

FAQ document for the University of Manchester staff developing Integrated Masters programmes and/or top up routes to full MA/ MSc degree qualifications:

1. Why offer an Integrated Masters (IM) programme?

Integrated Masters (IM) programmes enable a student to undertake 120 credits of Masters level study as part of a UG programme with funding provided by the Student Loans Company, which students do not have to repay until they are earning £21,000. It is likely that the demand for such programmes will increase as the potential to extend to a full Masters degree at a lower cost to students may make them more attractive.

The cost to the Faculty in offering these programmes is minimal as they will map to existing undergraduate programme structures and utilise existing PGT course units. The IM model maintains and enhances the viability of PGT units, complements existing Masters programmes and encourages students to continue their studies to full Masters level and further to PGR study. Whilst initial recruitment numbers are unlikely to be high, it is expected that students will transfer from the Bachelors programme to the IM programme reflecting the flexible, personalised learning experience the University wants to offer students.

2. What is the benefit of an IM programme to students?

With the onset of increased fees, students are incurring higher levels of debt and this could deter them from pursuing further study. The advantage of an IM degree is that all four years are classed as undergraduate study and so are HEFCE funded, therefore the only upfront funding required from students is from those wanting to extend their studies to the full Masters programme by completing the 60 credit dissertation.

3. How should an IM programme be structured?

It is suggested that the first three years of an IM programme be mapped to an equivalent Bachelors programme and be aligned in terms of title. It is possible that an IM programme could stand alone if student numbers justify.

The first three years of the IM programme should consist of units with credits of multiples of 10 and the fourth year would be expected to use Masters level units, at multiples of 15 credits, so that these units can be shared with existing Masters students. Schools can also use the undergraduate units, enhancing those up to masters level in accordance with Faculty guidelines. The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications states that an IM programme is Level 7 of the Framework, the same as a Masters programme and is to have 120 credits.

If the opportunity to extend to a full Masters is to be made available to the IM students, the fourth year of the IM programme should include Research Methods, particularly if the Masters programme is a research preparation programme and students considering extending onto the full Masters should be counselled to choose these units. If the IM proposal does not include the possibility to extend to full Masters, then the inclusion of Research Methods is not necessary but it must be clear to the students that this opportunity is not available.

The Intended Learning Outcomes for the full Masters should reflect the taught element (fourth year of the IM Programme) and the remaining 60 credits. The title of the full Masters would be expected to align with the UG and Integrated Masters awards.

Further advice regarding the management of programmes and the considerations that must be given when setting up new programmes is available via the Teaching and Learning Office [Programme Management](#) webpages

4. *What should the admissions criteria for an IM programme be?*

It is recommended that UCAS entry requirements onto an IM programme be higher than that of a standard Bachelors degree to reflect the Masters level study within the programme.

5. *What is the approval process for an IM programme?*

If an IM programme maps to an existing Bachelors programme, the proposal will be considered following the processes for a [major programme amendment](#). If the IM programme is entirely new, it should be submitted as a [new programme proposal](#). Further advice can be sought from the [Teaching and Learning Office](#)

6. *Who should be notified for when an IM programme is set up?*

The [Student Services Centre](#) (SSC) are to make Student Finance England aware of the new UCAS code for any IM courses created for students to transfer onto from existing programmes.

At the programme set up stage the Student Services Centre must inform the gown hire company so that arrangements are in place when students register for graduation events.

7. *What are the costs/funding available for students studying an IM programme?*

Students can receive funding for up to 5 years from the Higher Education Funding Council for England ([HEFCE](#)) for undergraduate study. An IM programme includes 120 credits of study at Masters level but is still classed as an undergraduate qualification; therefore the student loans company will provide funding to students for all four years of IM programmes.

8. *What regulations are the IM programmes considered under?*

All IM programmes are considered under the [undergraduate regulations](#). They are 480 credits, four years in length and the final 120 credits are studied at level 7.

9. *How are IM programmes advertised to current UG students?*

Based on the MGeog model, students commencing on the BA/BSc will be informed of the option to transfer at a meeting with the Programme Directors at the start of their 3rd year. Students who achieve >60% overall weighting after the third year examination boards are formally invited to extend to the IM programmes.

10. *How many students should IM programmes allow into each cohort?*

It is suggested that there is a maximum number of 20 students on IM programmes whilst the manual admissions process is still in use

11. What are the admissions criteria for students who wish to top up and transfer onto the IM programme from a Bachelor's degree?

Students who express an interest in transferring from a relevant Bachelors programme onto an IM programme must respond to the expression of interest letter at the start of semester two. The relevant Programme Administrators will carry out a programme change on Campus Solutions and notify the Student Services Centre of all course transfers. The Student Services Centre will then complete a change of circumstances request to Student Finance England by early April.

Students who achieve >60% at the third year exam boards will be allowed to continue onto the fourth year of their IM programme. Students who do not meet these criteria will revert to the Bachelors award and graduate in July.

12. What is the admissions process for students who wish to transfer onto the full Masters programmes?

After the third year UG examinations board, the Secretary will send the relevant PGT Programme Administrator a list of the names and ID numbers of those students who have progressed to the final year of the IM programme and therefore are potentially able to progress to the full Masters. The Programme Administrator will copy and paste the identified student's addresses from Campus Solutions into an 'Expression of Interest' letter and send the complete list to the Schools postgraduate admissions team, who will then send out the letters.

Students who express an interest in topping up onto the full Masters programme will be advised at the start of the fourth year that they must complete the compulsory units required (Research Methods) for the completion of the dissertation and will receive a holding email from the relevant Programme Administrator regarding the entry requirements and fee details.

Following the final UG completion board, the Programme Administrators will check those students who have accepted the offer of progressing onto the full Masters have met the entry requirements by achieving a >60%. They will then inform the postgraduate admissions team who will update the student's details and create a PGT record.

Students then accept or decline the offer within the agreed deadline via the online self-service system and pay the upfront dissertation fee direct to Student Finance. Students do not need to formally apply for the Masters programme

13. What is an expression of interest letter?

The 'Expression of Interest' letter is sent to students via the postgraduate admissions team to those students who meet the requirements for top up. It contains full details of the entry requirements, information to students regarding the opportunity to top up to the full Masters programmes, dates by which to accept/decline the offer to extend, the url to the programme information and the fees applicable.

14. What is the cost to students who wish to top up their degree to an IM or full Masters?

Students who choose to top up their bachelors to degree to an IM will have their funding covered by HEFCE. They will be advised to liaise with their Students Loans Company directly to ensure that the transfer process is complete. Students who wish to extend their study by progressing onto the full Masters degree can top up their 120 credits by completing a 60 credit dissertation. They will be

charged for one third of the PGT fee to be paid upfront for this dissertation element of their study - £2100 (based on 2014/2015 fees)

15. How will Masters dissertation payments be processed?

Once a student has received a formal offer to progress onto the Masters programme, they must accept online by the self-service system. The Masters dissertation fee payments must be processed manually via Student Finance.

16. Do students recruited to the IM programmes have to be within the existing student number controls?

At this time the development of IM programmes should be based on existing resources and student numbers to minimise the risk associated with offering this route to students. As no additional resources should be required to deliver the IM programme as it is based around existing course offerings it should not entail additional student numbers but should increase the quality of the cohort. The [Teaching and Learning office](#) can provide further clarification.

17. Will a visa extension be required for International Students topping up to the IM or full Masters Programme?

Once the June Board has confirmed the results and the student is eligible to continue to the full Masters, the University can issue a new [CAS](#) with a different end date (September). The student can then apply for a visa extension until January. The visa extension request has to be submitted before the end of September.

18. Can students graduate with an IM degree and undertake a Masters dissertation at a later date?

All IM students who have completed the required course units in Research Methods will be able to progress to the full Masters level programme (provided that the 'top-up' has been formally approved by the Faculty) within 5 years of starting the final year of their IM programme, providing they can pay the fee upfront.

19. Can students revert back to the IM if they decide not to complete the dissertation?

Yes, students are able to revert to graduating with their IM award before they progress to postgraduate study

20. How are course units transferred from the IM programmes records on the Masters transcripts?

Progressing students will be matriculated via batch admissions process and the Postgraduate Admissions team will run campus solution mandatory enrolment process to attach the 60 credit dissertation. Transferred course units from accredited prior learning will be listed as '120 APEL' credits. Students will need to refer to UG transcripts for details of those 120 credits. A text box can be added to Masters transcripts by the graduation team to explain the APEL route (this text should be agreed with Programme Directors prior to inclusion).

21. When will IM students and Masters students graduate?

As the current graduation system only allows students to graduate for one programme at a time, students will graduate from their Bachelors degree in July and their Masters in December. Students who choose not to top up to the full Masters (where available) and graduate from the IM programme will do so at the July graduation ceremonies.

Students who top up to the full Masters will be advised to defer graduation for the Bachelors element of their programme to December if they wish to receive both awards at the same time. This is a manual process carried out by the graduation team, who must receive a confirmed potential graduand list from Programme Administrators detailing students wishing to defer their Bachelors graduation.

22. What will IM students be awarded?

IM students receive an award of Integrated Masters at the end of their final year. This will be classified as per the Undergraduate regulations i.e. 1st, 2i or 2ii. If a student does not achieve an overall weighted average of 60% or more they are awarded a Bachelors degree.

Students who extend to the full Masters programme will rescind their IM award and exit with a Bachelors award appropriately classified according to their individual marks. They will then register on the Masters programme and complete the remaining 60 credit dissertation to be awarded the full Masters. At graduation in December, students will receive 2 transcripts including explanation for this format from the Graduation Team or from Campus Solutions transcript notes.

23. What happens if a student fails their Masters' dissertation?

If a student fails to achieve the remaining 60 credits they will leave with an exit award of Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip). They would not retain their IM degree. They would have registered for an MA/MSc programme to do the extension and under those regulations a PgDip is the exit award after 120 credits are passed.