

## **Research Student Admissions Policy**

### **1. Introduction**

The College of Law and Criminology research student admissions policy adheres to the practice approved by University Senate, as follows:

**1.1** Our admissions policy encourages the enrolment of students who have the potential to acquire a broad range of complex, new skills; to master an extensive body of advanced knowledge and, above all, to undergo a period of rigorous, intellectual development culminating in the award of a University qualification.

**1.2** The College welcomes applications and enquiries from people regardless of age, ethnic or national origins, race, religion, sex, sexual preference, marital status, family responsibility, mental health needs physical or sensory disability, and political or religious beliefs and activities unless those activities are unlawful or contrary to the policies of the University.

**1.3** When considering a candidate's suitability for admission, the people within the college delegated with the task of recommending students for admission will pay due regard, as appropriate, to previous academic performance and work experience (as appropriate).

**1.4** The College recognises that although they may well satisfy some or all of its criteria for selection, some candidates may have to be denied admission because of the intensity of competition for a limited number of places.

### **2. General Principles of Research Student Admissions**

The University's Admission Policy must be adhered to in all cases and without exception. The implementation of the University's Admission Policy is overseen by the Admissions and Marketing Committee which is chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor responsible for admissions. Each College/School has a Research Admissions Tutor nominated by the relevant Head of College/School. The authority to admit or not to admit rests with the Admissions Tutor, acting on behalf of the Head of College/School; however, the Registrar/Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Administration) is legally responsible for the admission of students. Formal offers of admission and statements confirming that a student has been admitted may only be made by or via the relevant Admissions Officer. The University Admissions Officer is administratively responsible for all aspects of the formal admission of applicants, including all liaisons with external bodies and agencies concerned with the admission of students.

### **3. Designated College of Law and Criminology Admissions Tutor**

The designated admissions tutor for the College of Law and Criminology is the Postgraduate Director of Research, who is supported in the role by the Postgraduate Administrator. Only the Postgraduate Director of Research and the Postgraduate Administrator will process submissions and only the Postgraduate Director of Research can make a formal offer of admission.

### **4. The University Admissions Office and its Role in Postgraduate Admissions**

**4.1** The University Admissions Office is responsible for:

- distributing application packs to UK/EU students;
- dealing with detailed enquiries from potential postgraduate candidates;
- the preliminary processing of postgraduate applications, including the creation of University student records;
- liaising with and advising Admissions Tutors on all relevant aspects of postgraduate applications;
- processing Admissions Tutors' offer recommendations; all liaison with applicants;
- producing statistical and other management information for the Admissions and Marketing Committee;
- post-offer follow-up work;
- confirmation of applicants' places;
- the preparation of enrolment and introductory materials for new students.

**4.2** The University Admissions Office has specific procedures for dealing with:

- complaints from applicants;
- appeals from unsuccessful applicants;
- unreasonable behaviour from applicants;
- the provision of false or misleading information in support of an application

### **5. Process of Application**

**5.1** Potential research students may find it useful to identify a member of College of Law and Criminology staff who would in principle be able to supervise the proposed research topic. If the College does not have the necessary expertise to supervise a particular research topic, the application will be rejected regardless of its academic

merit. Staff profiles and details of research interests are usually listed on the College web pages or can be requested by contacting the College directly.

**5.2** It should be noted that the identification of a potential supervisor does not imply any sort of guarantee of admission to the University, as only the College of Law and Criminology Postgraduate Director of Research can admit candidates, and the full University application procedure must be followed in all cases.

**5.3** Applications are accepted throughout the year although potential research students are advised to apply as early as possible prior to the desired starting date. Enrolment is carried out at four points in the year for the vast majority of our research programmes: October; January; April and July. Although there is no specific deadline for applications, places are limited and these are awarded on a first come first served basis to suitably qualified applicants. Also, supervisors are limited in the number of students they can supervise.

**5.4** Potential research students can obtain an application form in one of four ways:

- i. By applying online with [OnTrack Online Applications](#) through the University website;
- ii. By downloading the [Application for Admission to Postgraduate Study Form](#) in PDF format from the University website;
- iii. By emailing the Postgraduate Admissions Office for an application pack ([postgraduate.admissions@swansea.ac.uk](mailto:postgraduate.admissions@swansea.ac.uk)). The following information must be included in the email:
  - Academic Year of Entry
  - Full Name
  - Gender
  - Full Address
  - Email
  - Telephone Number
  - Proposed Qualification Aim
  - Nationality
  - Country of Permanent Residence
- iv. By contacting the Postgraduate Admissions Office directly

## **6. Process of Considering Application**

**6.1** On receipt of a completed application, the candidate will receive an acknowledgement letter (online candidates receive an emailed acknowledgement). The University Admissions Office will check each application to ensure that University and College minimum entry requirements are/will be met, before sending the application to the College of Law and Criminology Admissions Tutor. If an application form is received without a reference, the application will be held in the University Admissions Office pending receipt of at least one reference.

**6.2** Where necessary, advisory notes will be added in the 'Advisory note from Admissions' box on the section 'For University Use Only' of the application form.

**6.3** In making a decision on the suitability of an applicant, The College of Law and Criminology Admission Tutor must be aware of Indicator 6 of [QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education Chapter B11: Research Degrees \(June 2012\)](#) which states:

"Only appropriately qualified and prepared applicants are admitted to research degree programmes. Admissions decisions involve at least two members of the higher education provider's staff who have received training and guidance for the selection and admission of research degree students. The decision-making process enables the higher education provider to assure itself that balanced and independent admissions decisions have been made in accordance with its admissions policy."

#### **Entry Conditions for Research Degrees**

**6.4** Applicants for a research degree must normally hold an initial degree of a UK university or another university approved by Senate and would normally have achieved or be predicted to achieve a minimum classification of upper second (2.1) or equivalent. Applicants for a doctoral level research degree would normally have, or be studying for, a Master's degree of a UK university or another university approved by Senate or similar level of qualification. M.Res. or Masters by Research applicants not holding a degree can be considered on the basis of holding a minimum of three years' appropriate work experience.

**6.5** Applicants holding qualifications from non-UK institutions will be checked using the [National Academic Recognition Information Centre \(NARIC\) database](#) which has been established by the British Council. A NARIC Comparability will be included on all non-UK applications.

**6.6** Applicants whose native language is not English or Welsh must provide evidence of competence in English Language sufficient for research study. Different Colleges/Schools will require different levels of competence in English Language. The University's [English Language Training Services \(ELTS\)](#) offers a range of English Language courses during the year. ELTS offers its own internal test of English Language proficiency which is recognised for the purpose of admission to the University's degree programmes. Students will be required to provide proof of

their English Language qualifications before being permitted to enrol fully with the University.

**6.7** The College of Law and Criminology recognises that students who are diagnosed with long term conditions may want to start a dialogue with the relevant support service to discuss how any additional support needs are accommodated. The term 'long term condition' is associated with any diagnosed physical, mental, learning and communication difficulty, defined under the Equality Act 2010 as a disability.

Applicants who have disabilities, Specific Learning Difficulties and long-standing medical conditions are encouraged to declare their disability on their application forms. Information surrounding an applicant's support requirements is not asked for until an offer is made on academic grounds. Applicants are then sent a separate letter and questionnaire, following their conditional formal offer of admission. The completed questionnaires are returned to the Disability Office and/or Wellbeing Service. The Disability Office and/or Wellbeing Service will work with the applicant and (where required) other relevant staff within the University to discuss the support that may be required. Once the [Disability Office](#) and/or [Wellbeing Service](#) informs the Admissions Office that a candidate is 'clear to proceed', the condition is removed from the offer letter.

**6.8** Details of the University's facilities for students who have disabilities, Specific Learning Difficulties and long standing medical conditions may be found in the relevant Good Practice and Information Guide produced by the Admissions Office.

**6.9** Normally students may not concurrently be enrolled on another award bearing programme in this or any other university/institution. However, in certain circumstances, a student may be admitted on a research degree while still enrolled on another award bearing programme:

- The student has completed any taught modules of the other award bearing programme and is preparing for submission of a dissertation;
- The student is no longer liable for fees for the other award bearing programme.

**6.10** Where the condition of admission was the submission of a dissertation for the other award bearing programme, then the student must successfully have completed that award bearing programme no later than three months after enrolment on the research degree (on or before 31 December for October starters) in order to be permitted to continue study on the research degree. Students who are concurrently enrolled will be informed of the date by which the other award bearing programme must be completed at the point of enrolment and will be sent a reminder at least one month before the date. If the student does not successfully complete the award bearing programme by the date stated, then the student will be in breach of the

regulation concerning concurrent enrolment and candidature for the research degree will be terminated or suspended until such time as the award bearing programme is completed.

**6.11** Applicants for research degrees are requested to indicate whether or not they have any criminal convictions (excluding minor motoring offences). The University Admissions Officer writes direct to candidates who indicate they have convictions to request further information.

## **7. Specific entry conditions**

Specific entry conditions for individual research programmes may be sought from the following link: <http://www.swansea.ac.uk/postgraduate/research/>.

### **Transfer in from Another Institution**

Students may be permitted to transfer in from other institutions by submitting an application for admission in the normal way. (see the [Guide to Transfer and Withdrawal of Research Students](#) for more details). Please note that you must still be registered on your current research programme and have academically progressed to date in order to be eligible to apply for transfer consideration.

## **8. Methods of Candidature**

Research students are admitted as either full-time or part-time students (see [Guide to Research Degree Candidature](#) for definitions of full-time study and part-time study).

**8.1** Research students are admitted under one of four methods of candidature:

### **8.2 Method A**

As a full-time student, by pursuing research at the University.

Students admitted under Method A will be expected to be resident in the United Kingdom during the period of supervised study for the degree and should live within easy commuting distance of the University. Students admitted under Method A are not permitted to be engaged in any employment for the duration of the award except as permitted under the University's [Guide to the Employment of Research Students](#)<sup>1</sup>. Students admitted under Method A are liable for fees at the appropriate full-time level (depending on residency status)

*<sup>1</sup>Full-time Research Assistants (RAs) employed by the University may be permitted to enrol under Method A and be eligible for fee remission equivalent to the standard home fee for a full time programme of study where there is close matching between the research project to be undertaken and the work of the RA. RAs who wish to be*

*considered for fee remission are responsible for providing an authorised form before or at enrolment signed by: (i) the Head of College/School; (ii) the Human Resources Department verifying research assistant status; (iii) confirmation that the Academic Regulations and Cases Board has approved eligibility. In monitoring the progress of such students, the Academic Regulations and Cases Board ensure that Method A remains an appropriate method of candidature and may require the student to transfer to Method C (part-time study) if appropriate.*

### **8.3 Method B**

As a full-time student, by pursuing research in an external place of employment.

Students admitted under Method B will be based in an external place of employment in the United Kingdom<sup>2</sup> which has been approved by the University.

<sup>2</sup>*An external place of employment must be physically external to the University and must provide facilities independent of those provided by the University, most importantly supervision. The student does not need to hold a contract of employment with the external place of employment, but must be appointed an approved external supervisor in addition to the internal supervisors. If the place of employment is based within the University where the student can be supervised on a continuous basis by the internal supervisors then Method B is not appropriate.*

Students admitted under Method B will be appointed an approved External/Industrial Supervisor in addition to the supervisors based in the University. Approval for place of employment and External/Industrial Supervisor must be sought on a case by case basis (blanket approval for places of employment or supervisors will not be permitted). Students admitted under Method B are liable for fees at half the appropriate full-time level (depending on residency status).

### **8.4 Method C**

As a part-time student, by pursuing research either at the University or externally.

Students admitted under Method C do not need to be resident in the United Kingdom during the period of supervised study for the degree. Students who do not live within easy commuting distance of the University should ensure that there is regular contact with the supervisor and, as an absolute minimum, one face-to-face meeting during each academic year. Students admitted under Method C are liable for fees at the appropriate part-time level (depending on residency status).

### **8.5 Method D**

*As a full-time student, by pursuing research within an approved programme of research offered jointly by the University and another University or partner institution/approved partner.*

Students admitted under Method D may be based either at another University/approved partner or partially at the University and partially at another University/approved partner on an approved programme of research. Students admitted under Method D are liable for fees at the appropriate full-time level (depending on residency status).

## **8.6 Staff candidates**

Members of staff of the University will normally be admitted under Method C and may be eligible for a staff bursary to cover part of the fee liability<sup>3</sup>. In some cases a Research Assistant may be admitted under Method A (see Note to Method A above).

*<sup>3</sup>Members of staff who wish to be considered for a staff bursary are responsible for providing an authorised form before or at enrolment signed by: (i) the Head of College/School; (ii) the Human Resources Department verifying research assistant status; (iii) the Staff Development Unit, approving the application for a bursary. Full time members of staff will be eligible for a bursary equivalent to the standard home fee for a part-time course. Part-time members of staff will be eligible for a bursary calculated to the number of hours stated in their contract at the start of the session or at the point of admission (calculated using 35 hours per week as an average full time contract). If a member of staff has a fixed term contract, the value of the bursary will be pro rata to the period of employment. The bursary will be withdrawn from members of staff who do not progress satisfactorily.*

## **9 Process of Making and Accepting/Rejecting Offer**

The College of Law and Criminology decision should be written/typed on the last page of the application form, marked DEPARTMENTAL DECISION. The Admissions Tutor must tick the Accept (Conditional or Unconditional) or Reject box, as applicable. Conditions must be outlined in the space provided on the form. The College of Law and Criminology is also able to complete the decision-making process on online applications electronically.

**9.1** In accordance with precepts 5, 7 and 8 of the [QAA Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education \(Section 1: Postgraduate Research Programmes - September 2004\)](#) and the accompanying explanations, Admissions Tutors are requested to ensure that:

- The College can provide an environment that provides support for doing and learning about research and where high quality research is occurring;
- All students who are admitted are appropriately qualified and prepared to undertake research;
- It is feasible for students who are admitted, whether full-time or part-time, to successfully complete a particular research project.

**9.2** The decisions open to the College of Law and Criminology admissions tutor when dealing with postgraduate application forms are:

**ACCEPT (Conditional)**

A recommendation that a place be offered conditional upon the candidate meeting the specified academic criteria (e.g. degree result or satisfactory English Language requirement).

**ACCEPT (Unconditional)**

A recommendation that a place be offered unconditionally as the candidate has already fulfilled the academic qualifications deemed appropriate for admission. (Such offers are still subject to verification of the candidate's qualifications.)

The University admissions office must be supplied with the name of at least two anticipated supervisor(s).

**REJECT**

A recommendation not to offer a place. Admission Tutors should give a summary of the reason(s) for this decision as the Admissions Office may receive a request for further information from rejected candidates. Lack of financial support/funding is not grounds for rejecting a candidate's application.

**Offer Letter**

A formal offer of admission, signed by the Postgraduate Admissions Officer, is the applicant's official letter of acceptance to pursue postgraduate study at this University. The offer letter contains the following information:

- i. Course information: start date, College/School, details of degree, period of study, submission date, name of supervisors;
- ii. Conditions of the offer (if applicable);
- iii. Tuition fees plus information regarding the payment of fees;
- iv. Accommodation information (full-time candidates only);
- v. Full details of the terms under which the offer is made;
- vi. A copy of the offer for the applicant to sign and return.

**9.3** An applicant is asked to return the copy of their offer letter with their decision. Options available are to accept or decline the offer. Candidates who accept the offers will receive an acknowledgement.

**10. Confirmation**

Confirmation is the process by which the University Admissions Office records that the conditions of an offer have been met and, hence, that the applicant can be admitted to his/her chosen programme.

**10.1** From mid-June, the University Admissions Office will commence writing to Universities for details of candidates' summer degree results. Other academic results are also written for at this time. The University Admissions Office also contacts candidates by email to remind them of their outstanding conditions and to ask for the relevant documentation to be submitted.

**10.2** If a candidate fails to meet the terms of the offer then the application is referred back to the College of Law and Criminology Admissions Tutor for a decision which (depending on the individual circumstances of the case) could be either accept or reject.

**10.3** The University Admissions Office then writes to admitted candidates who have met the terms of their offers, as well as to unconditional candidates, requesting final confirmation that they wish to commence their postgraduate course of study. Student records are transferred from the admissions environment to the main student record for candidates who confirm that they will pursue their chosen programme of study. Files for candidates who request the deferral option are removed to the next session.

## **11. Appeals from Unsuccessful Applicants**

Unsuccessful applicants may appeal against the decision not to grant admission to the University. All appeals shall be conducted in accordance with the University Admissions Office's existing procedures for appeal.

*This policy will be reviewed as needed by the Head of College of Law and Criminology to ensure it remains in line with University Admissions requirements.*

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