Context

In this policy “you”, “your” and “yours” means a researcher (student) registered for a postgraduate research degree awarded by City, University of London. “We”, “us” and “our” means City, University of London and, depending on context, staff and officers of City acting on its behalf.

This policy applies to all postgraduate research programmes leading to an award of City, University of London.

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.

MARCH 2021
ADMISSIONS POLICY (RESEARCH DEGREES)

Introduction

1. This policy outlines the admission process and practice across postgraduate research programmes at City, University of London.
2. The University aims to admit postgraduate researchers of the highest calibre, who have the academic potential and the personal motivation to succeed on our rigorous courses. The University encourages applications from applicants from all backgrounds and it evaluates the potential of each applicant individually and on their own merits.

Our role in a changing sector

3. The University is proud to be a diverse, inclusive and global community; committed to providing a fair admissions system that reflects this. This means the University will provide equal opportunity for all individuals, regardless of background, to gain admission to a course suited to their motivation and potential.
4. The University will ensure that the entry requirements are appropriate for the academic needs of the programmes and for the postgraduate researchers the University seeks to attract to them.
5. The University is committed to developing its processes and improving the skills and understanding of its staff, to provide equal opportunities for all postgraduate researchers to achieve.
6. The admissions policy for postgraduate research programmes will continue to strive to be fair and transparent.

The scope of this policy

7. This policy reflects all the admissions activity across postgraduate research programmes at City, University of London. The policy includes all the details applicants need to know about the University’s admissions processes and outlines how the University’s admissions activity demonstrates the following principles:
   - We are committed to providing a fair, effective and professional admissions service informed by the indicators set out in the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Quality Code.
   - We will provide clear and useful information on our entry requirements and admissions processes.
   - We will update our information and processes on an annual basis, aiming to do this in September each year.
   - We will endeavour to operate an admissions procedure that is fair, transparent and consistent, whilst being compliant with all relevant legislation and regulations.
   - We will strive to admit only suitably qualified applicants who have the ability to complete their programme of study successfully.
   - We are committed to equality, diversity, inclusion and fair access, and encourage applicants from all social and cultural backgrounds.
   - We will provide an admissions function which seeks to serve the best interests of our applicants and assists the University in meeting its strategic aims.
8. We will ensure all staff with responsibility for admissions are well informed, customer-focused and regularly trained to understand the needs of our applicants and to be compliant with relevant procedures and processes.
9. The policy is managed by the City Doctoral College and approved by the University Senate, chaired by the President of the University. The policy is reviewed on an annual basis.

Admissions Responsibility and Structure

10. Postgraduate research admissions activity is managed within Schools; with guidance and support from the University Admissions Office where necessary. Decisions on applications are made by academic colleagues and supported by fully trained and experienced professional staff. Typically, these professional staff would be an Admissions Officer or a Course Officer.

Partner institutions

11. If you are applying for a research degree at a partner institution for which City, University of London validates their research degrees, your admission will be processed by the partner institution but will be subject to the criteria set out in this Admissions Policy, unless different arrangements have been agreed between City and the partner institution. Where different arrangements apply, these will be set out in the Memorandum of Partnership for the partnership and information provided by the partner institution to you.

Our commitment to you a compliance with codes and regulation: Schwarz review, QAA and SPA

12. This policy takes note of the best practice within the sector and uses the recommendations of three independent authorities on the subject.
13. The ‘Schwartz Review’ guides the principles outlined in this policy – following on from a Government report on Admissions to Higher Education, led by Professor Steven Schwartz in 2004: transparency, minimising barriers to entry, selecting for merit, potential and diversity, professionalism and using assessment methods that are reliable and valid.
14. This Admissions Policy also complies with the guidance set out within the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education on recruitment, selection and admission to higher education.

Competition and Markets Authority requirements

15. The University complies with the requirements of the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA). For the purpose of this Regulation, City is a ‘trader’ and its students are ‘consumers’.
16. City is clear about three main areas in particular:
   - The Terms and Conditions for Study at City, University of London governs the Institution’s dealings with students and form a contract between City and its students in relation to their studies. These Terms and Conditions provide a summary of the contractual framework and key terms on which an agreement is entered in to with the University. Applicants are therefore strongly encouraged to familiarise themselves with the document.
   - The University provides information which is accurate, easy to find and useful for the students to make an informed choice.
   - The University sets out an accessible, clear and transparent complaints policy for students, as set out in paragraph 86 of this Admissions Policy.

Senate regulations

17. Senate is the academic authority responsible for the maintenance of academic quality
and standards. According to the City's Royal Charter, Senate has delegated authority from the Council to provide guidance and advice on academic matters.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

18. City will handle your personal data in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018, which gave effect to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in the United Kingdom. The provisions of the GDPR apply to all bodies processing the personal data of EU nationals.
19. City’s Privacy Notice for past, present and prospective students of City is available here. This Privacy Notice explains how City collects, uses and shares the personal data of prospective students, and of their rights in relation to the personal data City holds.
20. City is committed to ensuring compliance in this area and has detailed our approach and the impact on applicants here.

Freedom of Information (FOI)

21. The University co-operates with all FOI requests and anything in relation to admissions should be to foi@city.ac.uk

The Application Process

22. All applications for admission to our postgraduate research programmes should be submitted via City’s online application platform on the City website: www.city.ac.uk. Prior to your application, you are encouraged to contact one of our academics in our subject area to discuss your proposed research project and whether we have the academic expertise to supervise you. Your application will be reviewed by the Department’s Senior Tutor for Research (the Programme Director) who consider your suitability for a place, and who will make a recommendation to the School Research Programmes Committee and Doctoral College Board of Studies for your admission.

23. You can apply for a research degree at any time in the year. Most research students start at the beginning of October, with smaller intakes in February and April, but an applicant can be admitted at any point in the year.

Entrance Requirements

24. We welcome applications from those who already possess the required qualifications or those who expect to obtain them before the research degree programme commences. You will be required to satisfy both City’s general minimum entrance requirements (see below) and any additional entry requirements required by individual programmes. You should consult the entry requirements and application specifications for your specific programme of interest at www.city.ac.uk

25. Prospective postgraduate researchers are expected to meet, or to have achieved before admission, the following entrance minimum entrance requirements:
   - A good honours degree (normally no less than a second-class honours degree from a UK University) and a master’s degree, or an equivalent qualification approved by City as of comparable standards awarded by recognised overseas universities / institutions in an appropriate subject for the desired programme of study;
OR

- An integrated masters (MSci or MEng) degree awarded with at least upper second class honours in an appropriate subject for the desired programme of study;

OR

- A qualification at FHEQ Level 7 such as; a registrable qualification in Medicine or a Master’s degree, awarded by a UK University, or an equivalent qualification approved by City as of comparable standards awarded by recognised overseas universities / institutions in an appropriate subject for the desired programme of study

OR

- A professional or other qualification obtained by written examination and approved by City for admission.

26. All prospective postgraduate researchers, except City graduates, are required to provide certified evidence of relevant qualifications in support of their application.

27. The University will consider applications where your qualifications are at the required level, but where the grades achieved do not meet City’s normal minimum entry requirements. In such circumstances, it will be at the discretion of the admitting Department to make a special case, which will only be valid for someone who has considerable work experience that compensates for the degree grades being below the minimum requirement. If the Department wishes to offer a place to such an applicant, the Senior Tutor for Research will make a case to the School Research Programmes Committee and Doctoral College Board of Studies for consideration.

28. If you are a current postgraduate researcher and wish to transfer your registration status from another university/institution to City, we will consider your application if you consider there is suitable expertise with the School/Department to supervise your research. In such cases, you must be registered at City for no less than 12 months (full-time) or 24 months (part-time) before submitting for examination. Your previous university / institution and supervisors must also agree to relinquish all rights to the intellectual property contained within your research project to date.

29. Prospective students who are not a national of a majority English-speaking country as defined by the UK Government must meet any one or a combination of the following:

- A score of 6.5 in IELTS;
- The award of an academic qualification equivalent to a UK degree from a majority English-speaking country.

30. Prospective postgraduate researchers who do not meet the English Language requirements may be expected to attend pre-sessional English classes before an offer may be considered.
Assessing an application

31. Your application may be considered at any time. 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. Prospective postgraduate researchers should look at the Departmental websites or the websites relating to that particular scheme for detailed information.

32. Applicants must indicate how they propose to fund their period of research. This is to ensure that applicants can fund their studies as well as complete and submit a thesis during the period of study. It is important to note that where students are unable to fund their studies and submit before the research has been completed, the supervisor may recommend that a student be withdrawn, undertake an interruption of studies or be required to submit for a lesser degree, because of financial reasons.

33. In your application, you will be expected to provide a supporting statement that details your intended research proposals in support of your application. The research proposal should include an abstract, the research objectives, the proposed research methodology, a summary review of the relevant literature and current understanding or knowledge and an indication of how the proposed research will contribute to the discipline. You should also provide an outline work plan for the period of research including consideration of approval of any research ethics implications. You are also asked to comment on why you wish to pursue this research and what you feel you will bring to it. If you have already been in contact with an academic member of staff and have reached an agreement about a suitable topic, you should provide the name of the potential supervisor.

34. You will be asked to provide two referees, at least one of whom must be an academic referee. The references provided will be used to inform your suitability to study, experience to date and verify your credentials for the admitting Department to consider and may determine whether you are called for interview and/or if an offer is made. Your referee’s assessment of your previous academic performance is of particular value, as are indications of the strength of your motivation to study the chosen subject at postgraduate research level. A professional reference can also be of use in establishing your postgraduate career development and is a requirement for certain programmes which stipulate relevant experience as an entry requirement. Departments reserve the right to process an unsuccessful outcome on an application prior to the receipt of references, where in their academic judgment the receipt of acceptable references would have no bearing on that outcome.

35. We will not use a referee’s judgement on your English language competency for study, you must fulfil our formal English language requirements. Any reference provided to the College will be considered data owned by the referee and not the applicant. As such, references are provided confidentially and will not be supplied or made available to an applicant, either directly, or under personal or subject access request.

36. 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.

37. Applicants may 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 Senior Tutor for Research. Interviews may be conducted as a video conference or teleconference if it is not possible for the candidate to visit the Department.

University offers

38. All offers for a place on a postgraduate research programme are transmitted electronically via City’s application portal. Any offer of a place made by City is made based on the applicant’s:
   a. Acceptance of City’s regulations;
   b. Payment of the fees required for the programme and any other fees for services offered by City and accepted, such as any additional costs for your programme;
   c. Ensuring that all statements made when applying for entry are accurate. 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 in line with the requirements of Senate Regulation 13: Student Disciplinary Regulation).

39. Upon registration, all postgraduate researchers 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).

40. If your application is unsuccessful, you may request feedback by emailing the Course Officer for your programme of study. Feedback will be issued via an email, normally within 21 calendar days of a request being made.

41. You cannot appeal the academic or professional judgement of those making a decision, but you may appeal the decision if you consider that an administrative error has occurred in the processing of your application.

Policies and Procedures

Fee status

42. City, University of London determines the tuition fee status of applicants and students in accordance with The Education (Fees and Awards) (England) Regulations 2007 (Statutory Instrument No 779) as amended by the Education (Student Fees, Awards and Support) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 (Statutory Instrument No 584).

43. The Regulations state that applicants who are classed as ‘Overseas’ can be charged a different, higher rate than those classed as ‘Home’.

44. A student’s classification is based on the fee regulations and the terminology employed (‘Home’/’Overseas’) may not have any relation to a person’s immigration status or other rights.

45. Where there is any confusion over the terminology, it should be noted that a person’s fee status will always be based upon the regulations and not invoked or inferred from the terminology in any other document.

46. The full details on the University’s Fee Status Policy can be found here.
Student visa requirements

47. As a Sponsor, City can support Non-EEA students on Student Visa as part of the Points Based System as well as EEA students from January 2021. These students must be on a full-time course lasting more than six months. City can also sponsor students on part-time courses at NQF/RQF Level 7 or above.

48. A Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) can be issued to a student only if they meet the requirements of the Student Visa immigration category and will comply with the conditions of their permission to stay in the UK. A CAS can be assigned to a student only if the University is satisfied that the student both intends and is able to follow the course of study concerned and where the University expects the student to successfully complete their course on the date specified on the CAS.

49. City's nominated staff check students' documents to ensure that they meet the academic, maintenance and other requirements set out in the Immigration Rules and by the University. A CAS is only assigned once an applicant has demonstrated that their documents fully meet the requirements.

50. Applicants are not entitled to a sponsorship on the basis they have met the entry requirements for their Course and hold an offer to study. They must also demonstrate to the University that they meet the requirements for Student Visa sponsorship. The University reserves the right to refuse a request for sponsorship, cancel a CAS or withdraw sponsorship at its discretion.

51. As part of the Visa sponsorship assessment, applicants are asked to declare their previous criminal convictions. This is because the Immigration Rules include provision to refuse the application of someone with certain criminal convictions, under the general grounds for refusal.

52. CAS sponsorship can only be assigned within six months of the course start date. For further information please check here.

Applicants under the age of 18

53. The University encourages applications from suitable applicants, irrespective of age. There is no formal stage in the application process where age will be a factor in the academic assessment.

54. The full policy outlines the regulations on the admission and treatment of students who will be considered minors when they commence.

55. Outside of the application process itself, there are age-related limitations to a student’s fitness to study and practise. These limitations are particularly in relation to the minimum age a student must be to undertake mandatory assessments or placements outside of the university environment.

56. The University Admissions Office is responsible for sharing the details of applicants under the age of 18 with all relevant parties, to ensure effective Safeguarding.

57. Further details of the use of data as part of this policy are available here.

58. Applicants under the age of 18 should also familiarise themselves with the University’s Safeguarding Policy. This is available here.

Criminal convictions

59. City, University of London wishes to ensure that higher education is available to all who will benefit from it. In this context, having a criminal record will not necessarily mean that an applicant cannot be admitted to their chosen course. Overall, however, the University
must also balance its responsibilities to provide a safe and secure environment and community for its staff, students, visitors and others. In addition, the University also has to take into account the demands of various professional bodies and requirements under the law to protect special categories of people, e.g., children or vulnerable adults.

60. Courses taught by our School of Health & Psychological Sciences may have particular requirements in the admissions process relating to the disclosure of warnings, reprimands, cautions and criminal convictions which are dealt with on a specific course basis and require applicants to agree to submit to criminal record checks by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

61. The University operates a separate Policy and Procedure for applications from students with a criminal conviction which should be read together with this policy. This policy is available here.

Disability and additional support needs

62. The University is committed to providing an inclusive learning environment and therefore welcomes applications from candidates with a disability / Specific Learning Difference or those who require additional support needs.

63. A number of different sources of student support are available at City including the disability support, neurodiversity support, academic learning support teams, Student Health Service and Student Counselling and Mental Health Service.

64. Applicants are encouraged to disclose information on any disability or other additional support need that would help the University to proactively identify and provide help with support needs throughout their studies. If an applicant discloses a disability or Specific Learning Difference then this information will be shared with the relevant support teams who will contact the applicant directly. An applicant will then be able to discuss potential strategies and reasonable adjustments which will enhance their learning experience.

Fitness to study

65. City, University of London 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 (physical / mental), disability or other reasons.

66. City aims to provide a supportive, engaging, and inclusive learning environment for students, conducive to education, research and a positive student experience. To that end, the University has developed a Fitness to Study Policy and Regulation, of which applicants should be aware.

67. At no stage does an applicant’s fitness to study impact on the academic decision processed on their application. Applicants can view the full policy here.

Fitness to practise

68. The fitness to practise policy and procedure is for the management of students and applicant fitness to practise concerns – specifically within the School of Health & Psychological Sciences.

69. The policy covers awards, progression and registration made by the school and applies to programmes leading to professional qualifications and/or eligibility to apply to a professional register which requires students to undertake periods of experience.
in practice settings. The University, in conjunction with the professional and regulatory bodies, has a duty to ensure the student is fit to practise during and up to the point of registration/awarding of qualification of academic credits.

70. For programmes regulated by professional statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) the Higher Education Institution is required to have a Fitness to Practise Policy and Procedure in place to manage fitness to practise. Applicants can view the full policy here.

Enquiries: Information, Advice and Guidance

Accuracy of information

71. The University will provide information to prospective students through a number of different sources: face-to-face, via partners, email, website and through printed publications.

72. The University will aim to ensure all the relevant channels we use are providing information that is accurate. However, the University would encourage all applicants and advisors to use our website for the most up-to-date information.

Communication of changes

73. In line with CMA regulations outlined in section 3, the University has a duty to inform all prospective students of any material changes to the information they may have viewed throughout their research process.

74. The University will use all reasonable endeavours to ensure that changes are kept to a minimum wherever published, but if the University is required to make any material changes to the terms of the Contract or programme (as described in the Offer and/or on our website) before the applicant registers at City, the University will bring these to the attention of the applicant as soon as possible.

Website

75. The University website is the definitive source of information for prospective postgraduate researchers.

76. The University aims to highlight where this information changes over time for all prospective students. Depending on the level of change, this will be communicated either in writing via email or on the website.

Contact details

77. The University is committed to providing the highest quality information, advice and guidance possible. Across all course pages and relevant sections of the website, the University aims to give applicants clear details on how they can contact us for further information. On all course pages the contact details of the relevant admissions officer will be found in the footer of the page.

Student Behaviour, Complaints and Appeals Procedures

Student Behaviour

78. City’s students are at the heart of the Institution’s commitment to academic excellence for business and the professions and are supported to achieving positive academic and professional goals.

79. Our Student Charter (We are City), has been developed by both staff and student and outlines our mutual responsibilities and aspirations.
80. Students at the Institution act as ambassadors for City at all times on campus, in the community and in any public or online forum. Students must behave responsibly and maintain standards of good conduct, in line with the Institution's Codes of Conduct, at all times. Students should also comply with principles of dignity and respect, and behave in accordance with the Institution's Student Harassment and Bullying Policy and Student Sexual Misconduct Policy. Harassing, bullying or generally anti-social behaviour, or any other form of misconduct, on or off campus, online or in-person, can negatively affect the good order of the Institution and disrupt the positive learning and wider experience of others. We may take disciplinary action against any student, or applicant, who does not act in accordance with this Contract under Senate Regulation 13: Student Disciplinary Regulation. One of the possible outcomes of such an action is that your Contract with us may be terminated and you may be removed from your programme, have your Offer to study at the Institution withdrawn or the revocation of your award.

Complaints Procedure

81. A complaint should be raised where an applicant has a specific concern related to a procedural error, irregularity or maladministration in the admissions process. City, University of London operates a three-stage-process for applicant complaints.
82. In the first instance, applicants should raise concerns informally with City's staff at the point the concern arises. Applicants may informally contact their named admissions contact in the relevant School. Staff will take reasonable steps to explain any relevant procedures, resolve concerns and respond promptly to any issues raised.
83. Concerns should be raised as soon as possible after the incident being complained about. Informal concerns which are raised at Stage 1 more than one month after the incident occurred may be deemed to be out of time and may not be considered.
84. For details of how to access the correct contact information and for full details on the admissions complaints procedure, applicants should visit here.
85. This complaints procedure is only relevant to applicants and offer-holders. Current students should visit here.

Appeals Procedure

86. City, University of London does not routinely provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants. However, feedback can be provided to individuals upon request. This would normally be to the Department to which the applicant has applied.
87. An appeal should be brought if an applicant seeks a formal review of the University's decision on their application because they believe an incorrect decision has been made about their application. City, University of London operates a three-stage process for applicant appeals.
88. In the first instance, applicants who wish to appeal a decision should raise it with the staff in the relevant Admissions Office by asking for feedback on why their application was unsuccessful.
89. The request for feedback should be made within one month of the reject decision.
90. For details of how to access the correct contact information and for full details on the admissions appeal procedure, applicants should visit here.
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<th>Admission for a Research Degree</th>
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<td>Responsible for Implementation and Department</td>
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<tr>
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<td>March 2021</td>
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