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*This document is part of the Academic Regulations, Policies and Procedures which govern the University's academic provision. Each document has a unique document number to indicate which section of the series it belongs to.*

## **3B - Recruitment, Selection and Admission (Postgraduate Research Degrees): Policy and Procedure**

### **1. SCOPE AND PURPOSE**

- 1.1 Bournemouth University (BU) is committed to the applicant experience and ensuring its admissions practices and entry requirements are transparent, consistent, followed fairly and do not generate unnecessary barriers to recruitment in accordance with the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education.
- 1.2 This policy outlines BU's commitment to the admission of students to postgraduate research (PGR) degree programmes offered by the University.
- 1.3 This policy is available to BU applicants and all University staff. Those involved in the PGR admission process are required to comply with them during the course of recruiting to a BU research degree programme.
- 1.4 BU is committed to ensuring that its selection policies and procedures are transparent, followed fairly, courteously, consistently and expeditiously; that information concerning applicants remains confidential between designated parties, and that decisions are made by those equipped to make the required judgements.

### **2. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 2.1 PGR Admissions policies and procedures are reviewed on a cyclical basis by the Head of the Doctoral College, in consultation with the Faculties and reporting to the Research Degrees Committee, to ensure that they continue to:
  - support the vision and strategic objectives of the University and remain current and valid in the light of changing circumstances, such as amendments to relevant legislation or reformed qualifications.

The Education Committee will recommend any policy changes to Senate for approval.

- 2.2 The Head of the Doctoral College is responsible for ensuring admissions policies and procedures are adhered to.
- 2.3 The Faculties, supported by the Doctoral College, are responsible for recruiting PGR students in line with these policies and procedures.
- 2.4 **All BU staff have access to, and are required to comply with BU's policies and procedures.**

### **3. ACCESSING OTHER RELEVANT BU DOCUMENTS**

- 3.1 All documents can be accessed [here](#):
  - 3A - Standard Admissions Regulations: Postgraduate Research Degrees
  - 6A - Standard Assessment Regulations: Postgraduate Research Degrees
  - 8A - Code of Practice for Research Degrees
  - 3P - Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and UK Credit Transfer (UKCT): Policy and Procedure

- *3C - Admissions - Appeals and Complaints: Policy and Procedure*
- *11F - Students Complaints: Policy and Procedure*
- *11K - Student Disciplinary: Procedure*
- *Equality and Diversity Policy.*

## Policy

### 4. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

4.1 BU's policies and procedures for the recruitment, selection and admission of PGR students are based on the following principles:

- the University's commitment to academic standards;
- the identification of students who are likely to succeed in the University's programmes;
- the encouragement of broad access to the University's academic programmes by students from diverse backgrounds as emphasised in the [Access and Participation Plan](#);
- equity of opportunity for all applicants. There shall be no discrimination against any applicant in relation to age, disability, gender reassignment, marital status, pregnancy, maternity/paternity, race (colour, ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, trade union membership activity or political belief in accordance with its policies on equality and diversity and relevant legislation;
- fair, consistent and transparent application by staff who are well trained and have access to, and comply with, the BU's policies and procedures.

### 4.2 Academic Standards

- 4.2.1 Entry criteria, which may vary between research degree programmes, are set by Doctoral College and Faculties using BU-wide and subject-specific benchmarks, and are widely published.
- 4.2.2 Applicants must have a set of skills required to fulfill the demands of the research degree programme they wish to study. Standard entry requirements are listed in the policy which can be found on our website here: [Standard Admissions Regulations: Research Degree Programmes](#).
- 4.2.3 For research degree programmes that are jointly ratified by the University and a Professional Body, criteria for entry will also meet any requirements specified by the Professional Body.
- 4.2.4 Applicants to certain programmes will be required to undergo selection tests, occupational health and/or Disclosure Barring Service and Barred List checks, the outcomes of which will be taken into consideration as part of the admissions process.

### 4.3 English Language Requirements

- 4.3.1 BU has a responsibility to ensure all applicants are capable of successfully completing a BU research degree programme in the medium of English. Details of how BU evaluates the English language proficiency of applicants to ensure applicants are capable of successfully completing a BU research degree programme is set out here: [Admissions Policy: Taught Programmes \(excluding apprenticeships\)](#).
- 4.3.2 PGR students are admitted to the University's programmes on the basis of standard admissions criteria, which includes the assessment of an applicant's English language level as set out here: [Standard Admissions Regulations: Research Degree Programmes](#).

### 4.4 Success in BU's Programmes

- 4.4.1 There should be a reasonable expectation that anyone admitted to a research degree programme will be able to fulfil the learning outcomes of the programme and achieve the standard required for the research degree award.
- 4.4.2 The ability to successfully complete and benefit from a research degree programme should be the basic criterion for admission, and this is not necessarily best evidenced by the highest possible entry criteria or equivalent.

- 4.4.3 In considering each individual applicant for admission to a research degree programme, evidence should be sought of personal, professional and educational experiences that provide indications of ability to meet the demands of the research degree programme.

## **5. PROVISION OF INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE**

- 5.1 BU strives to ensure that all information, advice and guidance in relation to recruitment and admissions is relevant, accessible, and accurate at the time of publication to enable applicants to make informed decisions.
- 5.2 BU will endeavour to provide information in a suitable alternative format for those applicants with particular disabilities.
- 5.3 Entry requirements and programme information is published in a clear and accessible format and is available on the BU website.
- 5.4 BU reserves the right to make changes to entry requirements or research degree programmes procedures at any point. Any significant changes will be communicated to applicants in a timely manner. Such changes may include:
- *Changes to start date*
  - *Changes to Supervisory Team*
- 5.5 In cases where it is necessary for the University to close or suspend a research degree programme for a given period, applicants and offer holders will be notified immediately and given the option of withdrawing their acceptance or considering alternatives as above.
- 5.6 The Doctoral College Admissions and Awards Team responds to admissions enquiries via telephone, email or live chat and can be contacted at: [pgradmissions@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:pgradmissions@bournemouth.ac.uk).
- 5.7 Information and guidance on how and when to apply can be found on our website here: [How to apply for a postgraduate research degree | Bournemouth University](#).

## **6. FEES**

- 6.1 BU is committed to a fair and transparent policy in respect of all fee charges made to PGR students, whether tuition fees or additional programme related costs. Information on such charges is included with the offer letter to each applicant and on the BU's website.
- 6.2 Information on the eligibility and application process for scholarships and bursaries is available on the University website here: [Help and Advice: Financial Support](#).
- 6.3 International applicants are required to pay a deposit for postgraduate research degree programmes. Failure to pay a deposit by the required deadline may result in the applicant losing their place.
- 6.4 The deposit will be non-refundable except in the circumstances listed in the Student Fees Policy available on our website here: [Help and Advice: Important Information](#).
- 6.5 The Fee Status Assessment is undertaken in line with the policy and process set out here: [Admissions Taught Policy: Taught Programmes \(excluding apprenticeships\)](#).

## **7. ASSESSMENT OF ELIGIBILITY FOR ENTRY**

- 7.1 When assessing an application, BU considers whether the content of the application indicates the applicant has the potential to fulfil the learning outcomes of the relevant research degree programme
- 7.2 Assessment of an application is based primarily on the applicant's qualifications and grades. Additional consideration may be required if the applicant is from outside the UK, the programme has additional selection methods or if the application does not meet the published entry requirements.
- 7.3 Admission decisions will be based on the information supplied by the applicant. The omission of pertinent information or the supply of inaccurate information may invalidate the application and any subsequent offer of a place.
- 7.4 Applicants with a conditional offer will be required to provide evidence that the conditions before a unconditional offer is made. Applicants who achieve all conditions of the offer will have their

place confirmed. Applicants who have not met the conditions are reviewed by admissions staff and the Faculty and their place may be confirmed if it is felt they have the potential to succeed.

## **8. THE APPLICATION PROCESS**

- 8.1 Enquiries about postgraduate research degree programmes, including advertised studentships and scholarships, should be made to the Doctoral College via email to: [pgradmissions@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:pgradmissions@bournemouth.ac.uk).
- 8.2 Unless otherwise stated, applicants for all postgraduate research degree programmes should apply via the University's online admissions system, accessible via the University website and must be submitted by the application deadline as published on the University website.
- 8.3 It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all pertinent information is supplied on their application. Incomplete applications may not be considered.
- 8.4 All applications for research degrees must include a research proposal following the guidance available here: [How to apply for a postgraduate research degree | Bournemouth University](#).
- 8.5 The Doctoral College Admissions and Awards Team are the main point of contact throughout the research degrees application process which is available in Appendix 1.
- 8.6 All formal communication with the applicant in relation to the application process must be made through the Doctoral College, to ensure that the BU's selection policies and procedures are followed fairly and consistently for all applicants.
- 8.7 Applicants will be kept informed of the status of their application throughout the admissions process. However, a decision will normally be made on an application within six weeks of receipt of the full application or within four weeks of an interview.

### **8.8 Academic Assessment**

- 8.8.1 All applications will initially be considered by the nominated member of academic staff for the Faculty, normally the Deputy Dean (Research) (or the nominee) and, if appropriate, passed to an academic supervisor(s) for full assessment and shortlisting. Each applicant's personal statement, research proposal and academic reference(s) are considered alongside their academic profile.
- 8.8.2 Eligible applicants will be required to attend an interview (either in person or online) with the potential academic supervisor(s) and independent senior academic. The interview will be used by the academic staff to assess the abilities, aptitudes, skills, and review qualifications (including English language proficiency) and experiences of the applicant that indicate their potential to succeed on their research degree programme.
- 8.8.3 Applicants are asked to provide details of at least two referees, both of whom should normally be able to provide an academic reference. The Doctoral College Admissions Team will contact the referees to request references when required. Applicants are asked to advise the University if they wish to be informed prior to references being requested. Additional references may also be requested in order to inform the admissions process.
- 8.9 Unsuccessful applicants, who have been interviewed, requiring feedback on their application should request this via email to: [pgradmissions@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:pgradmissions@bournemouth.ac.uk).

### **8.10 Offers**

- 8.10.1 **Offers can only be made to applicants via the Doctoral College Admissions and Awards Team once the application process has been fully completed - under no circumstances can any offer be made otherwise.**
- 8.10.2 Successful applicants will be sent an offer letter via the Doctoral College Admissions and Awards Team. Offers may stipulate specific conditions to be met prior to an unconditional offer being made to the applicant.
- 8.10.3 Applicants who fail to meet the conditions of their offer or those who fail to secure a visa will be given one further opportunity to meet those conditions or secure a visa or to have the deposit returned.

- 8.11 When an applicant accepts an offer of a place at BU, they are agreeing to the terms and conditions as stipulated in the Student Agreement. The latest version of the student agreement is on the BU website here: [Help and Advice: Important linformation.](#)
- 8.12 International applicants will need to apply for a Student Visa to study in the UK (see Applicants Requiring a Student Visa section). BU is a Licenced Student Sponsor and will issue a Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) from six months before the course starts as long as the applicant has met all the conditions of the offer, cleared the actions listed on their applicant record and paid the deposit if applicable.
- 8.13 Deferral of a place to a later intake prior to commencing the course may be granted according to the circumstances of the applicant. Deferral for two intakes will not normally be possible and is likely to require a new application to be submitted.
- 8.14 All applicants with a confirmed place will receive welcome information and joining instructions from the Doctoral College Admissions and Awards Team, in advance of the start of their research degree programme wherever possible. This pack includes information about online registration and enrolment processes including information about the University facilities, as well as its rules and regulations.

## **9. APPLICANTS WITH DISABILITIES, MEDICAL CONDITIONS OR OTHER SUPPORT NEEDS**

- 9.1 BU is committed to promoting diversity in its student population and will make reasonable adjustments to enable students with disabilities or medical conditions to participate in their chosen research degree programme.
- 9.2 If an applicant with a disability, medical condition or other support need receives and accepts an offer, they are encouraged to inform the University of their support needs at the earliest opportunity to enable to the University to assess what support or adjustments can be put in place. This assessment is undertaken in accordance with the policy here: [3D Admissions Policy and Procedure for applicants with a disability, medical condition or other support need.](#)

## **10. APPLICANTS REQUIRING A STUDENT VISA**

- 10.1 The process for applicants requiring a student visa is undertaken in line with the policy and process set out here: [Admissions Policy: Taught Programmes \(excluding apprenticeships\).](#)

## **11. ACADEMIC TECHNOLOGY APPROVAL SCHEME (ATAS) CLEARANCE**

- 11.1 The process for applicants requiring a ATAS clearance is undertaken in line with the policy and process set out here: [Admissions Policy: Taught Programmes \(excluding apprenticeships\).](#)

## **12. ACADEMIC PROGRESSION (INTERNATIONAL APPLICANTS)**

- 12.1 The process for applicants requiring Academic Progression (AP) assessment is undertaken in line with the policy and process set out here: [Admissions Policy: Taught Programmes \(excluding apprenticeships\).](#)

## **13. OTHER FACTORS**

- 13.1 The process for consideration other factors, such as criminal convictions or fraudulent applications, which may affect an application undertaken in line with the policy and process set out here: [Admissions Policy: Taught Programmes \(excluding apprenticeships\).](#)

## **14. APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS**

- 14.1 Should an applicant wish to request an appeal regarding the University's postgraduate research degree admissions process, they should follow the guidelines set out in the BU Admissions Appeals and Complaints Policy and Procedure which is available on our website here: [Help and Advice: Important linformation.](#)
- 14.2 It should be noted that appeals may only be raised with regard to the University processes and procedures and not in relation to matters of academic judgement.

## **15. DATA PROTECTION**

15.1 BU collects and retains personal information about potential future students for a range of purposes, including the operation of our admissions process as described in this Policy and Procedure.

15.2 This personal information is personal data which we manage in accordance with the relevant data protection legislation, including the EU General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act 2018.

For further information about our use of applicant information, including information about when and why we share it with third parties, please read the relevant BU Privacy Notice which can be found here: [Student Recruitment and Admissions Privacy Notice](#).

#### **14. REFERENCES AND FURTHER INFORMATION**

14.1 This policy was reviewed according to the BU's [Equality Analysis Procedure](#) in March 2025.

14.2 Contact details for further admissions information, policies or procedures:

Doctoral College, Dorset House, Talbot Campus, Fern Barrow, Poole, Dorset, BH12 5BB

Tel: + 44 (0) 1202 968255

Email: [doctoralcollege@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:doctoralcollege@bournemouth.ac.uk) / [pgradmissions@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:pgradmissions@bournemouth.ac.uk)

#### **15. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: Admissions Process

## APPENDIX 1 – ADMISSIONS PROCESS

The key stages for a research degree application are outlined below:

