How to apply for a Postgraduate Research Degree in the School of Informatics, University of Edinburgh

This guidance is provided to help applicants submit a high quality and complete PGR application via the University’s EUCLID portal. 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.

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1. 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 individual PGR programmes on the Postgraduate Degree Finder webpages here:


2. Check our entry requirements

You need to meet our programme specific entry requirements, usually a first or upper 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 on the Postgraduate Degree Finder webpages here:


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.

3. 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 details. 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 (below).

4. Find a supervisor

Your chances of a successful application will be greatly increased if you determine who would be a good 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 supervisors are 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.
5. Apply to the University of Edinburgh

We are not able to consider an applicant's suitability or eligibility without a complete application, including all the supporting documents.

If you wish to be considered for admission, you must submit a complete application using our online applications system (which is referred to with the University as EUCLID).

You apply directly to the University of Edinburgh via the degree finder here:


Click on the specific programme you wish to apply and select your preferred start date. Please choose a start date at least 3 months from the date of application submission, as we need time to complete screening and selection processes.

You can apply for more than one postgraduate courses, if you wish. If you are applying for more than one degrees, you must 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.

6. Required documentation

You must submit the following documents when applying for a PGR programme hosted by the School of Informatics.

a) A Curriculum Vitae (CV)

Please provide an up to date CV which details information on your education (including all degrees completed and in progress), experience, skills and interests, achievements, etc. We will not be able to consider your application without a CV.

b) A Research Proposal

“How to write a good research proposal” guidance is here:

https://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/postgraduate/applying/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 describing your proposed research topic in more detail.

The research proposal should be 2-5 pages long.

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.

We will not be able to screen and pass your application to our Academic Selectors for consideration without a research proposal.

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

Key guidance webpages are here:

https://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/postgraduate/applying/your-application/certificates-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. 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.

We will only accept good quality scans of your original or certified copies (no photos please).

- 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 of them. 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 you are currently a student studying for a degree 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.

- **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.

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.

d) **English language qualifications**

Key guidance webpage here: [https://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/international/english](https://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/international/english)

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) the minimum standards for Tier 4 visas.

Please check:

- When your English language certificate was issued
  - 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.
  - If you are meeting the English language entry requirement through submission of an IELTS, TOEFL or Trinity ISE, the certificate must be no more than two years old from the start of the programme you are applying for.
- Whether your grades for English language certificate such as IELTS, TOEFL, CAE/CPE or Trinity ISE meet our minimum requirements (you can check these on the PG Degree Finder pages here: [https://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/international/english](https://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/international/english))
- 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 still required.

We only accept original scans of IELTS/TOFEL (etc.) certificates 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 does meets our requirements.

e) Two academic references

Please provide two academic references which are:

- Specific to the programme you are applying for
- Signed
- Dated within the last 12 months, and
- On university/organisation letterhead.

We usually 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.

7. Application status

Your application will be passed on to our Academic Selectors for consideration when all required documents that meet our requirements are provided to us. We will also pass your application to Selectors:

- if your English language requirement is 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 is that meets our requirements is provided. However, please note that the second reference should be provided as soon as possible.

When we receive your application we will screen it and contact you to let you know whether additional documents are required or that your application has been passed on to our Academic Selectors for consideration.
8. Incomplete applications

Incomplete applications will be rejected if the required additional documents are not provided within 6 weeks from the time you submitted the application.

9. Deadline for applications

You can apply all year round for PhD, MPhil and MScR programmes as you can start at the 1st of each month. This does not apply for combined degrees (CDTs), which only start in September.

We recommend that all applicants submit a complete application at least three months before the programme start date, as sufficient allowance is required to complete application screening, selection and offer processes. International applicant should also consider the time needed to complete ATAS, CAS and Visa processes. More information is available here: https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-administration/immigration

If you are applying for funding or scholarships, check the deadlines for your application.

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 requested entry point.

10. Check fee status and funding

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

A number of studentships are available for PhD study. Please note that there are no scholarships available for MPhil or MScR programmes. 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. Indicatively, you can look in the following: https://www.ed.ac.uk/informatics/postgraduate/fees/research-scholarships https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-funding/search-scholarships

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 SoI make PGR offers to those who are planning to entirely self-fund.
11. Application outcome

When we receive your complete application, we will pass it to our Academic Selectors for consideration. Since we usually receive a large number of applications, delays in our average processing time should be expected. The outcome of your application will be communicated to you via our application system, so please ensure that you check your emails regularly for a notification email from us.

If your application is successful, you will receive an offer from us. This will either be unconditional or may include conditions – for example, meeting our English language requirements or completing your Bachelor’s or Master’s degree with a certain degree. 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.

12. Confirming your place

Once you receive an offer, please acknowledge receipt and confirm acceptance of the offer via our application system. 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.

13. 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
14. **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

15. **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