training elsewhere there is a process to accredit this training and offer exemption for part or all of the Early Stage Assessment professional skills training requirement. It should be noted that should students receive full exemption from this requirement they must still complete two Graduate School courses by the Late Stage Assessment. This is to ensure that students benefit from interacting with other students across College and to facilitate the development of cohorts.

1.4 The process for accrediting doctoral professional skills courses is set out in section two below.

2. Accreditation of doctoral professional skills courses
2.1 Accreditation and exemption requests can be made by individual students or by staff on behalf of students. To note, courses undertaken during a student’s studies at a taught master’s programme level (including MRes) will not be eligible to apply for accreditation. Only courses taken during their doctoral studies are eligible to apply for this process.
2.2 Student applications

2.2.1 Students wishing to seek exemption from the Early Stage Assessment professional skills requirement, via accreditation of professional skills courses they have undertaken elsewhere as part of their programme of research, should first discuss this with their supervisor. Should the supervisor agree, then a request can be made to the Graduate School’s Professional Development Programmes Manager (k.hayes@imperial.ac.uk) who will require the following items:

a) A copy of your completed Template-Application-for-Non-GS-Course-Approval
b) A copy of the course(s) programme/agenda
c) Learning outcomes of the course(s)
d) A copy of the course materials, including any hand-outs
e) Confirmation and proof of attendance in the form of a certificate or email from the person who delivered the course.

2.2.2 Once these items have been received, the Professional Development Programmes Manager will pass them to the Head of Postgraduate Professional Development for consideration. The Head of Postgraduate Professional Development will consider the course material and provide comments/feedback on the content and quality of the course. The Head of Postgraduate Professional Development will also recommend the level of exemption granted, for example exemption from one or two courses. The accreditation documentation (course material, learning outcomes and comments from the Head of Postgraduate Professional Development) will then be submitted to the Course Quality and Strategic Development Committee for ratification.

2.2.3 Professional Development Programmes Manager will maintain a database of all courses approved and a list of students who have received exemption. Should additional requests for exemption relating to this particular course be received, exemption will be granted to students on the same terms.

2.2.4 The database of courses and exemptions will be presented annually to the PPDC.

2.3 Staff applications

2.3.1 Staff wishing to seek accreditation of professional skills courses they provide to students as part of their doctoral programme can do so for cohorts of students or individual students.

2.3.2 The following material should be sent to the Professional Development Programmes Manager:

a) A copy of your completed Template-Application-for-Non-GS-Course-Approval
b) A copy of the course(s) programme/agenda
c) Learning outcomes of the course(s)
d) A copy of the course materials, including any hand-outs
e) Confirmation of the date the course will be delivered
f) A list of all students attending the course. [note: if it is intended to deliver the course annually, then a list of students taking the course each year should be submitted to the Professional Development Programmes Manager]

2.3.3 Once these items have been received, the Professional Development Programmes Manager will pass them to the Head of Postgraduate Professional Development for consideration. The Head of Postgraduate Professional Development will consider the course material and provide comments/feedback on the content and quality of the course. The Head of Postgraduate Professional Development will also recommend the level of exemption granted, for example exemption from one or two courses. Finally, the Head of Postgraduate Professional Development will also provide a date for which the course must be reviewed. Normally, courses will require review every five years. The accreditation documentation (course material, learning outcomes and comments from the Head of Postgraduate Professional Development) will then be submitted to the Course Quality and Strategic Development Committee for ratification.

2.3.4 The Professional Development Programmes Manager will maintain a database of all courses approved, including the expected review date and a list of students who have received exemption. Should additional requests for exemption relating to this particular course be received, exemption will be granted to students on the same terms until such time that the course needs to be reviewed.

2.3.3 The database of courses will be presented annually to the PPDC.

3 Review of Accredited Courses

3.1 The review of accredited courses will normally take place every five years and will be a paper-based review of the most recent course material, programme and learning outcomes.

3.2 The Professional Development Programmes Manager will contact the relevant member of staff with a request firstly to check whether students still undertake the course and secondly to request provision of the most recent and up to date course materials, course programme and learning outcomes.

3.3 Once these items have been received, the Postgraduate Development Coordinator will pass them to the Head of Postgraduate Professional Development for consideration. The Head of Postgraduate Professional Development will consider the course material and provide comments/feedback on the content and quality of the course. The Head of Postgraduate Professional Development will also recommend the level of exemption granted, for example exemption from one or two courses. Finally, the Head of Postgraduate Professional Development will also provide a date for which the course must be reviewed. Normally, courses will require review every five years. The accreditation documentation (course material, learning outcomes and comments from the Head of Postgraduate Professional Development) will then be submitted to the Course Quality and Strategic Development Committee for ratification. The Committee will review the material and decide whether or not to accredit the course for a further five years and re-confirm exemption.
3.4 The Professional Development Programmes Manager will update records accordingly.