



University of Aberdeen

**Guidance Notes on Admission For
Postgraduate Study (Taught and Research)**

(excluding Primary and Secondary Teacher Training (PGDE) Admissions, please refer to www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php)

Updated November 2016

Guidance Notes on Admission For Postgraduate Study (Taught and Research)

Scope of Guidance Notes

These *Guidance Notes* apply to all students who wish to submit an application for:

- Postgraduate study (taught and research)

If you wish to study Teacher Training (PGDE) Study, please refer to www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php

Admissions Policy

The University of Aberdeen's Admissions Policy is detailed on our web pages at:

www.abdn.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-taught/admissions-policy.php for taught programmes and at:
www.abdn.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-research/pgr-admissions-policy.php for research study.

Note A

Students who matriculate at the University automatically become a member of the Aberdeen University Students' Association (AUSA). However, under the 1994 Education Act, students have the right to 'opt out' of membership of AUSA and will be able to exercise that right should they wish to as part of e-registration. Please note that 'opting out' will restrict a student from participating in student elections and may restrict students from accessing some services provided by AUSA. Further information regarding this is provided in the University's Code of Practice for Compliance with the 1994 Act www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/teaching/aqh/appendix5x24.pdf

Note B

The University of Aberdeen continues to pursue best practice and high standards of service for all students. If you would like to receive this document in an alternative format, please contact the Student Recruitment and Admissions Service for more information. Telephone: +44 (0) 1224 273506 Email: pgadmissions@abdn.ac.uk

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Responsibility and Monitoring of Policy and Guidance Notes

Admissions Policy: Is the responsibility of the Student Recruitment and Admissions Committee.

Guidance Notes: Are the responsibility of the Head of Admissions and are reviewed and updated annually.

Admissions Procedures: The admission of students to the University of Aberdeen is managed by the Student Recruitment and Admissions Service (SRAS). The Head of Admissions is responsible for delivery of the admissions service. Admissions procedures are reviewed annually and updated where necessary. The academic Admissions Selectors and Admissions Officers, based in SRAS, in conjunction with the Head of Admissions and Head of SRAS monitor the admissions procedures.

Note 1. How do I apply?

By completing the University's online application. This can be obtained at: www.abdn.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-taught/apply.php or www.abdn.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-research/how-to-apply-1639.php

The Postgraduate Applicant Portal (PGAP) will allow you to submit an application once you have registered onto the system. In order to submit an application you must have fully completed the application, uploaded a Transcript and uploaded a Personal Statement. If these documents are not uploaded, the application cannot be submitted.

Please note if you wish to apply for entry onto the PGDE Primary or Secondary Education programmes, you must apply via UCAS – www.ucas.com

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/study/postgraduate-taught/index.php or www.abdn.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-research/index.php

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, a completed application must be submitted to UCAS with the applicant's fee. Information on how to pay the charge is contained in the UCAS web pages at: www.ucas.com

Note 4. Are there any bursaries or scholarships available?

For information on scholarships you should visit: www.abdn.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-taught/finance-funding-1599.php or www.abdn.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-research/finance-funding-1641.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. However, you should note that you can only accept one offer of admission if you have applied to more than one programme in the same academic year.

Note 6. When can I apply?

Early application is encouraged. You can apply up to 18 months before the programme start date. Most taught programmes commence in early September each year, while some start in January. Details of taught programmes can be found at: www.abdn.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-taught/index.php

Overseas students should apply in sufficient time to allow their applications to be processed before their visa interview takes 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 which is approximately 10 weeks prior to the commencement date of the programme. 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, apply for their visa, and arrive in Aberdeen in time for the start of their programme.

For most taught programmes, there is no deadline for those students classified as UK/EU or RUK for tuition fee purposes. You should apply before term commences and in addition, allow sufficient time for your application to be processed (approximately 3 weeks) and 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 most research students can apply and begin their studies at a time agreed with the relevant College.

The University endeavours to process all applications for taught programmes as quickly as possible. Applications for research degrees can take longer to process. **In both cases this is dependent upon applications arriving complete with supporting documents (see Note 10).**

Note 8. How will I know that you have received my application?

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 8109361257 D002.

Your application will then be forwarded to the relevant Graduate School for consideration by an academic Admissions Selector. The School 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 it is possible to defer an offer to the next available intake. You can either intimate this by email to the Postgraduate Admissions Office or on your Acceptance/Decline Form if you have already received an offer of admission.

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.

Please note that applicants for the Diploma in Professional Legal Practice **may not** defer.

Note 10. What supporting documents do I need to upload with my application?

- *Transcript(s)
If the degree is not yet complete, an original, official transcript to the present date should be submitted. If you have graduated already or, when you have completed your degree, the final, official transcript should be submitted.
- Personal Statement

Other documents that may be required but which can be uploaded later, if not immediately available:

- *Degree certificate(s)/diploma(s)
Please upload if you have already completed your degree otherwise, please upload when the certificate/diploma is available.
- A valid IELTS, Pearsons or Cambridge English certificate (if applicable)
If you have not yet taken a test please state your anticipated test date on your application form.
- Applicants for PhD and Masters by Research programmes should usually submit a Research Proposal. Some departments require an extended Research Profile, and applicants should refer to individual school websites for details before submitting an application.
- References (if required)

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

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

For **Taught Programmes** (MBA, MSc, MLitt, etc)

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

NOTE 10a: 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 10b: 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.

Further information can be found at: www.abdn.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/applying-for-a-postgraduate-programme-952.php

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/study/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. The University of Aberdeen Online Postgraduate Application asks 'If you have a relevant criminal conviction, enter **YES** 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 **YES**, the University of Aberdeen will email you to request further information. Your reply should be sent to the Head of 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 Admissions.

Note 13. What does 'refused admission to study' mean?

You will also be asked if you have previously been refused admission to study at the University of Aberdeen. This is **NOT** a refusal on academic grounds. If you have previously made an application to study at the University of Aberdeen and your application was unsuccessful on academic grounds, for example because you didn't satisfy the academic entry requirements please answer No to this question. If the refusal was for any other reason, please answer Yes and the Postgraduate Admissions Office will be in touch with you for further information.

Note 14. 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. If a reference has been applied as a condition of offer, the offer will remain conditional until the references have been received. Please note that it is your responsibility to ask your referee to prepare the reference. The University of Aberdeen does not contact referees on your behalf.

Note 15. 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 7 working days. This is for postgraduate taught programmes. Consideration of applications for postgraduate research study takes longer to determine.

If your application is successful you will be sent (by email) 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*, which is also available at: www.abdn.ac.uk/study/documents/standard-terms-governing-offers-pg.pdf If you wish to accept the offer of admission to study at the University, you should tick the box on the *Acceptance/Decline Form* to show that you *accept* the offer. You will also need to indicate how you intend to fund your studies. To do this you must return the '*Financial Guarantee Form*'.

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, including the address to which the invoice should be sent. If you are sponsored by a company, this will be a letter of confirmation from your sponsor. You can accept the offer of admission while your offer is conditional.

If you have any outstanding conditions of offer, please upload the documents to confirm that you have satisfied the conditions as soon as they are available so that you may be 'cleared for admission'.

If you no longer wish to study at the University, you should decline the offer that we have made to you.

If your application is unsuccessful, you will be notified by email.

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 8109361257 D001.

Note 16. 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 or by email: 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 17. Do I have to undergo a medical examination?

A medical examination is not normally required.

Note 18. 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 19. Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)

The ATAS scheme was introduced by the UK government on 1 November 2007. An ATAS certificate is required if you need Entry Clearance to study in the UK and you wish to study within certain subject areas. You will be notified on your Offer Letter if ATAS is required, along with the relevant JACS code of the programme you wish to study. Further detailed information is available at www.gov.uk/academic-technology-approval-scheme

If you are applying for a research degree, your offer letter will also provide 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 Entry Clearance. You must do this on-line via www.gov.uk/academic-technology-approval-scheme. You can apply for ATAS clearance up to 9 months before the programme start date and the application can be submitted even while your offer is still conditional.

AFTER I APPLY

Note 20. My Offer of Admission letter says that 'There are no academic or English language conditions attached'. What does this mean?

This 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. For research programmes, this may include written evidence that your sponsor agrees to pay additional research costs.

If you do not provide documentary evidence of who will be paying your tuition fees you may not be cleared for admission or, your registration will be delayed, or you may not be permitted to register for your chosen programme of study.

Note 21. My Offer of Admission letter says that I have conditions to satisfy. 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 or other 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 or other documents to demonstrate that you have satisfy a condition are available, you should upload these to your Applicant Portal as soon as possible.

If you do not provide documentary evidence of who will be paying your tuition fees you may not be cleared for admission or, your registration will be delayed, or you may not be permitted to register for your chosen programme of study.

Note 22. 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'). Further information about equivalencies can be found on the 'Entry Requirements' section of the 'In My Country' web pages: www.abdn.ac.uk/study/international/inmycountry/entry-requirements.php

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

Class	Range of Marks
First	70 – 100%
Upper Second	60 – 69%
Lower Second	50 – 59%
Third	40 - 49%
Pass	35 - 39%
Fail	Below 35%

Note 23. 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.

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 English language conditions of your Offer of Admission letter, you could write to request that your offer of a place be deferred to the next available intake. 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.

Please note that applicants for the Diploma in Professional Legal Practice **may not** defer.

Note 24. 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/study/open-days.php and Book a Private Visit from the links available on the screen. Alternatively you can telephone +44 (0) 1224 272090 or email: study@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 October or November each year the University holds a Postgraduate Open Day which would be an ideal opportunity to visit.

FEES STATUS AND TUITION FEES

Note 25. How do you decide what my fee status is?

Tuition fees have to cover the full cost of a programme and, for eligible students, (and eligible programmes) funding may be available via the Scottish Funding Council for Scottish and non-UK EU applicants. 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. Students from England, Wales and Northern Ireland undertaking taught programmes will be classified as RUK for tuition fee purposes. Further information on determining your Fee Status can be found on the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) website: www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Fees-and-Money/Scotland-fee-status

Your Offer of Admission letter will state whether the University has classified you as a home, RUK or overseas student for the purposes of tuition fees. In situations where it is not clear if you should be classified as a home, RUK or overseas student for tuition fee purposes the University will write to you to request further information. In such circumstances you will be sent a Fees Classification Form (FG1) for completion. Until such time as your situation is re-assessed your status will remain as that indicated in the offer of admission.

Note 26. How can I find out how much my tuition fees will be?

Information on tuition fees is displayed at: www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/finance/fee-rates.php

Note 27. 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 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, including the address to which the invoice should be sent. 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/study/postgraduate/finance.php

Note 28. Do my tuition fees have to be paid in advance of registration?

Information about tuition fees and ways to pay them can be found at www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/finance/tuition-fees.php

Note 29. 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 to you as soon as possible after you have been cleared for admission. If you require a visa to study in the UK, the Certificate of Acceptance will include a CAS (Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies) number. You cannot submit a visa application to study at the University of Aberdeen without a CAS number issued by the University of Aberdeen. Once you have received the Certificate of Acceptance you can register, once registration opens, and you are eligible to apply for University accommodation at www.abdn.ac.uk/accommodation

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 30. What are Joining Papers and when will I receive them?

If you are '*cleared for admission*' you will be sent Joining Papers which include the Certificate of Acceptance (and CAS number, if applicable). Joining papers are issued no earlier than 6 months before the programme start date. Please note that if you require a visa to study in the UK, the CAS should not be used and the visa application must not be submitted earlier than 3 months before the programme start date. The Joining Papers 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. Further information is available electronically at www.abdn.ac.uk/newstudents The information on the New Students websites is updated in the middle of December each year for January starts.

Note 31. 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 through the University Accommodation Service. For students on a Tier 4 visa, or other visa types, there is an expectation that students live within reasonable commuting distance to Aberdeen.

We have a range of student accommodation available through our Service, some of which is University owned and some of which is operated by organisations that work in partnership with us. If you are considering applying for accommodation through the University

Accommodation Service, it is important that you familiarise yourself with the application process and apply by the stated deadlines.

Information on how to apply for Accommodation is included in the Joining Papers which are sent 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 Service at www.abdn.ac.uk/accommodation

Note 32. Where can I find out the term dates?

Dates of term can be found on the University web pages at:
www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/study/term-dates.php

Note 33. 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 at:
www.abdn.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-taught/index.php or
www.abdn.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-research/index.php

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/postgraduate.php

Note 34. 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, Regent Walk
King's College
Aberdeen
AB24 3FX
Tel: +44 (0) 1224 273506

Student Recruitment & Admissions Service

University of Aberdeen
University Office, Regent Walk
King's College
Aberdeen
AB24 3FX
Tel: +44 (0) 1224 272090

Business School

Web: www.abdn.ac.uk/business
Email: gbs@abdn.ac.uk
Tel: +44 (0) 1224 272167

Law School

Web: www.abdn.ac.uk/law
Email: law-pg-enquiries@abdn.ac.uk
Tel: + 44 (0) 1224 274260

Graduate School

College of Physical Sciences

Web: www.abdn.ac.uk/cops/graduate
Email: cpsgrad@abdn.ac.uk
Tel: +44 (0) 1224 272081

Graduate School

College of Arts and Social Sciences

Web: www.abdn.ac.uk/cass/graduate
Email: cass@abdn.ac.uk
Tel: +44 (0) 1224 272080

Graduate School

College of Life Sciences and Medicine

Web: www.abdn.ac.uk/clsm/graduate
Email: graduateschool-clsm@abdn.ac.uk
Tel: +44 (0) 1224 557096

Note 35. 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, Student Recruitment and Admissions Service, Directorate of Student Life, University of Aberdeen, University Office, Regent Walk, 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/staffnet/teaching/appeals-and-complaints-686.php and its accompanying Guidance Note.

Note 36. 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.