

Admissions Policy (Research Degrees)

1. Purpose and Context

The University of Huddersfield has as its mission statement: ‘To provide a first class accessible and inspirational learning experience; to undertake innovative research and professional practice in an inclusive environment and to engage with national and international employers and researchers and provide sought-after graduates for the global economy’ In pursuit of this, the Admissions Policy sets out the means by which we will encourage and welcome applicants with different educational and social backgrounds and ensure that no student with the potential to meet our entry requirements is deterred from applying. All applications are considered and evaluated on the basis of individual potential.

This policy is aligned with the University’s Strategic Plan and is consistent with good admissions practice in higher education, as defined in the Quality Assurance Agency’s Code of Practice¹, The Schwartz Recommendations for Good Practice² and the Supporting Professionalism in Admissions project³ and complies with current legislation affecting the admission of students.

This document has been agreed by the University’s Graduate Board and represents the University’s policy on the admission of postgraduate researchers. The policy is the responsibility of the Dean of the Graduate School and will be subject to a major review every three years, with minor updates being made in the interim, as required.

1.1 Scope

This policy covers admission for all research degrees, including those delivered in conjunction with other institutions. This policy covers admission for all modes of study including full and part time and distance learning.

2. Admissions Criteria and Selection

2.1 Academic Entry Requirements

The University offers a range of qualifications and welcomes applications from appropriately qualified applicants, or those expected to obtain qualifications before the research degree commences.

International qualifications will be considered and evaluated by referring to independently published guides recognised with the United Kingdom higher education sector, for example [UK NARIC](http://www.uknaric.org). Further details can be found on our website: <http://www.hud.ac.uk/international/where/>

¹ The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2018) *UK Quality Code for Higher Education. Advice and Guidance: Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access*

² Admissions to Higher Education Steering Group (2004) *Fair admissions to higher education: Recommendations for good practice*

³ Supporting Professionalism in Admissions: *Admissions Policies – April 2014*

Applicants must be suitably qualified in terms of their ability and experience to undertake a viable research programme in the proposed field.

The overriding principle is that the University is satisfied that the applicant has the necessary background and skills to benefit from their studies.

Master's by Research

The admission requirements for Master's by Research degrees shall normally be a good honours degree with a classification of 2.1 or above of a recognised university or comparable institution, in a discipline appropriate to that of the proposed research degree. Qualifications regarded by the University as equivalent to the above may also be considered.

Doctorates

The admission requirements for Doctoral degrees shall normally be a good honours degree with a classification of 2.1 or above of a recognised university or comparable institution, or a postgraduate Master's qualification, in a discipline appropriate to that of the proposed research degree. Qualifications regarded by the University as equivalent to the above may also be considered.

Some research degrees require a higher academic entry requirement or specific subject specialism. An applicant should always refer to the respective individual research degree requirements listed on Course Finder: <https://courses.hud.ac.uk/>

2.2 Competence in English Language

Teaching, supervision, assessment and student support will normally take place in English therefore applicants must be competent in the English language.

Applicants who have not completed their education in a UKVI-defined majority English-speaking country within the last two years must satisfy the University's language requirements before admission to the research degree. This requirement means that they must have a satisfactory command of the English language in terms of reading, writing, listening and speaking. Applicants must be able to demonstrate at least a minimum level of attainment in English language equivalent to IELTS 6.0 overall with no element lower than 5.5. The minimum currently accepted qualifications are detailed on the University's website: <https://www.hud.ac.uk/international/applying-to-the-university/>

International applicants who meet our English entry requirements, but would still like to improve their confidence in English, are welcome to undertake our pre-sessional English programme prior to commencement of their research degree. More information can be found on our Pre-Sessional English webpage: <https://www.hud.ac.uk/international/pre-sessional-english/>

Some research degrees may require a higher English language entry requirement above the University's minimum level, applicants should always refer to the respective individual research degree requirements listed on Course Finder: <https://courses.hud.ac.uk/>

Once enrolled, all international students whose first language is not English are assessed by our Academic English Centre. This service is free of charge and ensures that postgraduate researchers are well prepared to meet the demands of writing their thesis. Free support is also available for all international postgraduate researchers who wish to improve their academic writing or speaking skills.

Once enrolled candidates may also be required to complete formal English language assessment and training in advance of, or as an outcome of, progression monitoring.

2.3 Recognition of Prior Research

Where a candidate has previously undertaken research as a candidate for a research degree, they may be allowed to transfer and complete the research at the University of Huddersfield.

Candidates will normally enrol at the same stage they were at in their previous institution.

If a candidate is transferring from another institution, this must have the agreement of both institutions involved.

In considering an application for the recognition of prior research for a candidate from another institution, the Director of Graduate Education (or nominee) will normally require:

- a letter of agreement and confirmation of release from the previous institution;
- a statement of rationale from the applicant for the proposed transfer from another institution;
- the title of the research project and the names and contact details of supervisors at the previous institution;
- a copy of the original approved research project;
- the date of original enrolment and anticipated date of completion;
- a progress report from the previous institution, which should confirm that the applicant has been progressing in accordance with the standard timescales for completion;
- in the case of international applicants, confirmation from the International Office that the applicant meets Home Office visa requirements.

The admissions process will include an interview that will take the form of a progression monitoring examination. The admissions decision will be based on the candidate's performance in the interview assessment and on the information in the application documentation.

2.4 Other criteria

In addition to academic qualifications, we will also consider whether an applicant is suitably motivated to complete their chosen programme of study, and whether the provision will challenge and benefit the student. Where research degrees are subject to professional body requirements, these may be needed in addition to academic qualifications.

In our assessment of an application, we will take into account information provided within your application (this may include a Research proposal or personal statement and academic references), and we will consider this alongside academic ability, motivation and experience.

The University will take into account compliancy requirements in regard to external legislation (such as UKVI policy) when reviewing applications.

Applications for research degrees will only be considered where an appropriately qualified supervisor(s) has availability and the research topic aligns with the research strategy of the School. In addition, adequate resources and facilities should be available. Resources and facilities would include equipment, computing facilities and software. Therefore, applicants will only be accepted where appropriate expertise, capacity for supervision and adequate resources are expected to be available for the duration of the normal period of study. Some research degrees may require applicants to undertake a criminal record check in conjunction with the Disclosure and Barring service (DBS).

The University reserves the right not to consider an applicant for entry if the entrant has previously been withdrawn or excluded from the University on academic grounds, or has been excluded from the University due to disciplinary issues, the submission of fraudulent documents, such as documents purporting to evidence educational background, qualification history and certificates, or inaccurate/incorrect information.

3. Commitment to fairness, transparency and consistency

To ensure a fair and consistent admissions process, the University of Huddersfield will ensure that the following principles are adhered to:

- All research degrees will clearly state their entry criteria, including academic qualifications, along with appropriate experience and skills required for entry;
- Entry criteria will be easily accessible through our website;
- Applicants will be informed in general terms how they can demonstrate their achievements (both academic and experiential) and motivation to study;
- Any amendments made to entry qualifications will be publicised on the University website;

Where programmes include interviews, portfolio submission or auditions as part of their selection criteria we will make this explicit to applicants, and provide details on how the interviews will be conducted and the criteria used to select successful candidates. Further information is available in our Interview policy: [<Insert link to relevant interview policy here>](#)

Many programmes require candidates to provide additional written work in the form of a research proposal, to supplement an application. This will be made clear as part of the [application process](#)

4. Feedback to applicants

Where applicants are unsuccessful, feedback is available on an individual basis in response to receiving a written request from the applicant. A written request includes a request made via e-mail, provided that this is sent from the same e-mail address that the applicant provided on their application form.

The written request must include:

Full Name

Date of Birth

Name of Programme applied for

Feedback will only be given in written format (not over the telephone or in person), normally within 6 weeks of receipt of a valid request. The University undertakes to reply to all written requests for feedback, but applicants should note that we prioritise making decisions on applications over providing feedback to unsuccessful applicants and therefore at certain times of the year there may be a delay in providing feedback.

The feedback given will be with reference to the selection criteria for the research degree and will normally be sent to the e-mail address the applicant has provided on their application form. Unsuccessful applicants should not use this feedback to review and then resubmit their application documentation in the same admissions cycle. Any such applications would be rejected by the University. Applicants may reapply the following year, having taken the feedback into consideration.

In line with our Data Protection Policy, we are unable to provide feedback to anyone other than the applicant, unless the applicant gives prior, express and voluntary consent in writing for someone else to act on their behalf.

5. Application deadlines

Research degree applications can be made at any time throughout the year and enrolment takes place at specific entry points. The University publishes application deadlines on its website: <https://research.hud.ac.uk/research-degrees/how-to-apply/> to ensure that all applications received by the deadline date can be considered in line with its commitment to fairness, transparency and consistency.

Application deadlines for those applicants who require a visa may be set at an earlier date to allow sufficient time for both the application and visa process.

Research degrees that are funded or are part of collaborative programmes may have specific deadlines. These are published, where applicable, as part of the advertisement for such programmes.

6. The Application in Context

Whilst we do not routinely use contextual information to inform our decision making, there may be occasions where the applicant and/or their referee asks us to take account of certain contextual factors which may have affected performance, and to consider this in making an offer.

Evidence of one or more of these contextual factors does not mean that preference will be given to those applicants, as each case will be considered on its individual merits. However, in cases where there is clear evidence that contextual factors have affected performance and achievement, and where the applicant is able to demonstrate motivation and potential to achieve, the University may consider this as part of its assessment of the application, and may take this into account in deciding whether to make an offer.

7. Admissions procedures

The University is committed to providing a professional service to all prospective students, delivered by representatives with expertise in admissions procedures. This allows us to provide the best possible service to applicants and to the institution. All applications for research degrees are carefully assessed and places are offered on the basis of the academic and professional judgement of suitably qualified staff. Applications are considered within the relevant academic school to ensure appropriate supervision and resources are available to deliver the research degree programme.

In order to provide a high quality and effective recruitment, selection and admissions process, the University fosters a collaborative approach between Schools, the Directors of Graduate Education and various professional services staff.

8. Responsibility of applicants in the application process

It is the responsibility of applicants to provide full and accurate information in an application and to notify the University of any changes or corrections to the original application.

Applicants can check the Research Portal: <https://pure.hud.ac.uk/en/> for information on our research expertise and interests. Applicants are encouraged to make contact with a potential supervisor before making a formal application.

Applicants who receive an offer from us will be made aware of the terms and conditions of their offer via email from the University.

Applicants must include in the application the names of two suitable persons who can be consulted concerning the candidate's academic attainment and fitness for research. The referees should not be related to the applicant and should be qualified to comment on the applicant's capacity to cope with the academic demands of the programme. In exceptional circumstances, the School Director of Graduate Education may allow a referee to be nominated who has knowledge of their employment activity to act as the second referee.

By accepting an offer of a place at the University the applicant agrees to abide by its rules, regulations, policies and procedures. Copies of the regulations can be found on the University's website: <https://www.hud.ac.uk/registry/current-students/>

In the light of additional information, which was not available at the time of offer, an offer may be amended or, in exceptional circumstances, withdrawn. This includes a student being withdrawn from a research degree if they have enrolled by the time

additional information comes to light. The University also reserves the right to correct errors where they have been made in the communication of decisions and offers. However, an offer made in error where all conditions have been satisfied will only be withdrawn with the applicant's consent. If someone is found to have provided fraudulent documentation in support of a University or UK visa application any offer from the University will be invalid.

The University reserves the right to exclude an applicant who is considered on justifiable grounds to be unsuitable for a place on a particular research degree according to individual circumstances <https://www.hud.ac.uk/registry/current-students/> and <https://www.hud.ac.uk/registry/current-students/pgr/fitness-to-study/>

At all times, the University expects staff involved in the admissions process and applicants to act in a professional, courteous and respectful manner.

9. The offer making process

On receiving an application, the applicant will be contacted (normally via e-mail) to acknowledge receipt of the application.

A formal decision will be made and communicated directly to the applicant by the Student Recruitment Team or the International Office.

Successful applicants will receive an offer of admission to the University, detailing the conditions of the offer. The offer of admission will either be *conditional* on the basis of qualifications or other requirements yet to be completed or met or *unconditional* meaning that all necessary requirements for admissions have been met.

An offer, whether conditional or unconditional, will be made in good faith taking into account information as supplied by the applicant. In some circumstances, an offer may be conditional upon non-academic requirements e.g. a Disclosure and Barring Service check, a successful visa application or health assessment which is deemed satisfactory.

10. Meeting offer conditions

Applicants who meet the requirements of their offer (including non-academic conditions) and provide the required documentation to demonstrate this, will have their place confirmed.

For programmes that have the standard entry date in September, all conditions of offers should be met in full by 31 August to guarantee a place. For all other start dates, the conditions of offer must be met a minimum of one month before the official start date of the programme. If conditions are met after this point, then the University cannot guarantee a place and may instead require the applicant to defer entry until the next scheduled intake of the programme. Applicants who require a tier 4 visa to study in the United Kingdom may be given individual dates by which conditions must be met to facilitate visa applications.

10.1 Students who require a Tier 4 visa to study at the university

Where an applicant requires a Tier 4 visa to study in the United Kingdom, failure to take up an accepted offer of a place, withdrawal from the programme or another change of circumstances, is likely to impact the applicant's permission to come to, or remain in, the UK. In order to comply with the relevant UK legislation and immigration regulations, the University will notify the immigration authorities, where relevant, of any non-arrival, or late arrival, of an applicant and of any subsequent changes to a student's enrolment status.

The University is licensed with the Home Office as a Tier 4 sponsor. In order to comply with relevant UK legislation and immigration regulations, the University reserves the right to refuse admission should an applicant be found not to be in a position to meet all UK visa requirements for the full duration of the programme of study.

ATAS clearance

A number of our research degrees fall within a list of subjects which require Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) clearance, if the applicant is an international non-EU citizen. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) manages the ATAS scheme and clearance is required before an application for a visa can be made. Applicants already holding other immigration permission that permits study, such as dependent visas, must obtain ATAS clearance before the start of the programme of study.

If ATAS clearance is required, this will be detailed in the offer letter received from the University and will form one of the conditions of offer. Further information can be found [here](#).

Where ATAS clearance is required, the applicant will need to provide a copy of their clearance from the FCO, to the University, in advance of us being able to sponsor the applicant for a visa application.

It is advisable that applicants begin the ATAS application process as soon as possible after a conditional offer has been made.

Confirmation of acceptance of studies (CAS)

A CAS is a unique reference number which is assigned and used by the UKVI to process your visa application.

The University generates the CAS via the UKVI Sponsor Management System once your offer is unconditional and has been firmly accepted. Further information can be found [here](#).

11. Fraudulent statements/omissions and Plagiarism

The University reserves the right to cancel an application or withdraw any offer if it is found that an application contains false, plagiarised or misleading information. Research proposals may be submitted to the Turnitin plagiarism detection software as part of the application process. The University also reserves the right to withdraw

a student from a research degree following enrolment if fraudulent activity is subsequently found to have taken place.

Scanned or photocopies of documents are generally accepted during the admission process but original documents can be requested at any stage. Decision makers are trained in detecting and dealing with fraudulent documents. Schools and Services may ask to see original documents as part of the admissions selection process or at registration.

12. Further Information

There are many policies that the University needs to adhere to in order to ensure complete transparency and fairness in its admissions processes. Additional relevant policies can be found in Section 1: Important information applicable to all students in our Regulations for postgraduate research students.

<https://www.hud.ac.uk/registry/current-students/>

The policies below provide detailed and specific guidance.

12.1 Equal Opportunities

The University is committed to a policy of equality of opportunity and aims to provide a working, learning and social environment that is free from unfair discrimination. The University's admissions process must therefore ensure that it is transparent, fair and consistent regardless of age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation.

The University recognises that individuals of black, Asian and ethnic minority (BAME) backgrounds are often underrepresented in postgraduate study. The University welcomes and encourages applicants from black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds with a view to improving access and participation.

12.2 Disability

The University welcomes applications from students with disabilities and aims to ensure that their participation in both the academic and social life of the University is as successful as that of other students. Applicants who declare a disability are considered according to the same principles as for other candidates.

We advise that any disabilities be brought to our attention as early as possible, preferably before the application is submitted, so that we can consider which adjustments may be appropriate to support your work. If made the offer of a place, applicants who have declared a disability are contacted, via e-mail, by the Wellbeing and Disability Services section of Student Services, and invited to register with the service. This enables them to be assigned a Disability Adviser who will offer support during the application process and future studies. The Disability Adviser will work closely with the applicant and proposed research supervisor to consider what appropriate adjustments can be made. If appropriate the applicant will also be

guided through an application for the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) so that further support can be put in place where necessary.

A decision may need to take into account any overriding health and safety concerns, barriers relating to professional body requirements or the University's ability or inability to make any necessary adjustments. Whilst an application may be rejected, this would only be where there were unacceptable risks which could not be mitigated by reasonable adjustments and the decision would only be taken after discussions with the applicant and a Disability Advisor.

12.3 Procedures for Disclosure and Barring Service checks

For certain programmes, as specified by government, the University is required to undertake a criminal record check of the applicant in conjunction with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

The DBS is a non departmental public body of the Home Office. Its Disclosure Service offers organisations such as the University, a means to check the background of applicants to ensure that they do not have a history which would make them unsuitable for the training/employment they will be undertaking.

Disclosure checks are required for all students joining programmes which lead to employment in areas involving contact with children and/or vulnerable adults, for example research degrees which are governed by professional bodies such as The National College for Teaching and Leadership, The Nursing and Midwifery Council and the Health and Care Professions Council

The University and its nominees will:

- ensure that applicants are advised in writing of the requirement for a DBS disclosure;
- ensure that applicants are aware of the potential effects a criminal record may have on their application;
- direct applicants to the appropriate website of the DBS Code of Practice;
- direct applicants who are ex-offenders to the web address of the University's Policy Statement on Staff Recruitment and Student Recruitment Where Applicants Are Ex-Offenders as early as possible in the recruitment and admissions cycle;
- ensure that all academic staff involved in the recruitment and admissions processes have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevant and circumstances of offences. The University also ensures that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relation to the employment of ex-offenders, for example the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

At an early stage in the application process, applicants are required to complete and deliver a self-declaration disclosure form to the University in order that any issues may be identified. For applicants who accept the offer of a place on such a research degree the applicant will also be required to apply to the DBS for a disclosure check.

The University reserves the right to exclude a student from the research degree should he/she have omitted to declare relevant information on a self-declaration disclosure form or DBS application.

Disclosure information will be:

- Passed only to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties, which may in certain circumstances include external agencies;
- Used only for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given;
- Stored separately and securely with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties;
- Destroyed by suitable secure means and not retained for longer than is necessary.

The University will not unfairly discriminate against the subject of disclosure information on the basis of conviction or other details received. The University's policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders can be found on the University's website <https://www.hud.ac.uk/media/policydocuments/Policy-Statement-on-the-Recruitment-of-Ex-Offenders.pdf>

12.4 Applicants who disclose a criminal conviction

The University considers applicants who disclose a criminal conviction on an individual basis, and in the light of the research degree applied for. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from studying with us. This will depend on the nature of the research degree applied for and the circumstances and background of your offence(s).

12.5 Complaints and Appeals Policy

Applicants who wish to make a complaint or appeal regarding their application must first request written feedback as detailed in 4 above.

A complaint is a specific concern relating to a procedural error, irregularity or maladministration in the admissions procedures or policies

An appeal is a request for a formal review of an admissions decision or the wording, terms or conditions of an offer.

If having received written feedback an applicant remains dissatisfied they should consult the Applicants Complaints and Appeals Policy (Research Degrees) [<Insert link to new policy here>](#)

12.6 Discussing your application with others

In line with Data Protection legislation, the University will not discuss an application with any person(s) other than the applicant themselves, although information being given to the University will be accepted without confirmation that the applicant is applying to the University.

Where applicants have given the names of third parties to act as a point of reference (referee) then it is assumed by the University that the provision of this information gives the University permission to contact the third party for further information in support of the application.

In the case of international applicants applying through third party educational agents or consultants, the individual will be asked to confirm that they agree to the sharing of information with the relevant third party.

Further information about this and how we handle your personal data can be found [here](#).

12.7 Nominated Representative

In exceptional circumstances, applicants may nominate one individual to discuss their application. This person will not be able to make any decisions regarding the application or change any of the applicant's personal details such as current address.

12.8 Interview Policy

Some research degrees use interviews/selection days as part of the admissions process. Applicants will be informed of the format of the interview/selection day at the time of invitation and advised of any examples of work they are required to bring with them. Further information can be found on the website: [<Insert link to new policy here>](#)

12.9 Other Relevant Policies

Applicants to research degrees also need to be aware of the following policies which may affect their studies, which can be found under additional relevant policies in Section1: Important information applicable to all students

<https://www.hud.ac.uk/registry/current-students/>

- Research Ethics and Integrity policy
- Intellectual Property policy
- Open access Publishing policy
- Research data management policy

13. Promotional Material

It is the responsibility of schools to ensure that promotional material is clear, accurate and up to date. Any amendments made to information will be publicised on the University website. Material changes will also be notified to applicants holding offers and updated information and terms and conditions will be provided to those applicants in a durable format.

14. Changes to research programmes

Occasionally, changes to the research subject area or Supervisory team may be required/requested. Any such changes would be arranged in discussion with the main supervisor, the relevant Director of Graduate Education and the postgraduate researcher.

15. Further Information

Further information on the University's admissions processes can be obtained from the Student Recruitment Team:

Telephone: 01484 472625
email: study@hud.ac.uk
www: hud.ac.uk/
In person: i-Point, Student Central, Level 4

POLICY SIGN-OFF AND OWNERSHIP DETAILS

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REVISION HISTORY

Version	Date	Revision description/Summary of changes	Author
V1.0	2020	New policy approved by Graduate Board and University Research Committee	Project Manager on behalf of Student Recruitment Manager