

Admission for a Research Degree (Policy)

Summary

A new University policy on admissions is being received for approval at this meeting of Senate, covering undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes (see separate item).

A separate policy has been developed to detail the service standards, rights and obligations for postgraduate research degree applicants for the forthcoming academic year, merging the former admissions policy with the separate Senate policy on research degree entry requirements. This is to address the immediate gap created by the development of a separate policy for taught provision. It is planned that a more extensive review of the admissions policy for postgraduate research degrees will be undertaken during 2018/19.

One action required.

Recommended Action

Senate is asked to **approve** the policy.

Publication: Open

ADMISSION FOR A RESEARCH DEGREE

Equality and Diversity statement

City, University of London is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in all its activities, processes, and culture, under its Public Sector Equality Duties and the Equality Act 2010. This includes promoting equality and diversity for all, irrespective of any protected characteristic, working pattern, family circumstance, socio-economic background, political belief or other irrelevant distinction.

Where relevant to the policy, decision-making panels will ensure a reasonable gender balance (with at least one man and one woman) and will actively consider representation of other protected groups.

Admission for a Research Degree

1. Introduction

- 1.1. City, University of London welcomes applications from all candidates with the potential and motivation to succeed in Higher Education. City recognises the importance of establishing policies and procedures for recruitment, selection and admission of students that are fair, clear and accurate. This policy and procedure outlines the admissions process for postgraduate research degrees at City, University of London.
- 1.2. The Admissions Policy and Procedures comply with relevant legislation, regulations and best practice including the following requirements:
 - 1.2.1. Competition and Markets Authority consumer protection guidance;
 - 1.2.2. the Quality Assurance Agency's Quality Code Chapters B2, B9, B10 and B11
 - 1.2.3. the Schwartz Recommendations for Good Practice;
 - 1.2.4. the Equality Act 2010;
 - 1.2.5. the General Data Protection Regulation 2018;
- 1.3. City admissions process aims to be transparent, clear, fair and consistent. City aims to ensure applicants have the necessary information to make informed decisions about where they choose to study during the research and application process.

2. Service Standards

2.1. What you can expect from City

- 2.1.1. When you apply to study at City, we will follow the principles listed below:
 - i. your application will be treated courteously, fairly and without prejudice and we will act in accordance with City's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. We will handle and share your personal data in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation as well as comply with our Safeguarding policy to ensure those who would be under 18 on the date of admission to City are treated in the same way
 - ii. disabled applicants are welcomed and are encouraged to disclose the nature of their disability in their applications. This enables City to be pro-active in provision of reasonable adjustments, thus enhancing the applicant and student experience.
 - iii. we are committed to encouraging applicants from non-conventional academic or professional backgrounds who are able to meet their chosen programme's entry requirements.
 - iv. we will respond to any complaints that arise as quickly as possible.

2.2. What we expect from applicants

- 2.2.1. If you decide to apply to City, University of London we will ask you to do the following:
 - i. provide information about yourself that is true and accurate and tell us promptly if any of this changes (including your contact details);
 - ii. supply correct and accurate information in a timely manner. Please remember that supplying false or misleading information to City as part of an application might affect whether or not we offer you a place or might lead us to withdraw an offer of a place;
 - iii. respond promptly if we ask you for more information or if we need to contact you to clarify something that will help us to process your application;
 - iv. attend an interview if you are invited for one or notify us quickly if you are unable to attend;
 - v. complete any additional requirements that we ask you to undertake;
 - vi. inform us as soon as possible whether you intend to accept an offer of a place;
 - vii. inform us of any relevant conditions, disabilities or other personal circumstances that may affect your safety or ability to study at City or may require additional arrangements to be made, to enable us to make appropriate arrangements for you prior to your arrival;
 - viii. behave courteously and appropriately to employees and students;

- ix. supply correct and accurate information in a timely manner. Please remember that supplying false or misleading information to City as part of an application might affect whether or not we offer you a place or might lead us to withdraw an offer of a place.

3. Applying to City

- 3.1. All applications for a postgraduate research degree require approval from the School Board of Studies on the recommendation of the Senior Tutor/Director of Research.
- 3.2. Prospective students are expected to meet the following:
- i. hold a good honours degree (normally no less than a second class honours degree from a UK University or an equivalent qualification) in an appropriate subject;
 - ii. Some subjects also require an appropriate Masters qualification;
 - iii. be able to demonstrate proficiency in the use of oral and written English;
 - iv. an aptitude and motivation to undertake a course of independent research to doctoral level.
- 3.3. Additional entry requirements may be required by individual programmes; for details of entry requirements and application specifications please refer to course information pages on the City website.
- 3.4. Prospective students who are not a national of a majority English-speaking country as defined in Home Office 'Tier 4 of the Points Based System - Policy Guidance' must meet any one or a combination of the following:
- i. A score of 6.5 in IELTS;
 - ii. The award of an academic qualification equivalent to a UK degree from a majority English-speaking country.
- 3.5. Prospective students who do not meet the English Language requirements may be expected to attend pre-sessional English classes before an offer may be considered.
- 3.6. All prospective students, except City graduates, are required to provide certified evidence of relevant qualifications in support of their application.
- 3.7. Prospective students must indicate how they propose to fund their period of research in order to ensure that neither they nor their supervisor(s) is put under any undue pressure to either submit a thesis before the research has been completed or to recommend that a student be withdrawn, or be required to submit for a lesser degree, because of financial reasons.
- 3.8. An applicant may apply at any time during the year to be admitted as a research student but all prospective students will be expected to register in either October or February of each academic year.
- 3.9. Applicants will only be admitted to a research degree programme if there is suitable expertise within the School/Department to supervise the proposed research.
- 3.10. All candidates will be appointed a supervisory team in accordance with City's policy for the approval of research supervisors, consisting of at least two supervisors, should their application be successful. One supervisor will be designated as a student's first supervisor.
- 3.11. Students are expected to familiarise themselves with the respective [roles and responsibilities](#) of the student and the supervisor(s).
- 3.12. All prospective doctoral students will be registered initially as MPhil/PhD students (or equivalent) except in those circumstances where a student has transferred from another institution and has provided suitable and appropriate evidence that permits direct registration as a PhD student (or equivalent).
- 3.13. Candidates applying to study for the award of PhD by prior publication must provide a list of the publications upon which the assessment for the degree is to be based. Publications should be in English and co-authored publications must be signed off by all contributing authors. Candidates must also provide an outline of how their publications demonstrate an original and significant contribution to their particular discipline. Candidates must additionally be nominated by a member of the City's professoriate who must demonstrate a common research interest with the candidate..

- 3.14. City's Research Degree Framework and Regulations apply equally to partnership provision unless different arrangements have been agreed between City and the partner institution and have received City, University of London approval. Details will be set out in the Memorandum of Agreement for the partnership and in information provided to students.
- 3.15. Applications for postgraduate research programmes are submitted via City's Online Application form. Information on how and when to apply can be found on individual course information pages on the City website.
- 3.16. Before you apply:
- i. we will set out, in course brochures and on our website, detailed entry requirements giving an indication of the typical offer level and applicant profile for each programme and telling you clearly what qualifications you need to apply to each of our programmes. We use the same admissions criteria for all students applying to a particular programme;
 - ii. we will tell you if there are any specific requirements you must meet when you apply. This may relate particularly to programmes that are accredited by professional organisations, many of whom ask for additional information such as interviews, portfolios, entry tests, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks etc;
 - iii. we will provide clear guidance on the fees we charge or the fee status you will be eligible for, or indicate where this information is available externally;
 - iv. we will provide clear and objective pre-entry guidance on all matters relating to admissions, including on visa requirements, so that you can make an informed decision about your application.
 - v. we will tell you what proficiency in English language you will need to enter and participate in the programme successfully;
 - vi. if you wish to apply for a programme that is run jointly with another university or institution we will explain the interaction between the admissions requirements for each institution.
- 3.17. When you apply for a programme:
- i. we will endeavour to provide swift responses to enquiries and applications and ensure that all necessary documentation is sent at the earliest possible time;
 - ii. we will explain clearly how your application will be processed by City and will provide information on which staff will be handling your application or who will be able to advise you on your application, including a named contact;
 - iii. we will treat the information you give us as confidential unless we are required to release it to a legally authorised third party (for example, the police).
- 3.18. When we consider your application:
- i. we will make a decision on whether or not to offer you a place based on the clear entry requirements and criteria for the chosen programme; your qualifications, needs and aspirations; and the views of the Senior Tutor for Research as to whether you will be capable of fulfilling the objectives of the programme and achieving the standards deemed necessary for the award;
 - ii. we will use appropriately qualified and experienced staff and will provide regular training to update the skills and knowledge of those staff;
 - iii. we will ensure that the Senior Tutors for Research are knowledgeable about the application procedures, matriculation requirements, programme aims and programme specifications for which they are responsible;
 - iv. we will ensure that the Senior Tutors for Research are aware of the resources that are available to them when they require advice of clarification, both within City and externally;
 - v. we will make all our decisions in accordance with our commitment to equal opportunities.

- 3.19. If your application is accepted:
- i. we will explain the arrangements for how you will enrol and register with City as a new student;
 - ii. we will inform you of any significant changes to the programme made between the time we offer you a place and the time when registration is complete and, if this does happen, will advise you of all the options available in the circumstances.
- 3.20. If your application is rejected:
- i. due to the volume of applications we receive, we cannot commit to providing you with feedback if your application is rejected. However, some programmes may be able to offer this on an individual basis to students who request it. If you require feedback on your application, please contact the Course Officer for the programme.

4. Making a complaint and appealing against an admission decision

- 4.1. An applicant can make a complaint if you are dissatisfied with the service you have received during the application process, if an error was made in handling your application or if City has not fulfilled the principles outlined in this policy.
- 4.2. An appeal can be made when an applicant believes the wrong decision has been made on their application and they would like this decision reviewed.
- 4.3. There will be no discrimination against any applicant who makes an appeal or brings a complaint.
- 4.4. City will usually only accept appeals and complaints from the applicant directly and not from any third party.
- 4.5. If you are considering making a complaint against the admissions process, applicants should raise concerns informally with City's staff at the point the complaint arises. Applicants should contact the relevant Course Officer, in the first instance. If you do not consider the response received to be satisfactory, you should write to the Senior Tutor for Research for the Department/Research Centre, outlining the steps they have taken to resolve the complaint informally. If the applicant feels the decision reached by the Senior Tutor is unsatisfactory, the applicant should ask their communications to be progressed to the Head of Department. The decision of the Head of Department is final.
- 4.6. If you are considering making a complaint about an admissions decision, please contact the relevant Course Officer in the first instance. Your contact person who may discuss this with other staff within the School. If you do not consider the response received to be satisfactory, you should write to the Senior Tutor for Research for the Department/Research Centre, outlining the nature and details of the appeal. If the applicant feels the decision reached by the Senior Tutor is unsatisfactory, the applicant should request a review by the Head of Department. The decision of the Head of Department is final.
- 4.7. Current City students who wish to complain about an action or lack of action by City, or any aspect of our service, may do so by using the Senate Regulation 26: Student Complaints Procedure.

5. General Information for applicants

5.1. Student Protection Plan

- 5.1.1. When you accept an offer and register for a programme at City, we fully expect to be able to deliver that programme to completion of your studies. However, in rare circumstances, factors may occur that mean this delivery will no longer be possible.
- 5.1.2. City's Student Protection Plan sets out what you should expect to happen should your chosen programme or City, University of London close including arrangements that would be put in place to enable you to complete your studies.
- 5.1.3. For more information, please refer to Clause 19.2 of the Terms and Conditions for Study at City, University of London. -

https://www.city.ac.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0010/434188/05.09.18.Terms-and-Conditions-2018_2019.GM240818.V2.pdf and to the [Policy on Change in Supervision Arrangements](#)

5.2. Protecting your data

- 5.2.1. All personal information collected and held by City will be treated in confidence, in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018 and City's data protection policies including City's Privacy Policy.
- 5.2.2. City collects, holds and processes information about all applicants to City and all students at City and where necessary, may share the information with a relevant third party. Such information may include personal data and sensitive personal data.
- 5.2.3. City will conduct its relationship directly with each student and not with his/her parents/guardians/agent/another third party nor would City share information about students with their parents/guardians (even where a student is under the age of 18) without a valid consent from the student or other lawful justification for disclosure. City will not provide information to parents/guardians about a student's progress, results or any other personal circumstances in the absence of a valid consent or other justification.
- 5.2.4. Your personal data (including sensitive personal data) will only be processed by City for the purposes of fulfilling its obligations and responsibilities as well as manage its relationship with applicants and students. City uses the information provided by or collected from applicants and/or students (including information from application forms) to administer applications and to compile statistics about applicants and/or students that may be published or passed to government bodies or the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).
- 5.2.5. For more information on how City uses personal data, please refer to City's Data Protection Notice for Students, HESA Student Data Protection Notice and Privacy Policy.

5.3. Freedom of Information

- 5.3.1. City will respond to written requests for information, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, 2000, within 20 working days. All requests should be directed to City's Information Compliance Officer.

5.4. Applications under the age of 18

- 5.4.1. City welcomes applications from people of all ages. However, City has a duty of care towards all our students, employees and visitors and in the case of students joining before their 18th birthday this duty is enhanced as these students are regarded as children under English law. As such, City is dedicated to having arrangements in place, which safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults whether or not they are registered at City.
- 5.4.2. City will consider applications from individuals who would be under the age of 18 at the date of registration on a case-by-case basis. Tailored considerations are required because in some cases, applicants who are under the age of 18 when studying at City may not be able to access all the elements of their chosen programme fully. City may also require that the admission of applicants who are under the age of 18 at the date of registration be subject to specific entry criteria and/or conditions. For instance, students under the age of 18 cannot be offered clinical placements on some Health programmes, and similar conditions may apply in other Schools and programmes. Therefore, applicants under the age of 18 at the date of registration should contact the relevant admissions office to discuss their application before applying to City.
- 5.4.3. Applicants under the age of 18 should also contact City's Accommodation Office to discuss their accommodation arrangements. Applicants can send an email to accommodation@city.ac.uk

- 5.4.4. It is important that individuals under the age of 18 and their parents/ guardians understand that City's community and campus is predominantly an adult environment. City does not take on the rights and responsibilities of parents/guardians in relation to under 18s.
- 5.4.5. If you are an applicant who will be under 18 on the date of admission you are advised to contact the Admissions Office by sending an email to admissions@city.ac.uk or call 020 7040 8716.
- 5.4.6. For City, University of London's Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy please visit: https://www.city.ac.uk/media/intranet-site/documents/prevent/Safeguarding-at-City-April-2017_FINAL.pdf
- 5.4.7. If you decide to apply for City, University of London and will be under the age of 18 on the date of admission, we will also ask you to do the following:
- i. provide a completed consent form from your parents or legal guardian giving their consent for you to enrol on your chosen course;
 - ii. provide details of two adults who will be responsible for you and can be contacted in the case of an emergency;
 - iii. International students and students who are under 18, whose parents or guardians will be residing in a country other than the UK during your time of study, will need to provide the contact details of a adult who will be able to act "in loco parentis" during your period of study.
- 5.4.8. If you are offered a place on a programme of study and will be under the age of 18 on the date of admission, this information will be reported to the Head of your Department and your School's Safeguarding lead for Safeguarding reasons.

5.5. English language requirements

- 5.5.1. All applicants (both UK and overseas) are required to demonstrate that their ability to understand and express themselves in written and spoken English is sufficient for them to be able to benefit from and participate fully in their degree course.
- 5.5.2. Applicants should visit www.city.ac.uk/study/applying for the most current and comprehensive list of English language requirements. Some courses will ask for more than the minimum requirement, so please check the relevant course page on our website.

5.6. International and EU applicants

- 5.6.1. City, University of London can sponsor international students from outside the UK and EU who require a Tier 4 visa, if they are due to study on a course lasting more than six months. All relevant students will be told if this is required, following the receipt of their application.
- 5.6.2. Applying for a Tier 4 student visa should be straightforward as long as students prepare carefully and in good time. It is important that students provide original academic documents, have met the necessary English language requirements, and demonstrate formal, original financial evidence to show that they have held the necessary funds for the required period.
- 5.6.3. International students must demonstrate sufficient maintenance funds to cover the first 9 months of the first year of study to qualify for a visa before being permitted to follow a course of research. International students must contact the Student Centre for clarification on any visa implications during any application for a research degree at City.
- 5.6.4. Once City has received evidence of the above, all new students will be asked to watch a video to help them understand the Tier 4 rules, then take a short quiz before a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) is issued. The CAS will only be issued within three months of the course start date.
- 5.6.5. Once an applicant has their CAS, they can submit their application for a Tier 4 visa. Students can find the full information on Visa Immigration Advice.

5.7. Tuition Fee status assessment and payment

- 5.7.1. Your fee status will be determined based upon your nationality and mode of study at the point of application.
- 5.7.2. Fees for doctoral candidates are charged annually and cover registration, supervision and examination. All self-paying, new and continuing students can pay their annual tuition fee in two equal instalments. Fees are subject to review each year and may vary during your period of registration.
- 5.7.3. Students are liable for fees until the final, hardbound copies of the thesis are submitted, including when making corrections following the *viva voce* examination, although your School may offer an exemption at this stage.

5.8. Criminal offences and disclosure

- 5.8.1. Applicants undertaking research on certain programmes (for example in the School of Health Sciences) may be required to undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) application, previously known as a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check, as part of research ethics approval. Where you are required to undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) application, City will consider whether any unspent or spent criminal convictions or related information are compatible with you taking up your place or continuing on your programme.
- 5.8.2. For more information on DBS please contact the Course Officer for the relevant programme

5.9. Providing adequate information

- 5.9.1. It is your responsibility to ensure that all of the information you provide to City (and/or to UKVI if you require immigration permission to study at City) is true and accurate. If it is discovered that your application contains material inaccuracies or fraudulent information, or that significant information has been omitted from your application form, City may withdraw or amend your Offer, or terminate your registration at City, according to the circumstances, without liability to you.

5.10. Fitness to study

- 5.10.1. City is an educational institution that aims to provide a supportive, engaging, and inclusive learning environment for students, conducive to education, research and a positive student experience. It is committed to protecting the health, safety and well-being of all students and stakeholders. In supporting these aims, City recognises the need for proactive management and support of concerns about a student's well-being and/or behaviour which may be related to ill-health, disability or other reasons.
- 5.10.2. There may be instances where a student's health or wellbeing causes City concern regarding the student's fitness to study on a course, including within a placement, and/or as a member of the City community. This may arise where, for example, City is concerned that:
 - i. a student poses a risk to his/her own health, safety and/or wellbeing and/or that of other persons
 - ii. the student's behaviour is or is at risk of negatively affecting the teaching, learning and/or experience of other students
 - iii. the student's behaviour is or is at risk of negatively affecting the day-to-day activities of City and/or a placement provider.
- 5.10.3. City's Fitness to Study Policy sets out how City may respond to and manage situations where a student's fitness to study is a concern. In responding to and managing situations where a student's fitness to study is a concern, City remains mindful of its duty of care and of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 including in appropriate cases its duty to make reasonable adjustments.
- 5.10.4. For more information on City's Fitness to Study Procedure please refer to Senate Regulation 10 and the Fitness to Study Policy.

5.11. Monitoring and review

5.11.1. City aims to regularly review and monitor its processes and practices with regards to postgraduate research admissions. This ensures that we are aware of changes in practice and policy within the sector and able to provide adequate training for employees and the best possible service to applicants. The policy is normally reviewed and where necessary, updated on an annual basis. A comprehensive review of this document is done every three years and as required.

5.12. Your rights to cancel

5.12.1. Once you have accepted an Offer to study at City, you have a legal right to cancel the Contract at any time within 14 days of the date that you formally accepted your Offer.

5.12.2. In order to cancel the Contract in accordance with Clause 16.1 in the Student Terms and Conditions, you must notify City within the required timescale by contacting the Course Officer for your programme of study.

Policy Title	
Admission for a Research Degree	
Policy Enabling Owner and Department	Responsible for Implementation and Department
Assistant Registrar (Research Degrees), Student and Academic Services	Schools
Approving Body	Date of Approval
Senate	17 th October 2018
Last Reviewed	Review Due Date
17 th October 2018	30 th September 2019
Publication of Policy (<i>tick as appropriate</i>)	
For public access online (internet)? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	For staff access only (intranet)? <input type="checkbox"/>
Queries about this policy should be referred to	
<i>Richard Alderman Assistant Registrar (Research Degrees), Student and Academic Services richard.alderman@city.ac.uk</i>	