

## POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH ADMISSIONS POLICY

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## 1. **BACKGROUND**

### 1.1 Admission to Postgraduate Research Courses at Imperial College:

Consistently rated amongst the world's top universities, Imperial College London is a science-based institution with an international reputation for excellence in both teaching and research.

We provide both discipline-based and multidisciplinary postgraduate research programmes in science, engineering, business and medicine, leading to the award of MPhil (one year programme), PhD, MD(Res) and EngD. These courses are designed to prepare our research students for their future careers, whether in academia or industry. They are intended to benefit students of high ability, whatever their ethnic or national origin, religion, politics or gender in accordance with our Equal Opportunities Policy. In order to cope with, enjoy and succeed on these courses, our students need to be extremely well-qualified on entry, see Section 3. This Postgraduate Research Admissions Policy is approved and monitored by the College's Recruitment and Admissions Strategy and Policy Committee.

### 1.2 Equal Opportunities Statement:

The College's mission is to maintain excellent standards of achievement in teaching and research in order to attract and admit students of the highest calibre, and its national and international reputation relies on the people who make up its diverse and high-achieving community. In pursuing its aim of excellence, Imperial adheres to a comprehensive policy of equal opportunities which ensures that it does not discriminate against any individual, from the first point of contact through to graduation. Selection for entry is based on consideration of academic ability, motivation for study, interest in the subject area and the potential both to benefit from the experience and to contribute to College life. All applications are considered and evaluated on the basis of individual potential.

## 2. **APPLICATION ROUTES AND DEADLINES**

### 2.1 How to apply:

All applications for admission to our postgraduate research programmes should be submitted online via the Imperial College website: [www.imperial.ac.uk](http://www.imperial.ac.uk) Receipt of an application will be acknowledged, following which an initial assessment will be made by Admissions. The application will then be forwarded to the relevant Department which will consider suitability for a place. Students are permitted to submit one application only and to identify two choices of research area, which will be considered simultaneously.

## 2.2 When to apply:

Those wishing to study for a research degree can apply at any time in the year, as detailed in the prospectus: [www.imperial.ac.uk/pgprospectus](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/pgprospectus). The majority of research students start at the beginning of October but student can be admitted at any point in the year. Applicants are advised to consult the departmental website for information regarding the research interests of the Department and to make contact with a potential supervisor before making a formal application. International applicants should note that obtaining a visa can be a lengthy process and should ensure that they allow enough time to fulfil immigration requirements before the start date of their formal registration with the College.

## 3. ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

### 3.1 Academic Requirements:

We welcome applications from those who already possess the required qualifications and those who expect to obtain them before the research degree programme commences. Candidates will be required to have satisfied both the College general entrance requirements and the individual research programme requirements before an offer of a place is confirmed. Applicants should consult the individual departmental web pages on [www.imperial.ac.uk](http://www.imperial.ac.uk) for more specific guidance. The following paragraph outlines the College's minimum general entrance requirements for entry to our postgraduate research degree programmes:

- The College normally requires at least an upper second class honours degree from a UK university (or equivalent from an overseas institution) **and** a Master's degree, or an equivalent qualification or relevant postgraduate experience as a prerequisite for research degree study. These qualifications must be in a subject deemed appropriate to that of the programme to be followed.

Or

- An MSci or MEng degree awarded with at least upper second class honours.

Or

- A registrable qualification in Medicine - awarded by a UK university (or a qualification of an equivalent standard awarded by an overseas university, and which is appropriate to the programme to be followed) and a Master's degree, or an equivalent qualification or relevant postgraduate experience in a subject deemed appropriate to that of the programme to be followed.

Or

- A professional or other qualification obtained by written examinations and approved by the College.

Students on a Imperial College integrated Master's and Research (1+3) programme, are normally required to achieve a minimum mark of 60% in their Master's qualification at Imperial, as a prerequisite for continuing to the research programme.

### **3.2 English language qualifications:**

All programmes of study in the College are taught in English. To obtain maximum benefit from studies at Imperial College **all** students must have full command of written and spoken English.

Students must normally have a minimum of grade B in GCSE English Language or an acceptable alternative English Language qualification before admission can be confirmed.

Overseas applicants for whom English is not the first language must provide evidence of a very good command of English before commencing their studies. Full details of our English language requirements can be found here:

<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/registry/admissions/pgenglish>

Please note that the scores or grades indicated are the minimum levels generally acceptable to the College. Selectors have the discretion to prescribe higher requirements.

In addition to the above, students will also be assessed by the College's Centre for Academic English after they have registered and arrived at College. After this assessment students may be required to attend internal classes (free of charge), and may also have a further assessment as an integral part of their studies. This is to ensure that they are able to carry out their research successfully, and are properly prepared to write the thesis and defend it in the viva voce examination.

Overseas applicants who meet the requirements but would like to improve their confidence in English are recommended to spend some time in an English Language school in the UK prior to commencement of their research programme at Imperial. Once enrolled at Imperial, they may wish to attend in-house language classes which are available free of charge to all non-native English speaking students.

## **4. SELECTION POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

### **4.1 Timetabling of selection:**

Selection for research programmes occurs throughout the year and all applications are given careful consideration. Some programmes may have specific deadlines, for example when combined with a one year Master's programme. Some Departments and schemes will restrict applications to particular times, either due to funding requirements or because the students are all admitted at a specific time. Students should look at the Departmental websites or the websites relating to that particular scheme for detailed information.

### **4.2 Selection Criteria:**

While the specific selection criteria vary by research programme there are, however, certain general points which are equally applicable to all departments.

#### **(i) Interviews**

All applicants must be interviewed before a formal offer of admission is made. This interview must be conducted by at least 1 and normally 2 members of staff in addition to the Director of Postgraduate Studies or the Head of Department or nominee. Interviews may be conducted as a video conference or teleconference if it is not possible for the candidate to visit the Department. Further information about an individual Department's interview processes, including its policy and practice on interviewing applicants based overseas are detailed on the individual departmental websites.

#### (ii) The References

All applicants are required to provide the names and contact details of two academic or professional referees. References are always taken up in writing and all departments attach considerable importance to their reports. They play a major part in deciding whether an applicant is called for interview and determining whether an offer is made. The assessment of previous academic performance is of particular value, as are indications of the strength of an applicant's motivation to study at research level. A professional reference can also be of use in establishing an applicant's postgraduate career development.

#### (iii) The Research topic and supervision

In order to assist in the processing of applications applicants should identify the research area (and if appropriate, specific project) and the Department in which they wish to work. They should also include the name of their potential supervisor if they have already been in contact with an academic member of staff and reached an agreement about a suitable topic.

### **4.3 Applicants with disabilities:**

The College's policy is to consider all applications solely on academic grounds. However, any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary will be put in place to enable all students to compete on an equal basis. It is important therefore that the College is informed of any disability well in advance so that early discussion can take place to determine the reasonable adjustments that it may be possible to put in place. Every effort is made to ensure that our research programmes are accessible, but occasionally, due to the nature of the programme competency standards, it may not be possible to make the necessary adjustments to enable an individual candidate to undertake a particular research programme.

We therefore encourage those with disabilities to contact us as early as possible and preferably before making an application, indicating the research area they are interested in together with the nature of the disability so that a meeting can be arranged to discuss any adjustments that may need to be made. The Disability Advisory Service (DAS), works closely with the Registry, the Student Accommodation Centre and academic departments to provide a variety of support initiatives to enable students to access their studies successfully. The Disability Advisers are available to discuss, on a confidential basis, any issues of concern people with disabilities may have and can advise on necessary evidence of disability that will be required.

More information can be found here: <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/disabilityadvisoryservice>

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 Imperial College London's Disability Equality Scheme is available at:

<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/hr/equality/disability/disabilityequalityscheme>

This document can also be made available in ordinary or large print. Should a Braille or taped version be required this can also be arranged on request.

### **4.4 Criminal Convictions**

**Applicants for medical courses who declare a criminal conviction:**

**While we do not wish to penalise an ex-offender the College does have a duty of care to its wider community and there may be occasions when an academically suitable applicant will be refused entry.**

The College's policy is that applicants who declare a criminal conviction are initially reviewed on the same academic grounds that apply to all applicants. It is the responsibility of applicants to inform the College of any convictions occurring after an application has been submitted and throughout their College career.

## **5. CHECKING THE STATUS OF AN APPLICATION**

The acknowledgment email sent to applicants following receipt of the application, contains information regarding how to access Student e-Service. Student e-Service enables applicants to track the progress and view the outcome of the application. It also enables applicants to view the progress of any outstanding supporting application documents, which have been submitted.

## **6. ACCEPTING OUR OFFER & CONTRACT OF ADMISSION**

All offers for a place on a research course are transmitted electronically via the College's Student e-Service. Any offer of a place made by the College is made on the basis of the applicant's:

- Acceptance of the College's rules and regulations as published and amended from time to time
- Acceptance of the following statement:  
The College prospectuses and website describes the programmes of study offered by the College. Further documents describe the educational services offered by the College, the regulations governing the conduct of students and details of registration and assessment. Further details can be found at <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/students> The College takes all reasonable steps to provide the educational services described in the prospectus and in the documents listed but it does not guarantee the provision of such services. Should industrial action or circumstances beyond the control of the College interfere with its ability to provide educational services, the College undertakes to use all reasonable steps to minimise any resultant disruption.
- Undertaking to pay the fees required for the course and any other fees for services offered by the College and accepted, such as accommodation.
- Ensuring that statements made in applying for entry are accurate, as the discovery of false statements or omissions may lead to the offer being withdrawn (or in the case of students registered, to their registration being terminated).

## **7. FEEDBACK TO UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS**

The College receives a large number of applications for every place and, as entry is very competitive, it is unable to make offers to all applicants. Imperial College acknowledges that it is important that unsuccessful applicants are informed as early as possible so that they can consider other options. We will provide feedback to all unsuccessful postgraduate applicants at their request.

### ***When to request feedback:***

Feedback can only be requested during the application cycle in which the application was made.

### ***How to request feedback:***

Applicants should request feedback by emailing the appropriate admissions team, details can be found at: <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/registry/abouttheregistry/contacts#admissions>

quoting their full name, College ID number and programme applied for. Please note the College cannot provide feedback to third parties such as parents, guardians, teachers or referees without the express written permission of the applicant.

***How you will receive feedback:***

Feedback will be issued via an email (normally within 15 working days of a request being made).

**8. CHANGES TO PROGRAMMES**

The College will use all reasonable endeavours to allow the student to undertake the agreed research programme. The College reserves the right to make variations to the research programme if such action is reasonably considered to be necessary by the College in the context of its wider purposes, or for reasons that are outside the College's control (for example departure of the proposed supervisors). If this happens the College will use reasonable endeavours to provide a suitable alternative research programme.

**9. APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS**

Please note that you may not appeal against the academic or professional judgement of those making a decision but you may complain if you are dissatisfied with the processing of your application. Complaints should be made to the Academic Registrar in writing.