

University of York

Admissions Policy

Code of Practice on the Recruitment, Selection and Admission of Postgraduate Researchers

1. Purpose and Scope of the Code of Practice

- 1.1. This Code of Practice sets out policy and outlines processes specific to the recruitment, selection and admission of Postgraduate Researchers (PGRs) i.e. those undertaking a PhD, MD, EngD, MPhil, Master of Arts (by research) or Master of Science (by research). This Code of Practice serves as a reference point for York Graduate Research School (YGRS), all staff involved in the recruitment, selection and admission of PGRs, and PGR applicants.
- 1.2. This Code of Practice should be read alongside the [University's Admissions Policy](#) (which sets out the high level policy and principles, within an institutional and legislative framework), the [Policy on Research Degrees](#), and [Regulation 2](#).

2. Training of staff involved in PGR recruitment, selection and admission

- 2.1. All Departments (including academic and professional services) should ensure that staff involved in the recruitment, selection and admission of PGRs have received training and guidance to prepare them for this role.

3. Admissions requirements for PGR programmes

Academic admissions requirements for PGR programmes

- 3.1. For MD, MPhil or PhD research programmes, applicants are expected to have a first degree, normally an upper second class (2i) honours degree (or equivalent alternative or overseas qualification) in a relevant subject, or a relevant postgraduate Masters qualification (or equivalent).
- 3.2. For admission to an MA by research or MSc by research programme, applicants should normally have at least a lower second class (2ii) honours degree (or equivalent alternative or overseas qualification)
- 3.3. Some PGR programmes require a higher academic or an additional entry requirement so applicants should always refer to the respective individual programme requirements.

English admissions requirements for PGR programmes

- 3.4. The University's minimum English language requirements, as set out in the main body of the Admissions Policy, apply to all PGR programmes. Many

PGR programmes require a standard of English above the University minimum. Further information is [available](#).

- 3.5. The University's policy on alternative evidence of English Language ability, as set out in the main body of the Admissions Policy and the English language code of practice, also apply to all PGR programmes.

Exceptions (academic waivers) for PGR programmes

- 3.6. Exceptions to academic requirements may be made, for example for applicants with extensive relevant work experience. Such exceptions will require the support of the Chair of Graduate School (or delegate) and approval of the Dean of the York Graduate Research School (YGRS) (or delegate).

4. How applications to PGR programmes are assessed

Applications

- 4.1. All applications for PGR programmes are assessed individually and holistically. In assessing the ability and suitability of applicants, the following information is provided via the application form and supporting documentation:
 - achievement in awarded or partially complete qualifications
 - predicted achievement in qualifications yet to be awarded
 - personal statement / statement in support of the application / CV
 - evidence of relevant work experience (selected programmes only)
 - references (see below)
 - sample of written work, portfolio submission, or evidence of professional experience (selected programmes only)
 - research proposal
- 4.2. Applicants to PGR programmes are normally required to submit two academic references as part of their application. Further information concerning the content and format of references is [available](#).

PGR applicants who have mitigating circumstances

- 4.3. If any applicant to a PGR programme feels that any disability, long term health condition, other personal circumstance (e.g. bereavement, or other difficult home or family circumstances) or any other event may have affected their previous education, then they are encouraged to complete the mitigating circumstances form. All formal notifications for mitigating circumstances which are supported by a full declaration about the nature of the circumstances will be considered as part of the admissions process, and may be taken into account by the department when considering whether to interview and / or offer a place. Further advice and guidance for PGR applicants with mitigating circumstances is [available](#).

Reviewing applications for PGR programmes

- 4.4. Applications for PGR programmes will only be considered where an appropriate supervisor(s) and resources are expected to be available for the duration of the normal period of study.

Interviewing PGR applicants

- 4.5. Before an offer of a place on a PGR programme is made, an applicant must be interviewed, either in person or, where this is not practicable, online interviews are permissible. The **interview must involve at least two members of academic staff** (this is to ensure sufficient scrutiny of the applicant and for safeguarding on both sides), **normally including the Graduate Chair (or their delegate) and the prospective supervisor**. The purpose of the interview is to allow the department to assess the suitability of the potential PGR and (where applicable) the broad viability of their proposed project (including, for example, ethical considerations, funding constraints, or UKVI restrictions).

Post-interview decisions for PGR programmes

- 4.6. The **decision (post-interview) to offer a place on a PGR programme must involve at least two members of academic staff**, normally including the Graduate Chair (or their delegate) and the prospective supervisor.
- 4.7. Successful applicants will receive an offer letter from the University which sets out the key details of the PGR programme, any conditions attached, and which draws attention to the regulations, policies and guidance applicable to PGRs. The offer letter forms a binding contract with the University and, upon acceptance, on the applicant.
- 4.8. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified of the decision and given feedback. Applicants wishing to request additional feedback should contact the PG Admissions team.

5. PGRs wishing to transfer to a PGR programme at York from a PGR programme at another University

- 5.1. If a PGR wishes to transfer from another university to York, they must apply through the usual postgraduate admissions process for PGRs.
- 5.2. Potential incoming PGRs should include their current PGR programme within the education section, and should also note their aim to transfer within the personal statement section of the PGR application form.
- 5.3. The Department should identify applicants who wish to transfer during their assessment of the application, and notify the PG Admissions team when recording their recommended offer. The PG Admissions team will seek further information from the applicant on their individual transfer circumstances.
- 5.4. The application will then be considered by PGR Administration on behalf of Special Cases Committee for exceptional entry.
- 5.5. The PGR will be informed of the basis on which they are being accepted (including the length of enrolment (including any entitlement to a writing up period), any variation to standard progress and review arrangements, and any accreditation of prior learning to recognise courses and modules already

undertaken etc.) and will be issued with a tailored offer letter by the Postgraduate Admissions team.

- 5.6. The department will need to ensure that the research to date, where applicable, is subject to a light touch ethical review in accordance with the University's Code of practice and principles for good ethical governance.

6. Responsibility for the Code of Practice

- 6.1. This Code of Practice is the responsibility of the Head of Admission. It is reviewed and updated annually or whenever legislation or the Admissions Policy is amended, in consultation with YGRS.
- 6.2. Responsibility for reviewing individual cases against the Code of Practice is the responsibility of the Dean of the York Graduate Research School.
- 6.3. Responsibility for detailed processes arising from this Code of Practice rests with the York Graduate Research School. Processes are reviewed annually or, sooner if legislation, the Admissions Policy or this Code of Practice is amended.

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