School of Informatics: FAQs
Frequently Asked Questions: How to Apply
www.inf.ed.ac.uk

1. If I send my CV (resume) directly to you, will you admit me?
No, we are not able to consider an applicant's suitability or eligibility without a complete application, including all the supporting documents. If you want to be considered for admission, you must submit an application using our online applications system (which is referred to with the University as EUCLID).
ed.ac.uk/studying/postgraduate/applying/how-to-apply

2. Is there an application fee?
We do not charge a fee for you to apply for admission. However, applicants receiving an offer of admission for a taught MSc programme, either unconditional or conditional, will be asked to pay a non-refundable tuition fee deposit to secure their place on the programme. For research degrees, there is no deposit or entry fee. For further information, contact admissions.

3. Is there an application deadline for PhD, MPhil or MSc by Research?
You can apply at any time. However, to be considered for funding, you need to apply within the appropriate funding round. An early application is particularly important for overseas (non-EU) applicants.

4. Does submitting an application mean I am automatically considered for funding or scholarships?
No, you may have to submit a short application form for some scholarships. Please check our scholarship pages: ed.ac.uk/informatics/postgraduate/fees/research-scholarships

CDT programmes, however, are exempt from the above as when applying for any of the CDT programmes in the School of Informatics, applicants will automatically be considered for fully funded CDT studentships for which they are eligible.

5. Which programme should I pick?
Consult the following web page about each of the institutes to learn about their work:
www.ed.ac.uk/informatics/postgraduate/research-degrees/research-topics

If you have chosen a research topic from the following web page, then pick the institute corresponding to the person listed under 'Contact'.
ed.ac.uk/informatics/postgraduate/fees/research-grant-funding

Information about other topics of interest to potential supervisors may be found in our research directory: www.ed.ac.uk/informatics/research/directory

6. I am interested in two institutes / two topics. Which one should I pick?
You are welcome to submit an application to more than one institute, but please tailor each application to the institute through your research proposal and other elements.

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If you're interested in more than one topic, you are welcome to mention both in your application - you could discuss both in your research proposal.

7. What documents do you need in support of my application?

When you make an application online, via EUCLID, you would normally also upload:

- A Curriculum Vitae (CV) (which includes your educational history, work experience and any relevant research publications)
- A degree certificate and academic transcript for each degree you currently hold, or an interim transcript for degrees you are currently studying.
- If your first language is not English, a language certificate showing evidence of your proficiency in English (see section 12).
- Two academic references
- For research degrees only: a research proposal (see section 13).You may also upload additional supporting documents that you think will help us to assess your application.

If you do not have all these documents to hand when you complete the online application form, you can submit your online application without them and you will be expected to provide them later in the application process. However, you should note that we cannot consider your application for admission until all the documents noted above (apart from an English language certificate) have been received. All documents should be official, i.e. signed and/or stamped by the issuing Institution. If your documents are not in English, certified translations will also be required.

Additional, detailed guidance on submitting an application for an Informatics PGR programme is available here:
ed.ac.uk/informatics/postgraduate/apply/planning-submission-pgr-application
ed.ac.uk/informatics/postgraduate/apply

8. What if I don't have my degree certificate yet?

Our online applications system (which is referred to as EUCLID) may ask you to provide your degree certificate. If your studies are not yet complete, you will not be able to provide this. We can still consider your application without the degree certificate. However, you will still be required to provide an official interim transcript (which will be signed and/or stamped by your University) for your degrees that are in progress.
Please note that if your application is successful, your offer of admission will be conditional on you providing the degree certificate and final transcript as soon as they become available, i.e. once your degree is completed.

9. What is an academic transcript and how do I obtain it? What is an interim transcript?

An academic transcript is a list of all courses taken, all grades received, all honours awarded and degrees conferred. An interim transcript provides similar information for degrees you are yet to complete (it may also show the expected grade or level of award if you are near the end of the programme of study).

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The transcript is usually issued by Student Administration/Registry of the relevant institution. If the transcript is not in English you will also need to submit a certified translation (see section 10).

10. What if my documents are not in English?
Where your original degree certificate, academic transcript, or other relevant documents are not in English you must provide an officially certified translation. This means:
- a translation certified as accurate by the institution that issued the certificate or transcript OR
- a translation certified as accurate by the British Council, a British Embassy or Consulate OR
- a translation certified as accurate by a professional translation service

11. Do I need a Master's degree to apply for a PhD?
No. We may however suggest to some applicants that they study for a Master's degree before coming to do a PhD, if we consider that additional preparation is necessary. Also, some funding sources provide four years of funding covering an MSc followed by a PhD.

12. What evidence of proficiency in English do you require?
If English is not your first language then you must submit a copy of a recent English language test certificate.
Any offer of a place will be conditional on you obtaining a required score on this test.

The English language qualifications we accept are listed below.
All applicants must have one of the following qualifications as evidence of their English language ability:
- an undergraduate or Masters degree, that was taught and assessed in English in a majority English speaking country as defined by UK Visas and Immigration or taught and assessed in English at a university on our List of Approved Universities.
- IELTS Academic: total 6.5 with at least 6.0 in each component
- TOEFL-iBT: total 92 with at least 20 in each section
- CAE and CPE: total 176 with at least 169 in each paper
- Trinity ISE: ISE II with distinctions in all four components

Degrees taught and assessed in English must be no more than three and a half years old at the beginning of your degree programme. Language tests must be no more than two years old at the beginning of your degree programme.

13. What is a research proposal?
When you apply for a research degree (PhD, MPhil or MSc by Research) 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. 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

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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.

If you have contacted a potential supervisor before you make your application, they may be willing to advise you in the preparation of your research proposal.

ed.ac.uk/studying/postgraduate/applying/research-proposals

14. What do you mean by 'first or upper second class honours degree or its equivalent'?

The University of Edinburgh requires postgraduate research students to hold at least a first or upper second class bachelor's degree or its international equivalent before they can be admitted to a higher degree. For more information on international degree equivalencies, please see:

ed.ac.uk/studying/international/postgraduate-entry

In the absence of highly relevant work or other experience, we will normally reject applications from candidates whose degrees are not of this standard. Note that this is a minimum standard, and a higher standard may be needed for your application to be competitive for admission or funding.

We take the ranking of the university at which you studied into account in determining whether or not your degree is equivalent to a first or upper second class honours degree in the UK.

15. What if I don't have the necessary academic qualifications for entry but can evidence significant and exceptional work experience in a research environment?

The University of Edinburgh is committed to increasing the diversity of its student population by presenting no unnecessary barriers in its admissions selection processes to prospective students currently underrepresented in higher education.

We recognise that some prospective students may not be able to evidence that they meet the University's entry requirements through the accepted qualifications detailed in University publications, but they are able to provide substantial and relevant alternative evidence that they have the potential to succeed on their chosen programme.

As such, we may consider applications from candidates who do not possess the necessary academic qualifications but can successfully evidence significant and exceptional work experience / capability within a research environment and can evidence a strong research publication record. Entry on this basis is assessed under the Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and is assessed on a case by case basis. More information on RPL is available here: ed.ac.uk/studying/admissions/policies-procedures (Policy and Procedure for the Recognition of Prior Learning for Admissions to the University of Edinburgh)

16. How is my Research degree application accessed?

Applications are first checked for completeness: you may be asked to provide missing information. They are then assessed by at least two academic staff members within the Institute to which you have applied.

You may be invited for interview or interviewed by phone or video call at this stage.

A first decision is made about admission: students can potentially be admitted if they meet

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our high academic standards and a staff member is willing to act as their supervisor. Students eligible for admission are then further considered for funding; in general, we cannot offer funding to all admissible students but try to fund as many admissible students as possible. Admission decisions will be communicated to you through the EUCLID system; most funding decisions will be communicated to you informally by email and formally by an 'offer' letter. For a September start, we try to make most offers around March, but there can be many factors that delay a decision, in which case we will try to keep you informed about the status of your application. If you are funded by external sources, we may be able to issue a decision more quickly.

17. I have received an offer from another university before hearing your decision, and I need to respond. What should I do?
Sometimes we can make early offers to exceptional candidates who have received an offer from elsewhere and need to respond before our offer is due. Please contact us if you are in that position. (General contact details may be found at the end of this factsheet). Expect us to take a few days to come to a decision.

18. I am applying for external funding, and I need an offer from you to apply, but have not yet heard your decision. What should I do?
We are sometimes able to make early admission decisions for applicants who need this information to apply for funding. Please contact us if you are in that position. Expect us to take a few days to come to a decision.

19. You have accepted me as a PhD student, but the letter says that you cannot yet offer funding. What does that mean?
We may let you know about your admission status before we have made the funding decision. If a funding decision has been made, the offer letter should clearly state either the source of funding, OR that you are expected to fund yourself. If it does not state either, then the decision has not been made, and a further letter concerning funding will follow. In the meantime, you might well be able to use the offer of admission to apply for alternative sources of funding yourself. If you are unsure about your offer, please contact us

20. You have accepted me as a PhD student, but the letter says that you expect me to be self-funding. Can I assume I will find funding once I arrive?
No. When you accept a self-funded place, you are agreeing to fully cover the costs of study, which is clearly set out in advance, from your own resources. For research degrees, please speak to your potential supervisor if you are expecting a funded offer, as allocations may be ongoing.

21. May I transfer to the University of Edinburgh from another university?
It may be possible to arrange for you to transfer from another institution and for you to complete your PhD at the University of Edinburgh. You should apply to us in the normal way and contact us to explain your circumstances. We will then be able to provide specific guidance on the application process. When an application for transfer is accepted, the amount of "credit" allowed for study elsewhere will be determined at the admissions stage only and on a case-by-case basis.

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22. What start date should I choose from my research degree (excluding CDT programmes)?
We usually recommend that students start in September or February, when a formal induction takes place. We have had feedback that it is hard to start at other times of the year as it might be slightly more difficult to integrate with the rest of the cohort. There might be other issues, from finding accommodation to get going on studies, due to the structure of the academic year, e.g. holidays, exams and courses overseen by supervisors. Alternative start dates might be possible, if you do not wish to start in September or February.

Please choose a realistic start date for your degree, which is at least 3 months form the time you submit your application (especially if you are an international student). This would be sufficient time for application and visa process to be completed. Receiving your visa can take several weeks, depending on your location and nationality. This should also allow you time to book your flights, consider accommodation options, and make other arrangements for your study at the University of Edinburgh.

If you are applying for scholarships, you may need to choose a particular start date. Please check the particular requirements of the scholarship, and choose your start date accordingly.

23. I have another question, who do I ask?
Taught MSc enquiries:
Tel: +44 (0) 131 650 5194
Email: sciengra@ed.ac.uk

PhD, MPhil and MSc by Research enquiries
Tel: +44 (0) 131 650 3091
Email: pgr-admissions@inf.ed.ac.uk