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 common questions 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) and Master's by Research (MScR) programmes; and
- Combined MSc and PhD programmes (CDT's).

You can find a list of Informatics PGR programmes on the [Postgraduate Degree Finder](#).

Check our entry requirements

You need to meet our programme specific entry requirements, which would 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 of each individual PGR programme in the links below:

[Postgraduate Degree Finder](#)

[Entry requirements by country](#)

We have students applying from a range of scientific backgrounds, so if you feel your abilities and experience make you eligible for the programme, please submit an application.

Please note that we cannot comment on your individual circumstances without a full application, as each application is considered as a whole.

Choose a research topic or project

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

More information on research proposal is provided in **Section 6b**.

Find a 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 as some could be in high demand and may not be able to respond to your enquiry immediately. 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](#)

Check our scholarships and funding opportunities

a)   Institute led PGR Programmes

There are multiple sources of funding available for students, so please ensure that you research the UoE[1] and SoI[2] websites before you apply. You can find more information via the links below:

SoI site – Scholarships for research students

UoE site – Scholarships and student funding

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

Our fully funded PGR places are particularly competitive. Therefore, we also encourage applicants to seek funding from other sources, such as awards from your home country or industry/grant awards. These applications will be considered in addition to the allocated, fully funded places.

Only in very exceptional circumstances does the School make PGR offers to applicants who are planning to self-fund their studies entirely.

b)   CDT Scholarships

The CDT Natural Language Processing (NLP) and CDT Biomedical Artificial Intelligence (BMAI) have an annual allocation of scholarships. Applicants to these two programmes will automatically be considered for funding, so there is no separate scholarship application required.

CDT in NLP

CDT in BMAI

Check application deadlines

The IGS[3] 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 2023/24 entry the round 1 deadline is 25 November 2022 and the round 2 deadline is 27 January 2023.

Once you have submitted an application on EUCLID[4], 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 early deadlines, you can still apply all year round for Institute led programmes, as we offer three intake sessions each year in October, January and May (NB: this does not apply for combined degrees (CDTs), which only allow students to commence studies in September each year).

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[1] UoE – University of Edinburgh
[2] SoI – School of Informatics
[3] IGS – Informatics Graduate School
[4] EUCLID – UoE admissions portal

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

International applicants also need to factor in the time needed to complete ATAS (approx. 12 weeks), CAS (7-10 days) and Visa processes (location dependent). 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 your preferred intake session.

Check your fee status

When completing your application you will be asked to complete a fee status questionnaire which will allow the University fees team to assess your fee status. Please ensure that you complete the questionnaire before you submit your application to us.

[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, this means applicants must submit all the 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](#)

You apply directly to the University of Edinburgh via the [Postgraduate Degree Finder](#). Application links for the following academic year open in the month of October of the current academic year. For example, application links for the academic year 2023/24 open in October 2022.

Click on the specific programme you wish to apply to and find application links under the section "Applying". Select your preferred start date from the various drop down menus. <u>Please choose a start date which is at least 3 months after the date the application will be submitted</u>, as we need time to complete screening and selection processes.

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

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

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

Required documentation

You must submit the following documents when applying to a PGR programme at SoI.

1. Curriculum Vitae (CV)

We will not be able to consider an application if a CV is not submitted. Applicants are required to provide an updated CV, which details information on their education (including all degrees completed and in progress), experience, skills and interests, achievements, etc.

2. Research Proposal

Applicants are required to upload a research proposal. Without a research proposal, applications will not be passed on to Academic Selectors for consideration and will be rejected as incomplete.

[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. It is very important in assessing your application, and potential supervisors will be looking at your proposal for evidence that you have an appropriate background knowledge for the topic area and your own ideas about how research on that topic should best be taken forward. If you have not yet decided on a precise area of study, 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)

- We will only accept good quality, colour scans of your original documents or certified copies. Please save these as a pdf.
- 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 which comes with your certificate and details the grades you have achieved per course/module per semester/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 in 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 the degree/qualification awarded from your Institution. If the name on your academic transcripts is different to the name in the application, you will be required to provide a document from a legal signatory or a change of name certificate, in order for your application to be considered.

Your academic documents must be official and genuine. They should be signed, stamped and/or watermarked by your 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 both.

The same applies if you have completed more than one Bachelor's or Master's degrees. Please do not just submit your Master's if you have also completed a Bachelor's degree, no matter how long ago, as 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 confirm this in an official statement along with a certificate of registration to 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. You certified translations must be provided by:
- The awarding institution.
- 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 contact details.

A translation should consist of a copy of the original document attached to the translated document. Please submit all the pages you have received from the translator, not just 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](#)

If applicable, 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 qualifications we accept meet both our English language proficiency requirements and (where applicable) immigration requirements.

Please check:

- When your relevant document was issued.
    o If your English language requirement is being met through completion of a degree taught and assessed in English, then the qualification must be no more than three and a half years old from the start date of the programme you are applying to study.
    o If you are meeting the English language entry requirement through submission of an English language certificate, i.e. IELTS, TOEFL etc., the certificate must be no more than two years old from the start of the programme you are applying for.

- Whether your grades on the English language certificate such as IELTS, TOEFL, etc., meet our minimum requirements. You can find specified grades for each programme via the [Postgraduate Degree Finder.](#)

- Our list of approved universities, if you have studied in a non-majority English speaking country. If you fall in this category an official letter for your University confirming that your degree was fully taught and assessed in English is also required.

We only accept original scans of IELTS/TOFEL (etc.) certificates or test score reports, so please don't upload screenshots of web results. All English language certificates will be formally verified directly with the test centre.

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 come 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 don't have an English language certificate, 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 certificate which meets our requirements.

5. Two academic references

Please provide two academic references which must be:

- Specific to the programme you are applying for;
- Signed by the referee;
- Dated within the last 12 months;

- On university/organisation letterhead.

We require at least one academic reference which meets our requirements to be submitted before we are able to pass your application to our Academic Selectors for consideration. The second reference should be provided as soon as possible.

References

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 into one of three statuses, as detailed 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 EUCLID portal to view any changes or requests for additional documents.

a) "Being processed" status

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

Please note:

- Incomplete applications are not passed to Academic Selectors for consideration until all the required documents have been received.
- Incomplete applications will be automatically rejected if the required additional documents are not provided within 28 weeks from date the application was originally screened.

b) "All details received" status

Your application has been successfully screened by our admissions officers; you have submitted all the required documents and admissions requirements have been met. Your application has been passed onto the relevant Academic Selector for the programme to which you applied.

We will also 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.

c) "Ready for decision"

A selection decision has been made on your application. The outcome of your application will be communicated to you via EUCLID, so please ensure that you check your emails regularly for a decision notification email from the UoE.

Application outcomes

Once your application has been considered by the relevant academic selector, the Informatics Graduate School will be notified of the successful applicants who are to receive an offer of admission. This offer of admission goes through an approval process, prior to being issued via the EUCLID portal. Please ensure that you check your emails (including your junk/spam folders) regularly for the automatic notification emails from us.

a) Conditional offers

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 as soon as possible. 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.

b) Unconditional offer

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

c) Rejections

If you application is unsuccessful, you will receive an outcome of Reject, along with a reason as you why your application was unsuccessful.

Confirming your place

Once you receive an offer, please acknowledge receipt and confirm acceptance of the offer via our application system. You must accept your offer in the EUCLID portal within the stated response deadline (usually 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. You will not be charged 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 a quite large number of emails from the University containing introductory information. We will also send you a Welcome email with specific guidelines about starting your studies with the Informatics Graduate School.

Please ensure that you thoroughly read them, as they do contain important information, such as how you 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 relevant applications in a timely manner, as delays in processing times might affect your ability to enter the country and start your programme on time.

The IGS is unable to advise applicants on UKVI 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:

https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-administration/immigration

Still have a question?

Please make every effort to read this guidance fully before contacting the Informatics Graduate School, as this guidance is very comprehensive and if read carefully, will provide answers to many of the common questions asked by PGR applicants. However, if you still have answered questions, 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