Taught Modules for PhD Students:
Summary of Policy in the UCD College of Agriculture, Food Science and Veterinary Medicine

(Please note that what follows largely arises from policy decisions taken by the UCD College of Science Graduate School Board)

1. From September 2014, all incoming PhD students must take 30 credits of taught modules over the course of their programme. The aim of these taught modules is to facilitate research as well as to provide important transferable skills enhancing career development.

2. This mandatory requirement applies to all PhD students who began their registration on or after September 2014, irrespective of:
   a. Whether the student’s period of registration is three or four years (or longer);
   b. Whether the student is usually based at the UCD campus or off-site (e.g. at a Teagasc research centre or overseas);
   c. Whether the student’s registration is full-time or part-time;
   d. The student’s source of funding.

3. For PhD students who began their programme before September 2014, it is not mandatory to take any taught modules. It is also not mandatory for any Research Masters students (however students initially registering for a Masters with an intention to subsequently upgrade to PhD should be aware of the 30 credits requirement for PhD students).

4. The completion of module credits is recorded centrally, and students who have not completed the mandatory 30 credits of taught modules will not be permitted to submit their PhD thesis for examination.

5. No particular modules are recommended or required at School level. Therefore students may choose from the full range of modules available throughout UCD in consultation and agreement with their Principal Supervisor and the relevant module coordinators. However, students undertaking a Thematic PhD Programme should consult with the Programme Coordinator/administrator for any specific modules that may be mandatory.

6. A full list of UCD modules is available by clicking the 2014/15 Modules tab on the Course Search page: http://www.ucd.ie/students/course_search.htm. A document containing lists of possible modules for PhD students in the College is available from your School postgraduate administrator. Some modules using an online/blended approach to teaching and learning are available, if desired.

7. There is no requirement for students to have taken a particular number of credits before their STA (Stage Transfer Assessment), or in the first/second/third years of their programme. However, as noted above, the 30 credits must be completed before thesis submission.

8. There is no requirement as to the academic level at which the modules should be taken (e.g. level 4, level 3). However, it would ordinarily be expected that a PhD student would
overwhelmingly select modules at **levels 3, 4 or 5**, unless there are exceptional academic circumstances. Students are reminded that that the academic level of the module will be recorded on their final University transcript.

9. To register for modules, students must complete a module registration form, available from their School, after securing agreement with the module coordinator and their Principal Supervisor. Being registered to a module means that a student must attend classes and complete assignments; students will earn credits for this, which will be shown on their transcript. Audited modules do NOT count towards the 30 credits requirement.

10. Please note that once registered for a module, if for any reason a student does not complete it, and they have not officially withdrawn from this module within **6 weeks**, a NG grade will be entered onto his/her university record and will appear on their transcript. To withdraw from a module, please contact your School office within **6 weeks** of the commencement of the module. NO RETROSPECTIVE CHANGES CAN BE MADE.

11. Students are permitted to count modules from non-UCD institutions towards the 30 credits requirement, but such modules should have an **ECTS weighting** (ECTS is the European Credit Transfer and accumulation System e.g. 5 ECTS credits; 10 ECTS credits). An application form is available from your School postgraduate administrator. Applications to include non-UCD modules which lack an ECTS weighting will require a very detailed case to be made in writing, including the ECTS equivalent weighting which is claimed. There is NO maximum or minimum number of external modules which can be counted towards the 30 credits requirement.

12. The attention of students and supervisors is drawn to the possibility for the recognition of prior learning (RPL) against the 30 credits requirement. Students can apply for RPL where some of the learning outcomes of their PhD programme were achieved before they first registered (e.g. a prior taught Masters degree). Any application for RPL must:
   a. Be approved by the student’s supervisor and DSP (Doctoral Studies Panel) in the first instance, ideally at the first meeting of the DSP. An application form is available from your School postgraduate administrator.
   b. Each student is assessed on a case-by-case basis in line with UCD’s policy on RPL. An applicant must demonstrate that they have met the learning outcomes of the modules defined within their PhD programme, for which they are requesting RPL.
   c. The application will then be sent for approval to: (i) the Postgraduate Education Committee (Research) of the College of Agriculture, Food Science and Veterinary Medicine; (ii) the UCD College of Science Graduate School Board.
   d. It would ordinarily be expected that a PhD student claiming RPL would overwhelmingly count modules at levels 3, 4 or 5, unless there are exceptional academic circumstances. **Accreditation of up to 20 credits of modules of prior learning is permissible, but only in exceptional circumstances.**

13. Ultimately the responsibility for ensuring the completion of the mandatory 30 credits requirement lies with the PhD student.