Policy and Procedure for Postgraduate Admissions to the University of Edinburgh

1. **Purpose**

   1.1 To set out policy governing the admission of postgraduate students to the University of Edinburgh.

   1.2 The postgraduate admissions policy sits within the University of Edinburgh's overarching policy framework which is set out in the University of Edinburgh Admissions Policy.

2. **Principles**

   2.1 The University of Edinburgh aims to admit students with the academic potential and aptitude to succeed on its postgraduate programmes.

   2.2 The University is committed to fair, transparent and consistent admissions practices which meet best practice standards within the higher education sector, and which comply with the expectations of the Quality Assurance Agency's UK Code for Higher Education (Chapter B2: Recruitment, selection and admissions to higher education; and Chapter B11: Research degrees).

   2.3 The University welcomes applications from all students with the potential to succeed, regardless of their background. The University values diversity, and aims to improve access to higher education for students from under-represented groups including those with protected characteristics under the 2010 Equality Act.

3. **Scope**

   3.1 This policy applies to applications for postgraduate taught and postgraduate research programmes made directly to the University of Edinburgh, and to applications for postgraduate programmes which are managed through the Universities & Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) or any other external body.

   3.2 This policy applies equally to all applicants regardless of fee status or domicile.

4. **Application processes**

   4.1 Applications to postgraduate taught and postgraduate research programmes are made using the University of Edinburgh's online application system with the exception of applications for the programmes listed below:

   - Professional Diploma in Education (PGDE) applications are made via UCAS
   - Master of Social Work applications are made via UCAS
   - Diploma in Professional Legal Practice applications are made via the university where the LLB Law was studied, rather than directly to the University of Edinburgh

- MSc in Applied Psychology for Children and Young People applications are made through NHS Scotland
- Doctorate in Clinical Psychology applications are made through the Clearing House for Postgraduate Courses in Clinical Psychology

5. Pre-application information

5.1 The University of Edinburgh will ensure that prospective postgraduate students have access to accurate information and advice to enable them to make an informed choice about opportunities for postgraduate study. This information will be available in the University's online Degree Finder, and will include:

- Programme outline

- Entry and selection criteria

- References required

- Deadline for applications (if applicable)

- Tuition fees and any other programme costs

- Application fee, if required

- Deposit, if required

6. Application timescales and deadlines

6.1 The postgraduate application cycle will formally open on 1 October each year. Applications can be made for :

- entry to the current year (postgraduate research programmes and postgraduate taught programmes with a January intake)

- entry in the next academic year

- deferred entry to the year beyond (where a programme is open for deferred applications)

6.2 Applicants will be encouraged to submit applications as early as possible, and at least one month prior to the start of the programme. Where a programme has a specific application deadline, this will be clearly published in the online Degree Finder. When the deadline is reached, the programme will be closed to further applications, unless it is decided that the deadline is to be extended. Where an application deadline is to be extended, applicants will be notified of this on the online Degree Finder, and the programme will remain open until the new deadline.

6.3 Programmes which have limited numbers of places may become full before a published deadline has been reached. In such cases, the programme will be closed and any applicants waiting for a decision will be informed as quickly as possible. Information on the Degree Finder will also be updated and no new applications for the programme will be considered even if the deadline has not yet been reached.

6.4 Applicants who require a visa to study in the UK should ensure that they have sufficient time to apply for a visa once an admissions decision has been made. An applicant who has not obtained the required visa in time will not be permitted to join the programme, and will have to defer to the next available start date for that programme. The applicant will also be required to meet all minimum entry requirements for the new entry date, including the currency of English language qualifications.

6.5 Applications for specific funded postgraduate research projects will be subject to published deadlines. Any terms and conditions attached to the funding will also apply. No applications which are received after the deadline will be considered. If a postgraduate funded research post is unfilled, the position will be re-advertised.

7. Entry requirements

7.1 Academic entry requirements are set at a level which evidence shows is the minimum required for a student to be successful on programme. The entry requirements section of the online degree finder will indicate if applicants whose academic qualifications fall below entry requirements, may still be considered for an offer of a place, and what additional criteria they are required to meet.

7.2 For some programmes, an applicant may be able to evidence that they meet the minimum entry requirements on the basis of substantial, relevant work experience or professional training. In such circumstances, the application will be considered in accordance with the University's *Policy for the recognition of prior learning in admissions.*

7.3 The University recognises many different international qualifications, and sets appropriate requirements equivalent to our stated UK entry requirements. Any academic conditions attached to an offer will be expressed in terms of the qualifications on which the application is based.

7.4 Applications which include a request for the accreditation of prior learning will be considered on an individual basis, within the parameters set out in the University's degree regulations.

7.5 Entry to some programmes includes a requirement for an art and/or design portfolio.

7.6 Entry to some programmes includes a requirement for a portfolio of written work. Only programmes given University approval to request written samples as a routine part of the admissions-selection process can do so. Where a portfolio of written work is required, it will be noted in the entry requirements in the online Degree Finder.

7.7 Samples of written work may be requested from applicants to any programme where:

7.7.1 An applicant meets academic entry requirements but has been out of formal education for a considerable amount of time.

7.7.2 An applicant does not meet academic entry requirements, but wishes to use prior certificated or experiential learning to gain entry, as set out in University's R*ecognition of prior learning in admissions policy.*

8. English language requirements

8.1 All postgraduate programmes at the University of Edinburgh are taught in English. Applicants for whom English is not their first language must demonstrate their proficiency in the use of English as set out in the University's *Policy regarding English language entry requirements.*

8.2 Applicants are not required to have completed an English language qualification at the point of application.

8.3 Where an offer can be made on the basis of academic qualifications but an applicant does not yet have an acceptable English Language qualification, an offer may be made conditional on the applicant obtaining a specific English Language award.

9. References

9.1 A maximum of one satisfactory academic reference will be required for postgraduate taught admission. Two references will be required for postgraduate research admission. Additional references may be required for particular programmes, for example in relation to work experience.

9.2 Where references are normally not required, a School or College may decide to request references in borderline cases where there is insufficient information in the application to assess an applicant's suitability, for example where an applicant has non-standard qualifications. In these cases the University may consider a reference, a piece of written work or an interview with the applicant to be the most appropriate means of assessing suitability.

9.3 The online Degree Finder will clearly indicate the reference requirements for every programme.

9.4 Where an academic reference is normally required but cannot be provided by the applicant, it may be possible for an alternative such as a professional or employment reference to be provided instead. Applicants should discuss this with the University prior to application.

9.5 Where provision of a satisfactory reference is an entry requirement, an application will be considered incomplete until the reference is received.

10. Application turnaround times

10.1 The University will aim to screen applications within 10 working days of receipt, and to make a decision within a further 28 days, except in cases where a longer timescale is required due to a funding deadline, interviews, or a "gathered field" where applications are not considered until after the application deadline is reached. Each application is then considered on its own merits in competition with all other eligible applications for the same programme.

10.2 Applicants who have been requested to submit additional information will be encouraged to supply the information or to indicate when it will become available, (e.g. in the case of degree transcripts), within 28 days. Where an applicant has informed the University that the information will not be available within 28 days, an appropriate extension will be agreed, where possible.

11. Selection

11.1 Every complete application that meets the minimum entry requirements for the programme will be considered on its own merits and in competition with other applications. Where there are more applications than there are places available, selection criteria will be applied fairly and consistently by appropriately trained staff.

11.2 The processing of each admissions decision will involve at least two members of staff.

11.3 Selection decisions will be communicated to applicants via the EUCLID portal.

11.4 Applicants are required to reply to offers within 28 days of an offer being made, after which point the application may be rejected by default. If there is a reason why the applicant cannot reply within this timescale, he or she should contact the appropriate admissions office and an extension may be agreed. Where an applicant applies later in the application cycle, it may not be possible to allow 28 days for a response to an offer, if for example, this would not give the applicant sufficient time to enrol ahead of the start of the programme. In such cases, applicants will be advised of how long they have to respond.

12. Deferred entry

12.1 An applicant who has received an offer of a place to study on a postgraduate programme at the University of Edinburgh may request that the offer be deferred to the intake after the one they were originally offered entry to. Requests for deferred entry will be considered on a case by case basis.

13. Other relevant policies

13.1 The following University of Edinburgh admissions policies will also apply to postgraduate admissions:
- *University of Edinburgh Admissions Policy*
- *Policy regarding English Language requirements*
- *Policy and procedure for applicants with declared disabilities*
- *Code of practice for student criminal convictions and disclosure assessment*
- *Policy and procedure for recognising prior learning in admissions to the University of Edinburgh*
- *Policy and procedure regarding admissions fraud*
- *Policy and procedure for admissions feedback, appeals and complaints*

14. Monitoring and review

14.1 Postgraduate admissions data is monitored by the Monitoring Student Numbers Group.

14.2 The *Policy and Procedure for Postgraduate Admissions to the University of Edinburgh* will be reviewed on an annual basis, and any proposed changes will be submitted to the Recruitment and Admissions Strategy Group for approval.

15. Requests for flexibility to policy

15.1 Requests for flexibility in relation to any aspects of this policy, for example in response to specific requests from applicants or members of staff, should be made to the relevant College Office and/or Head of Admissions, in Student Recruitment and Admissions.

Policy approved by the Recruitment and Admissions Strategy Group: September 2014

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