School of Informatics

Informatics Graduate School

Guidance on How to Apply for a PG-Research Degree

This guidance is provided to help applicants submit a high quality and complete Postgraduate Research (PGR) application via EUCLID, the University of Edinburgh Admissions portal. Please make every effort to read this guidance fully before contacting the Informatics Graduate School. This guidance is very comprehensive and, if read carefully, will provide answers to many of the questions frequently asked by PGR applicants.

Contents

Choose your programme

We offer a range of Postgraduate Research (PGR) degrees:

- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
- Master of Philosophy (MPhil)
- Master's by Research (MScR)

You find more information on the structure of these programmes in the links below:

Research degrees in Informatics

A list of Informatics PGR programmes can be found here:

Postgraduate Degree Finder

Entry requirements

You need to meet our programme specific entry requirements, which will usually be a UK first (1st) or upper second class undergraduate honours degree (2:1), or the equivalent international qualification.

If you are an international student, you will also need to meet the English language entry requirements.

You can check the specific entry requirements in the links below:

Postgraduate Degree Finder

Entry requirements by country

Our applicants have a wide range of scientific backgrounds, so if you feel your abilities and experience make you eligible for a programme, please submit an application. Applications are considered as a whole.

Please note that we cannot confirm whether you meet minimum entry requirements or comment on your individual circumstances before you have submitted an application.

Research topic or project

When you apply for a research degree, you will be asked to indicate a proposed topic of study and submit a research proposal describing your proposed research topic in more detail. We will not be able to pass your application to our Academic Selectors for consideration without a research proposal.

More information on research proposal is provided on **Page 6**.

Proposed supervisor

Your chances of a successful application will be greatly increased if you determine who would be a suitable supervisor for the topics you are interested in, and contact that person informally to discuss your interests and suitability for the degree programme. Please ensure that you contact supervisors well in advance.

If you don't get a response or are unsure who best to nominate, we will still consider your application without a proposed supervisor.

You can find more information on this process, along with a list of potential supervisors and their research interests, here:

Contacting a potential supervisor

Scholarships and funding

There are multiple sources of funding available for students, so please ensure that you research the University of Edinburgh and School of Informatics websites before you apply. You can find more information via the links below:

School of Informatics site – Scholarships for research students

University of Edinburgh site – Scholarships and student funding

Project related PhD Studentships

Some scholarships require additional application forms and may have their own deadlines. Please check the details of each scholarship you wish to apply for.

There is a range of funding opportunities offered by the School of Informatics, including funding from School/University scholarships, research councils, research grants, or studentships provided by the School to PhD supervisors for specific projects. Our fully funded PGR places are particularly competitive. We also encourage applicants to seek funding from other sources, such as home country awards/scholarships or industry/grant awards.

In exceptional circumstances, the School can make PGR offers to applicants who are planning to self-fund their studies entirely.

Application deadlines

The Informatics Graduate School usually has two rounds of applications for Institute-led programmes, which align with School and University application deadlines for scholarships.

Round 1 and Round 2 deadlines are highly likely to be set for the end of November and the end of January, respectively.

For example, for **October 2024/25**, entry deadlines are:

Round 1 deadline: **24 November 2023**

Round 2 deadline: **26 January 2024**

Once you have submitted an application on EUCLID[1], you will also be able to apply for any relevant scholarships that require a separate application. For more information, please check the link below:

Planning submission of your PGR application

If you miss these initial application deadlines, you can still apply all year round for Institute-led programmes as we offer three intake sessions each year in September, January and May.

In this case, we recommend that applicants submit a complete application as early as possible and at least three months before the preferred intake session. This is to allow sufficient time for application screening, selection and offer processes to be completed.

International applicants also need to accommodate time needed to complete ATAS (approx. 12 weeks), CAS (7-10 days) and visa processes. More information is available here:

Student Immigration Service

Please note that, depending on the number of applications we receive and the time required for additional documents to be provided, you might not be able to commence your studies at the intake session you selected when you submitted your application.

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[1] EUCLID – the University of Edinburgh's student record system

Fee status

When completing your application, you will be asked to complete a fee status questionnaire that will allow the University Fees team to assess and determine your fee status. Please ensure that you complete the questionnaire as part of your application.

Fee status questionnaire

Work out your fee status

Apply to the University of Edinburgh

We are not able to consider an applicant's suitability or eligibility without a complete application. Applicants must submit all required supporting documents at the point of submitting their application.

If you wish to be considered for admission, you must submit an application via EUCLID. You can find more information below:

EUCLID and applicants

Applicants (Student Systems guidance)

Post online application help (Student Systems guidance)

Application links for the following academic year open in the month of October of the current academic year.

Application links for the academic year 2024/25 open in October 2023.

Start an application

1. Go to the Postgraduate Degree Finder and select your subject area. Informatics programmes can be found in the Computing and Informatics subject area.
2. Click on the specific programme you wish to apply for.
3. Find programme application links on the right side of the page under the section titled "Applying".
4. Select your preferred start date from the relevant drop-down menus. Please choose a start date which is at least 3 months after the date the application will be submitted, as time is required for screening and selection processes.

You can apply for more than one PGR programmes. If this is the case, please submit a research proposal that is specific to each area of study you are applying for.

Applicants are responsible for providing documents that meet our requirements. Please ensure that all required supporting documentation is available, preferably before you start your application.

Incomplete applications will be rejected within 28 days of initial screening, if applicants do not provide required additional documents or do not indicate when they will become available.

There is currently no application fee required for applications to PGR programmes (MScR, MPhil, PhD) managed by the School of Informatics, Informatics Graduate School.

Required documentation

You must submit the following documents when applying to a PGR programme at the School of Informatics.

1. Curriculum Vitae (CV)

We will not be able to consider an application if you do not submit your CV. You are required to provide an updated CV, which includes information regarding education (including all degrees completed and in progress), experience, skills & interests, achievements, etc.

2. Research Proposal

A research proposal is required as part of your application.

Research proposals

Unless otherwise stated in your programme website, you will be asked to indicate a proposed topic of study and to submit a research proposal (approximately 2 to 5 pages long), describing your proposed research topic in more detail.

What you write here is not binding on what you will finally study but will give us a useful impression of your background, interests and ideas. The research proposal is very important in assessing your application and potential supervisors will be looking at your proposal for evidence that you have appropriate background knowledge of the subject area and your own ideas about how research on that topic should best be taken forward.

If you have not decided on a precise area of study yet, please tell us about areas of Informatics that you find most interesting and why, in as much detail as possible.

3. Degree certificate(s) and transcript(s)

The academic documents you provide need to meet certain requirements:

- We will only accept good quality, colour scans of your original documents or certified copies. Please save these as PDFs.
- Please do not upload documents in zipped folders.
- We do not accept photographs of official documents.

Key guidance webpages are here:

Degree Certificates and Academic Transcripts

A **degree certificate** is the official document, which you usually receive at your graduation ceremony and confirms that the degree has been awarded to you.

A **transcript** is an additional document that details the grades you have achieved per course/module in each semester or academic year. Please ensure that your transcript includes information for the total duration of your studies.

Please also provide additional transcripts from Institutions you have studied at as a visiting student or as part of an exchange programme. If you wish, you can upload additional documents in order to explain any other gaps in your studies.

Your documents should state your name as it appears in your passport and on the degree/qualification awarded from your Institution. If the name on your academic transcripts is different to the name on

the application, you will be required to provide a document from a legal signatory or a change of name certificate.

Your academic documents must be official and genuine. They should be signed, stamped and/or watermarked by the issuing University. We also accept certified copies, which are officially recognised with an official institution's stamp or watermark.

- **Completed degrees**

Please ensure that you provide documents for all the degrees you have completed, not only the most recent ones.

The vast majority of our applicants have completed Bachelor's and Master's degrees, and are required to provide degree certificates and academic transcripts for all these.

The same applies if you have completed more than one Bachelor's or Master's degrees. Please do not submit your Master's degree only if you have also completed a Bachelor's degree, no matter how long ago. Your application will not be passed on to our Academic Selectors for consideration without a complete document history.

- **Degrees in progress**

If your degree is in progress, you will be asked to upload an interim transcript, otherwise your application cannot be considered.

If your University does not provide interim transcripts, please request an official statement confirming this, along with a certificate of registration on the degree in progress.

If an offer is made to you while your degree is in progress, the offer will be conditional on providing your final degree certificate and transcript.

- **Certified translations**

If the original degree certificate(s), transcript(s) or other relevant document(s) are not issued in English, you must provide an officially certified translation. The certified translations must be provided by:
- the awarding institution (i.e. your University)
- a sworn translator
- a Fellow (FITI) or Member (MITI) of the Institute of Translation and Interpreting (ITI), who may self-certify the translation

If the translation is not provided by the awarding institution, we will also ask you to provide:
- Confirmation from the translator or translation company that it is an accurate translation of the original document.
- The date of the translation.
- The full name and signature of the translator or of an authorised official of the translation company.
- The translator or translation company's contact details.

A translation should consist of a certified copy of the original document, attached to the translated document. Please submit all the pages you have received from the translator, not only the pages in English.

We will not be able to process applications where certified translations of degree certificates and academic transcripts are missing, even if completion of degrees/qualifications can be deduced from other English documents.

You can find more information below:

[Certified translations](#)

4. English language qualifications

Please check our English language requirements here:

[English language entry requirements](#)

You must demonstrate a level of English language competency that will enable you to succeed in your studies, regardless of nationality or country of residence.

The University has a responsibility to ensure that all students have a sufficient level of English language competence to undertake and derive full benefit from their chosen programme of study, and to contribute to a positive learning environment for all.

Applicants from a non-majority English-speaking country who require a student visa to study in the UK must also meet UKVI English language requirements for the University to sponsor them for a visa.

If you already have an English language qualification

Please check:

- When your relevant document was issued.
    - o We can accept an undergraduate or postgraduate degree, including a one-year Master's degree that has been taught & assessed in English; the degree must be no more than three and a half years old at the start date of your programme.
    - o We can accept an English language certificate, e.g. IELTS or TOEFL; the certificate must be no more than two years old at the start date of your programme. Cambridge C1 Advanced and C2 Proficiency must be no more than three and a half years old at the start of you programme.
- Whether your grades on the English language certificate, e.g. IELTS, TOEFL or similar, meet our minimum requirements. You can find specified grades for each programme via the [Postgraduate Degree Finder.](#)
- The [list of approved universities,](#) if you have studied in a non-majority English speaking country. Please note that for certain universities, an official letter from your University confirming that your degree was fully taught and assessed in English might also be required.

Please do not upload screenshots of web results. We can only accept original scans of IELTS/TOFEL/other acceptable certificates or official test score reports. All English language certificates will be formally verified by us via the test provider's verification platform.

If you are not sure if you meet English language requirements

If you are unsure whether you meet our English language requirements, please upload any documents you think might be relevant to your application or leave this field blank. We will get back to you with feedback on the suitability of your documents or with feedback on what is required. We will not be in a position to assess if you meet our English language requirements before an application is submitted.

If you do not have an accepted English language qualification

If you do not have an accepted English language qualification, we will still consider your application. However, please note that if an offer of admission is made, it will be conditional on you providing an English Language qualification that meets our requirements.

5. Two academic references

Please provide two academic references that are:

- specific to the programme you are applying for;
- signed by the referee;
- dated within the last 12 months; and

-   on university/organisation letterhead.

Appropriate people to provide your references would include a Personal Tutor (or equivalent) or another academic who has taught you at undergraduate or master's level. They should be able to comment on your potential to undertake research study.

If it is a while since you graduated you may be able to supply a work-related reference in place of an academic one. This would typically be written by a line manager.

We will pass your application to Academic Selectors for consideration when you have provided at least one reference that meets our requirements. The second reference should be provided as soon as possible.

References

Application status

Guidance for application status queries regarding your submitted postgraduate application can be found in the link below:

Application status

When we receive your application, one of our admissions officers will screen it for completeness and verify the authenticity of your academic and supporting documents. Following this screening, your application will enter and progress between the statuses below.

Please note that the EUCLID system does not send an automatic email when the status of your application changes, so you must make sure you log into your Applicant Hub to view any changes, requests for additional documents or feedback from us.

a) Application received

Your application has been submitted and added to our queue. We will soon screen it and use the relevant fields to provide feedback on your documents or request additional documents.

b) Being processed

If your application is incomplete or your documents do not meet our admissions requirements, your application will enter into the "being processed" status. Notes on what extra documentation needs to be provided can be viewed via the Applicant Hub. Please upload the required/missing documentation directly to your application.

Please note:

-   Incomplete applications are not passed to Academic Selectors for consideration until all required documents have been provided and checked.
-   Incomplete applications will be rejected after 28 days from the date the application was originally screened have passed, if the required additional documents are not provided or if you do not let us know when you expect to provide the requested documents.

c) All details received

Your application has been screened by our admissions officers and you have submitted all the required documents. Your application has now been passed onto the relevant Academic Selector/Selection panel for the programme to which you applied.

We will pass your application to Selectors:

- If English language requirements are not met at the point of application. In this case, if an offer of admission is made, it will be conditional on providing an English language certificate that meets our requirements.

- If only one reference that meets our requirements is provided. However, please note that the second reference should be provided as soon as possible.

d) Ready for decision

We are in the process of communicating a final decision on your application to you.

e) Decision

A decision has now been made on your application. You will receive an automated email via Euclid asking you to log in to your Applicant Hub to check the decision that has been made on your application, so please ensure that you check your emails regularly for a decision notification from the University of Edinburgh. Please ensure that you check your emails (including your junk/spam folders) regularly for the automatic notification emails from us.

Application outcomes

When your application has been considered by the Selection Panel, the Informatics Graduate School will be notified of the outcome and your application will be moved to "Decision" status. It usually takes six to eight weeks for a decision on an application to be made after it has been passed to Academic Selectors for consideration. Decisions might take longer during peak application periods associated with Round 1 and Round 2 application deadlines.

a) Unsuccessful application - Reject

If the Selection panel have decided that your application is unsuccessful, you will receive an outcome of Reject, along with a reason as you why your application was unsuccessful.

b) Successful application – Make an offer

If the Selection panel have decided that your application is successful, the Informatics Graduate School will process an offer of admission, which will go through an internal approval process.

An offer of admission can be conditional or unconditional.

Conditional offer

If you are issued with a conditional offer, the condition(s) you need to meet will be included in your offer letter e.g. meeting our English language requirements or completing your Bachelor's or Master's degree with a certain classification/grade.

Please provide the necessary documentation by the deadline given to you. If you feel that you will not be able to upload your relevant final degree certificate and academic transcript before your programme starts, please let us know as we might be able to convert your conditional offer into an unconditional, if you provide alternative official documents from your University.

Unconditional offer

If you are issued with an unconditional offer, you have met all the entry requirements of the programme.

Confirming your place

Once you receive an offer, please respond to the offer via your Applicant Hub. You must respond to your offer in the EUCLID portal within the stated response deadline (usually 1, 2 or 4 weeks) or you risk the offer (and any associated funding allocation) being withdrawn.

If you are unable to take up your place, you can request to defer your entry to another start date or you can reject our offer. Fees/charges will not be incurred if you accept our offer and then change your mind.

Before your start

a) Pre-arrival information

In the months before you start your programme, you will receive quite a large number of emails from the University of Edinburgh containing introductory information. We will also send you a Welcome email with specific information about starting your studies with the Informatics Graduate School.

Please ensure that you thoroughly read these emails as they do contain important on boarding information, such as how to confirm your attendance, when you receive your stipend payments (if funded by the School), how you access your office space, etc.

b) Immigration processes

If you are an International student requiring ATAS/CAS/visa to study in the UK, you need to ensure that you submit the relevant applications in a timely manner as delays in processing times might affect your ability to enter the country and commence your programme on time.

The Informatics Graduate School cannot advise applicants on student immigration procedures. These questions must be directed to the University of Edinburgh's Student Immigration Service; their website and contact details are available here:

[Student Immigration Service](#)

Still have a question?

Please make every effort to read this guidance fully before contacting the Informatics Graduate School as it includes answers to many questions frequently asked by PGR applicants. However, if you require further information/clarifications, please contact the Informatics Graduate School.

Email – pgr-admissions@inf.ed.ac.uk

Phone – **+ 44 (0) 131 650 3091, + 44 (0) 131 650 9989**

Alternative formats

If you require this document in an alternative format, such as large print or a coloured background, please contact a member of the Informatics Graduate School team:

Email – pgr-admissions@inf.ed.ac.uk

Phone – +44 (0) 131 650 3091, +44 (0) 131 650 9989