Possible Degree Structures for CDT Bids

Staff working on the preparation of CDT bids should use the following to choose which model to use for the first year of a 1+3 programme. This is a revised version of the document previously approved by both Strategy Committee and Research Committee. Any CDT bid to be supported by the School of Informatics must commit to precisely one of these three schemes.

Consecutive Registration

From 2012/2013 the University degree regulations contain the option of "consecutive registration" for MRes and PhD degrees, providing a standard 1+3 format with alternative routes of exit. This is recommended for options 1 and 2, and may also be appropriate for option 3.

- Postgraduate Degree Programme Regulations 2012/2013
  Item 16, Consecutive Registration
  http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/12-13/regulations/postgrad.php#a16

Probationary Period

In all three options the first year of study provides a training element, which is then followed by a three year PhD period. The first year of the three-year PhD component is the probationary period of the research degree, and must follow the existing Graduate School milestones. In particular, this means that an MRes dissertation cannot be considered as the PhD proposal.

- Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees 2012/2013
  http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Regulations/PGR_AssessmentRegulations.PDF

1 - Research Programme ['taught' MRes]

This option uses an MSc by Research (MRes) programme to deliver training in the first year of a 1+3 programme. Bids following this route must provide a 180pt DPT proposal in the following form:

- MRes Dissertation – 140pts ['long thin’ compulsory course]
- Taught Courses – 40pts [20pts per semester, from a list which may contain both compulsory and optional courses]

This model is standard for Schools in HSS, under a College-wide agreement.

Arriving students are registered onto a PGR programme, having been admitted in the usual way via a PGR Selector, but accepting that their first year will follow this defined taught programme.

This first year is administered by the ITO under the usual taught assessment regulations, with results decided through Stage 1 (course) and Stage 2 (programme) Boards of Examiners as for other taught postgraduate programmes. In particular, this means that the MRes dissertation must be given a numerical mark, subsequently assessed and ratified by a Board of Examiners.
The Stage 2 Board of examiners will conclude by declaring a pass/fail result for the year. Students who pass the MRes will graduate and automatically proceed to the probationary year of PhD study. This is mandated by the regulations for consecutive registration.

2 - Research Programme ['dissertation' MRes]

This option uses an MSc by Research (MRes) programme to deliver training for the first year of a 1+3 programme through an extended dissertation. Unlike the 'taught' MRes option, this programme does not require a fixed DPT of taught courses, but does require students to submit a more traditional MRes dissertation at the end of their first year. This dissertation must be examined under existing research assessment regulations, administered by IGS and College Office. Bids electing to follow this route may encourage students to attend taught courses class-only (auditing), but this cannot be made a DPT requirement.

This option involves registering students onto a PGR programme, admitted in the usual way via a PGR Selector, and administering student progress via the existing IGS milestones process.

In support of the dissertation, a CDT programme using this option might provide additional research training through workshops, courses from IAD, or other appropriate activities.

3 - Taught Programme ['normal' MSc]

This option uses a standard taught MSc as the first year of a 1+3 programme. Bids electing to follow this route must provide a 180pt DPT proposal matching the School's existing MSc programmes, and sharing current MSc material where possible.

To minimise disruption and make effective use of resources, a CDT would create a new specialist area, to be delivered to a restricted cohort of students under the existing MSc arrangements. This would be administered by ITO and examined by the usual MSc Board of Examiners.

Any taught bid can include the proposal of new specialised courses and/or a set of restricted course choice constraints, operating within the existing PGT framework and requiring approval through the Informatics Board of Studies in the normal way.

There remains an issue with the recruitment and admission of students to the taught first year in this option. At present College Office admit all MSc students on behalf of the School, so a CDT might have less control over student selection than in either of the MRes options. Any CDT bid planning to use this option should contact the College Office to discuss management of appropriate admission arrangements.