

**University of Aberdeen**

**Guidance Notes For Students Concerning  
Postgraduate Admissions**

(excluding Primary and Secondary Teacher Training (PGDE) Admissions)

**Updated 11 April 2011**

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## **BEFORE I APPLY**

### **Note 1. How do I apply?**

By completing the University's application. This can be obtained:

- by visiting [www.abdn.ac.uk/postgraduate/apply.php](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/postgraduate/apply.php) and applying on-line or
- by downloading a hard copy application

### **Note 2. What are the entry requirements?**

The entry requirements for degree programmes are listed in the University of Aberdeen Postgraduate Prospectus at [www.abdn.ac.uk/prospectus/pgrad](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/prospectus/pgrad)

### **Note 3. Is there a charge for applying?**

The University of Aberdeen makes no application charge if you wish to apply for postgraduate study.

For Primary and Secondary Teacher Training (PGDE) Admissions, completed GTTR application must be submitted to GTTR with the applicant's fee. Information on how to pay the charge is contained in the GTTR web pages at: [www.gttr.ac.uk](http://www.gttr.ac.uk)

### **Note 4. Are there any bursaries or scholarships available?**

For information on scholarships you should visit [www.abdn.ac.uk/postgraduate/funding.php](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/postgraduate/funding.php)

### **Note 5. Can I apply for more than one degree programme?**

Yes. You may apply to as many degree programmes as you like. You should submit a separate application for each one.

### **Note 6. When can I apply?**

Early application is encouraged, ideally up to one year in advance of studies, but you can apply at any time. Most taught programmes commence in mid-to-late September each year, while some start in January. Lists of programmes can be found at [www.abdn.ac.uk/prospectus/pgrad](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/prospectus/pgrad)

Overseas students should apply in sufficient time to allow their applications to be processed before their visa interviews take place. Six months in advance is a suggested timeframe. (An appointment for a visa interview might take 8 weeks.)

**Note 7. Is there a closing date by which time I must submit my application?**

Please check our website for information on the dates for receipt of applications. For international students, applying to taught programmes, there may be a deadline. Any application received after the deadline, will be considered for the next available intake. Please note this deadline is to ensure students have sufficient time to complete the application process and apply for their visa, and arrive in Aberdeen in time for the start of their programme.

There is no deadline for those students classed as UK/EU for tuition fee purposes but allow time for your application to be processed (approximately 4 weeks) and for you to make arrangements to come to Aberdeen in time for the start of the session. There is also no deadline for application to Research programmes as students can start at a time agreed with the relevant College.

The University endeavours to process all applications for taught programmes within 21 working days of receipt, (approximately 4 weeks). Applications for research degrees can take longer to process. **In both cases this is dependant upon applications arriving complete with references and other supporting documents.**

**Note 8. How will I know that you have received my application (on-line or hard copy)?**

If you apply on-line you have thirty days in which to make amendments to your application before submission. If your application is still incomplete after thirty days have elapsed your application will be deleted from our systems. Once you have submitted your application you will receive an e-mail confirming that it has been received. The acknowledgement will contain your 10-digit personal ID number which you should quote in any correspondence with us. For example, it will look like 9109361257.

Applications received by hard copy will be sent an acknowledgement email as above.

Your application will be forwarded to the relevant Graduate School for consideration by an academic Admissions Selector. The School will be in contact with you (normally by e-mail), shortly after receipt of your application in the School. They will notify you if there are any supporting documents missing which may delay consideration of your application.

**Note 9. Can I make an application for deferred entry?**

Yes, in most cases, but only once and for entry at the start of the next academic session. Applications are only retained for 1 year, therefore after this time you would have to submit a new application.

If you wish to defer your entry date after an offer of admission has been made, you should write to request this. The Postgraduate Admissions Office will confirm whether a later start date is permitted and, if it is, will issue you with an Amended Offer of Admission letter.

## **Note 10. What supporting documents do I need to provide with my application?**

- \*Degree certificate(s)  
[A **good photocopy** is required. Applies for degree(s) already completed.]
- \*Transcript(s)  
[An **original** transcript is required. If the degree is not yet complete an original transcript to the present date is permitted]
- A valid TOEFL or IELTS certificate (if applicable)  
[A **good photocopy** is required. If you have not yet taken a test please state your anticipated test date on your application form.]
- References

### **For Research Degrees (PhD, MPhil etc)**

Two confidential references in sealed envelopes, signed by the referee across the seal.

### **Normally, for Taught Programmes (MBA, MSc, MLitt etc)**

Applicants with a degree from a UK institution are **not** required to supply references  
Applicants with a degree from outwith the UK are required to submit **one reference only**

NOTE 1: Some Schools may vary their reference requirements from the above e.g. some programmes may ask for work references rather than academic. **Applicants are therefore strongly encouraged to check individual school websites to confirm reference requirements for applications**

NOTE 2: If your referee(s) agrees to share the reference(s) with you, the reference(s) can be uploaded along with your online application. The reference(s) must be on institutional headed paper and signed by your referee(s). The original copy must be produced if required by the University. If your referee(s) is unwilling to share the reference(s) with you then it should be forwarded, in a sealed envelope signed by the referee(s) across the seal, to the PG Admissions address.

[\*Denotes that the above documents must be translated into English and authenticated by a Notary Public, or similar authority]

The University of Aberdeen reserves the right to scrutinise the originals of applicants' certificates at any time. If you become a registered student at the University you have the opportunity to check the information we hold on your qualifications. Corrections can be made at Registration or via your Student Portal.

**Please note that consideration of your application will be delayed if there are any required documents missing.**

## **Note 11. Is my proficiency in English good enough?**

If your first language is not English, it is important that your proficiency in English is good in order for you to study successfully at the University of Aberdeen. Without this ability you will

find great difficulty in understanding lectures, producing written work and sitting examinations. Even if you have been educated in the medium of English you must meet our English Language requirements. These are located at [www.abdn.ac.uk/international/english-requirements.php](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/international/english-requirements.php)

If you are in doubt about your proficiency in English, contact the British Council office or its equivalent in your country.

**Note 12. If I have a criminal conviction can I still apply?**

Applicants with a criminal conviction can make an application for admission. Section 3 of the University of Aberdeen Postgraduate Application Form states 'If you have a relevant criminal conviction, enter **X** in the box'. The Instructions for Completion provide full information on how to complete, in addition to the definition of a relevant criminal conviction. If you enter **X** in the box the University of Aberdeen will write to you to request further information. Your reply should be sent to the Head of Postgraduate Admissions who will treat the information in the strictest confidence. A recommendation on whether or not an offer should be made may be considered by the University Secretary. The outcome is communicated to you by the Head of Postgraduate Admissions.

**Note 13. How will I know that you have received my references?**

Any references received are passed to the relevant School concerned to be matched up with your application form. The School will notify you if references have not been received.

**Note 14. How long does the application process take?**

If you submit an application **with all the required supporting documents**, the outcome of your application should be known within 21 working days.

You will be sent an *Offer of Admission* letter detailing any academic and/or English language conditions that you must satisfy before you are allowed to proceed to registration and matriculation. Our formal offer will also contain: a document detailing the *Standard Terms Governing Offers of Admission to the University*, available at: <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/documents/standard-terms-governing-offers.pdf> and a combined *Acceptance/Decline and Financial Guarantee Form*, available at: [www.abdn.ac.uk/documents/finance-guarantee.doc](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/documents/finance-guarantee.doc)

If you still wish to study at the University, you should *accept* the offer of the place that we have made to you and show that you agree to pay your costs of study. To do this you must return the '*Financial Guarantee and Acceptance/Decline Form*', along with any documentation showing that you meet the conditions set down in the offer. If you are to be sponsored through your studies, you must tell us on the form who is to pay your costs and attach supporting evidence. If you are sponsored by a company, this will be a letter of confirmation from your sponsor.

If you no longer wish to study at the University, you should decline the offer that we have made to you. For popular programmes we will then be able to offer your place to the next applicant on the waiting list.

Any letter Postgraduate Admissions sends to you will contain your 10-digit personal ID number which you should quote in any correspondence with us. For example, it will look like 9089361257.

If you do not reply to the Offer of Admission letter within 3 months of the date it was sent to you, your application will be withdrawn.

**Note 15. What happens if I have a disability, medical condition or specific learning difficulty?**

The University welcomes applications from disabled applicants and, the University aims to make all of the services it provides as accessible as possible. The University's Disability Advisers are the main point of contact for discussing any requirements you may have. Each School also has a designated Disability Co-ordinator who is responsible for ensuring that any provisions that have been agreed are put in place.

The University's Disability Advisers are based in the Student Advice and Support Office, Student Support Services. They are informed of all applicants who have disclosed a disability or impairment. The Disability Advisers contact each of these applicants to discuss support arrangements and to ensure that appropriate guidance is given.

If you think it would be helpful, you are welcome to contact a Disability Adviser for a confidential discussion on your application. More information can be found on our web pages at [www.abdn.ac.uk/disability](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/disability) or by email: [student.disability@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:student.disability@abdn.ac.uk)

The application for admission provides applicants with the opportunity to disclose a disability and the University of Aberdeen encourages early disclosure. In line with the Admissions Policy, the University makes the reassurance that a disability will not affect the outcome of an application. Early disclosure enables the University to work with you to ensure that appropriate support systems are in place to allow you to participate fully in your studies.

**Note 16. Do I have to undergo a medical examination?**

A medical examination is not normally required.

**Note 17. Will I be required to attend an interview?**

For some programmes, especially for entry to a research degree, an interview forms part of the admissions process. If you live overseas, sometimes it is possible for an academic International Officer to interview you when he/she is scheduled to visit your country.

**Note 18. Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)**

The ATAS scheme is to be introduced by the UK government on 1 November 2007. An ATAS certificate is required if you need a student Entry Clearance or Visa to study in the UK and you wish to study within certain subject areas where the exit award will be a

Doctorate/Postgraduate Masters by Research. Further detailed information is available at [www.fco.gov.uk/atas](http://www.fco.gov.uk/atas)

When you receive an offer letter from the University you will also receive confirmation of the JACS code for your area of research and a short statement summarising the area of research you hope to undertake, which will have been agreed with your lead supervisor. You must then proceed to apply for an ATAS certificate before applying for your student Entry Clearance or Visa. You must do this on-line via [www.fco.gov.uk/atas](http://www.fco.gov.uk/atas)

## **AFTER I APPLY**

### **Note 19. My Offer of Admission letter says that I have an unconditional place. What does this mean?**

An *unconditional* place means that you have provided the University with sufficient documentary evidence that you meet the academic and/or English language conditions stipulated in your Offer of Admission letter. However, even though you have an unconditional offer, you must still meet the Financial Guarantee requirements.

If you do not provide documentary evidence of who will be paying your tuition fees (in advance of your start date), your registration will be delayed, or you may not be permitted to register for your chosen programme of study.

### **Note 20. My Offer of Admission letter says that I have a conditional place. What does this mean?**

A *conditional* place means that you must send us documentary evidence that you have met the academic and/or English language conditions stipulated in your Offer of Admission letter. In addition you must also meet the Financial Guarantee requirements.. Once your degree result or English language test result is known you should send these to the Postgraduate Admissions Office as soon as possible.

If you do not provide documentary evidence of who will be paying your tuition fees (in advance of your start date), your registration will be delayed or you may not be permitted to register for your chosen programme of study.

### **Note 21. Degree equivalences – my Offer of Admission letter states that I have to provide evidence that my degree is equivalent to an honours degree in the UK. What does this mean?**

Successful candidates in British honours degrees are placed in different classes: Class I (a 'first'); Class II, Division 1 (an 'upper second'); Class II, Division 2 (a 'lower second'); Class III (a 'third').

An indication of the range of classes awarded by UK universities is shown below:

<b>Class</b>	<b>Range of Marks</b>
First	70 – 100%

Upper Second	60 – 69%
Lower Second	50 – 59%
Third	40 - 49%
Pass	35 - 39%
Fail	Below 35%

**Note 22. I have not met the conditions as stipulated in my offer (academic/English language/financial). What can I do?**

If your degree result is not as good as expected, you should still contact us. The Postgraduate Admissions Office will consult with the relevant School to find out if an alternative programme could be offered.

For example if you had originally been offered a place directly onto a Master’s programme it may be possible to offer you a place on the corresponding Postgraduate Diploma programme as an alternative. If you are registered on a particular Postgraduate Diploma programme, it is normally possible to transfer to the Master’s programme if your assessment results are at the required standard for progression.

If your English language result is not as expected, it will probably be the case that you will have to wait until your test result improves. The pace of teaching on postgraduate taught programmes is such that you may fall behind very quickly if your language skills are not at the required standard.

If you have not met the conditions of your Offer of Admission letter and we cannot offer you an alternative, you could write to request that your offer of a place be deferred to the next available intake. Application forms are only retained for one year so, after this time, you would have to submit a new application. If you request deferral, the Postgraduate Admissions Office will confirm whether a later start date is permitted and, if it is, will issue you with an Amended Offer of Admission letter. You can also request deferral if you are unable to meet the Financial Guarantee requirements of the offer.

**Note 23. Can I come and visit the University of Aberdeen?**

The University of Aberdeen has an 'Open Door' policy, which means that you are welcome to contact us to arrange a private visit at any time. A visit tailored to your interests is the most informative and enjoyable way to find out what it is really like to be a student at the University of Aberdeen and is to be encouraged.

To arrange a visit, simply fill in our on-line form at: [www.abdn.ac.uk/sras](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/sras) and select the Arrange a Visit link towards the top of the page. Alternatively you can telephone +44 (0) 1224 272090/91 or email: [sras@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:sras@abdn.ac.uk) You are asked to give at least two weeks notice of when you wish to visit and which departments you would like to see, so that adequate arrangements can be made for you. In November each year the University holds a Postgraduate Open Day which would be an ideal opportunity to visit.

## FEES STATUS AND TUITION FEES

### **Note 24. How do you decide what my fee status is?**

Tuition fees have to cover the full cost of a programme and, for eligible students, the UK government subsidises that cost. These students are known as Home students and they have to meet set criteria to be eligible. Overseas fees are payable by students who do not meet the criteria. Further information on determining your Fee Status can be found at [www.abdn.ac.uk/international/finance.php](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/international/finance.php) Alternatively you can contact UKCISA The UK Council for International Student Affairs who have an advice line for students +44 (0) 20 7107 9922.

Your Offer of Admission letter will state whether the University has classified you as a home or overseas student for the purposes of tuition fees.

In situations where it is not clear if you should be classified as a home fees or overseas student the University will write to you to request further information. In such circumstances you will be sent a Fees Classification Form for completion. Until such time as your situation is re-assessed your status will remain as that of an overseas student.

### **Note 25. How can I find out how much my tuition fees will be?**

Information on tuition fees is updated once a year and is normally available by May once all fees have been approved by the University. When updated the information will be displayed at: [www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/tuitionfees](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/tuitionfees)

### **Note 26. Do I have to tell you how my tuition fees will be paid and, if so, what information do you need from me?**

Yes. You must return the '*Financial Guarantee and Acceptance/Decline Form*'. The Form is sent to you with your Offer of Admission letter. If you are to be sponsored through your studies you must tell us on the Form who is to pay your costs, and attach supporting evidence. If you are sponsored by a company this will be a letter of confirmation from your sponsor. Information on Costs of Study is displayed at: [www.abdn.ac.uk/international/finance.php](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/international/finance.php)

### **Note 27. Do my tuition fees have to be paid in advance of registration?**

No. Information about tuition fees and ways to pay them can be found at [www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/tuitionfees/payment.shtml](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/tuitionfees/payment.shtml)

### **Note 28. What is a Certificate of Acceptance and when will I receive it?**

When you have satisfied all academic, English language and financial conditions laid down in your Offer of Admission letter, the University will send you a Certificate of Acceptance. You will then be known as an applicant who is '*cleared for admission*'. The Certificate will be sent you as soon as possible after you have been cleared for admission. International students commencing studies in September will not receive their Certificate until end of April at the

earliest. It means that you are now eligible to register at a start date determined by your School. The date given on your Offer of Admission letter is the official date of the start of the term. However, some courses commence slightly sooner or slightly later than the official start of term. Your Department/School will notify you directly of the **actual** start date of your course where it varies from the official start date stated on your Certificate of Acceptance.

If you do not receive your Certificate of Acceptance and you think you have satisfied our requirements, please contact us as soon as possible.

**Note 29. What are Joining Packs/Instructions and when will I receive them?**

If you are '*cleared for admission*' you will be sent a Joining Pack from June onwards. Cleared for admission means that you have satisfied all academic, English language and financial conditions laid down in your Offer of Admission letter. Joining Pack information is updated annually, around May of each year, and you will be sent Joining Pack details from then onwards. Joining Packs contain important information and useful web-site addresses that you should take time to read prior to registration. You will also find them useful during your time as a student at Aberdeen. The current Joining Pack information is available electronically at [www.abdn.ac.uk/newstudents](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/newstudents) The information is updated in the middle of December each year for January starts.

The Joining Pack also includes an Accommodation Form and details of accommodation available. If you have any questions on accommodation you can contact the Accommodation Office at [www.abdn.ac.uk/accommodation](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/accommodation)

**Note 30. Is student accommodation available?**

The University of Aberdeen makes no stipulation about where its students should live and new students may arrange their own accommodation or apply to the University for a place in one of the Halls of Residence.

Accommodation Application Forms are sent out with Joining Packs from June onwards to applicants who have satisfied all academic, English language and financial conditions of admission. If you have any questions about accommodation you can contact the Accommodation Office at [www.abdn.ac.uk/accommodation](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/accommodation)

Please be aware that, if you accept a place in Halls, you are entering into a contract for a set period of time. If you break this contract, you will almost certainly still be liable to pay accommodation fees for the remainder of your contract.

**Note 31. Where can I find out the term dates?**

Dates of term can be found on the University web pages at: [www.abdn.ac.uk/students/term-dates.php](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/students/term-dates.php)

**Note 32. Where can I find regulations and more information on the degree programmes that you offer?**

Information on degree programmes that we offer can be found in the current Postgraduate Prospectus at [www.abdn.ac.uk/prospectus/pgrad](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/prospectus/pgrad) If you are looking for more **in-depth** information on the content of your degree you can follow the taught programme or research option links from the Prospectus or you can contact the relevant Programme Selector for the programme that you would like to undertake.

Regulations for Postgraduate Study and a list of the individual modules that make up each taught postgraduate degree programme can be found in the University Calendar at [www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/calendar](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/calendar)

**Note 33. Who can I contact if I have more questions?**

Please contact the Postgraduate Admissions Office or Student Recruitment using the information below. You may also wish to speak to the relevant Graduate School.

Postgraduate Admissions  
Student Recruitment + Admissions Service  
University of Aberdeen  
University Office  
King's College  
Aberdeen  
AB24 3FX  
Tel: +44 (0) 1224 273506  
Fax: +44 (0) 1224 272041

Student Recruitment + Admissions Service  
University of Aberdeen  
University Office  
King's College  
Aberdeen  
AB24 3FX  
Tel: +44 (0) 1224 272090/91  
Fax: +44 (0) 1224 272675

Business School  
Web: [www.abdn.ac.uk/business/smartthinking](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/business/smartthinking)  
Email: [gbs@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:gbs@abdn.ac.uk)  
Tel: +44 (0) 1224 273235

Law School  
Web: [www.abdn.ac.uk/law](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/law)  
Tel: + 44 (0) 1224 272441

Graduate School  
College of Physical Sciences  
Web: [www.abdn.ac.uk/cops/graduate](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/cops/graduate)  
Tel: +44 (0) 1224 272515

Graduate School  
College of Arts and Social Sciences  
Web: [www.abdn.ac.uk/cass/graduate](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/cass/graduate)  
Tel: +44 (0) 1224 272080

Graduate School  
College of Life Sciences and Medicine  
Web: [www.abdn.ac.uk/clsm/graduate](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/clsm/graduate)  
Tel: +44 (0) 1224 559970

**Note 34. How do I make a complaint regarding my application for admission?**

It is the policy of the University at all times to provide the highest possible level of service to its applicants. Nevertheless, it is recognised that there will be occasions when applicants may feel that the level of service, or the treatment they have received from staff, has fallen short of that normally expected.

If you are unhappy in regard to your application for admission, you can raise your concerns in the first instance with the person who answers your call. In many cases staff in the Student

Recruitment and Admissions Service will be able to sort out your problem over the phone. Or you can write, giving your applicant number if you know it, to the Head of Admissions, Office of External Affairs, Student Recruitment and Admissions Service, University of Aberdeen, University Office, King's College Aberdeen, AB24 3FX.

If you are unable to resolve your concerns, guidance on the procedure for submitting a complaint is given in the University's Policy on Student Complaints which can be accessed at [www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/appeals](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/appeals) and its accompanying Guidance Note.

**Note 35.      What does Data Protection mean?**

When you agree to the declaration on your application you agree that we can process your information and keep a copy of your application to collect statistics and to use the information for any other legitimate purpose.