

# Postgraduate Research Degrees Admissions Policy

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| <b>Related Policies &amp; Procedures</b> | <a href="#">Equity, diversity and inclusion   Governance   LSHTM</a><br><a href="#">English Language Requirements Policy</a><br><a href="#">Tuition Fees Policy</a><br><a href="#">Fee Assessment Policy</a><br><a href="#">Data Protection Policy</a><br><a href="#">Code of Practice on Free Speech</a> |

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## 1. Scope

- 1.1. The aim of this policy is to support the admission of students through procedures that are fair, transparent, and applied consistently. LSHTM is committed to providing a professional and efficient admissions service which is consistent with good practices as defined by the [Quality Assurance Agency's UK Quality Code, Advice and Guidance: Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access](#).

## 2. Purpose & Overview

- 2.1. LSHTM aims to admit students from diverse cultures and with various levels of experience who can benefit from our postgraduate teaching programmes and contribute to the learning experience of others. LSHTM is committed to an educational environment, which provides equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination on grounds of religion, race (including colour, citizenship, and ethnic origin), political affiliation, disability, sexual orientation, age, or gender.
- 2.2. Applicants will be considered based on their merits, abilities, and potential. LSHTM welcomes applications from students with disabilities and aims to offer as much assistance as possible to accommodate their needs.
- 2.3. LSHTM takes all reasonable steps to ensure that the application procedure, programmes, and examinations are organised and delivered to give the best opportunity for full participation by all students.
- 2.4. Nothing in this Policy shall be construed as limiting academic freedom or lawful freedom of speech, as protected under the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023. Where concerns relate to speech or academic expression, decision-makers must ensure that these rights are fully considered. Please see LSHTM's [Code of Practice on Free Speech](#) for further details.

LSHTM is also committed to providing an inclusive education, research and working environment free from bullying and harassment, ensuring all staff and students are treated and treat others with respect, consideration, courtesy, and dignity at all times. Information on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at LSHTM can be found [on our website](#).

- 2.5. This policy refers to LSHTM's postgraduate research degree programmes only. It does not include:
  - applications for LSHTM's taught postgraduate degree programmes; or
  - applications for LSHTM's Distance Learning programmes
- 2.6. Where substantive amendments are made to this policy, they will be reviewed by LSHTM's Senate Research Degrees Committee.

## 3. Application Process

- 3.1. All applications for admission to LSHTM's postgraduate research degree programmes should be submitted online via <https://apply.lshtm.ac.uk>.
- 3.2. Information on the process of how to apply is available at: <http://www.lshtm.ac.uk/study/applications/applying-research-degree>.
- 3.3. Once an application is submitted, an initial assessment will be made by the Admissions team. Complete applications are then forwarded to the Faculty Research Degrees Manager for dissemination to the applicant's preferred Supervisor, or another nominated member of the programme staff.

- 3.4.** It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that their application is complete and that all required supporting documentation, such as passport, official transcripts and references, are provided. Incomplete applications will not be processed. Where required information or documentation is missing, applicants will be informed and provided with a deadline by which to submit the required material. Where an applicant fails to complete their application within the deadline, the Admissions Team may withdraw it from consideration.
- 3.5.** Applications to postgraduate research degree programmes are open throughout the academic year. However, if candidates wish to join the programme at a particular point, then they should note the application deadlines.
- 3.6.** There are three entry points to MPhil/PhD research degree programmes throughout each academic year – applicants are only permitted to register at the start of one of LSHTM's three academic terms. DrPH applicants are only permitted to register at the start of the academic year. For more information about term dates, please see the following webpage: <http://www.lshtm.ac.uk/study/termdates>.
- 3.7.** Research degree application submission deadline dates for each academic term are available on our website: <https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/study/applications/applying-research-degree/you-apply-research>.

## **4. Minimum Entrance Requirements**

**4.1.** To be admitted to an LSHTM postgraduate research degree programme, an applicant must:

- hold a first degree at Upper Second-Class Honours standard in a relevant discipline; a degree in medicine, veterinary medicine, or dentistry; or another degree of equivalent standard awarded by an overseas institution recognised by [UK ENIC](#)

**Or**

- a Master's degree in a subject relevant to the programme of study,

**Or**

- hold a professional qualification appropriate to the programme of study to be followed obtained by written examinations and judged by LSHTM to be equivalent to a Second-Class Honours degree or above.

**Or**

- For DrPH applicants only, a minimum of two years appropriate professional experience and, normally, a Master's degree;

**And**

- demonstrate an aptitude for research;

**4.2.** Some research degree programmes may have a higher entry requirement than specified above. Full details of all entry requirements are specified on individual programme pages on LSHTM's website at <http://www.lshtm.ac.uk/study/research>.

**4.3.** Application for admission to a programme and registration shall be undertaken in accordance with procedures specified by LSHTM: <https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/study/applications/applying-research-degree>.

- 4.4. Satisfaction of the criteria above does not guarantee admission to LSHTM.
- 4.5. LSHTM welcomes applications from students holding a broad range of qualifications. The Admissions Team will use independently published guides recognised within the UK higher education sector, such as [UK ENIC](#) when considering the equivalency of qualifications.
- 4.6. Applicants who do not meet the minimum entry requirement, but who have relevant professional experience may still be eligible for admission and will be assessed in the usual way

## 5. English Language Proficiency Requirement

- 5.1. Applicants must be fully competent in the English Language. All applicants who do not meet the exemptions outlined by the UKVI [Student visa : Knowledge of English - GOV.UK](#) will be required to achieve minimum English test scores.
- 5.2. Full details of our English Language Requirements Policy can be found [here](#)

## 6. Fee Status

- 6.1. As part of the application assessment process, an applicant's fee status will be determined by the Admissions Team in accordance with LSHTM's [Fee Assessment Policy](#) and regulations defined by the UK Government.
- 6.2. Further independent advice regarding fee status requirements and classification is available from UKCISA's [website](#).

## 7. Programme Choice

- 7.1. Applicants are required to select one postgraduate research degree programme only in their online application to LSHTM.

## 8. Recognition Of Prior Learning

- 8.1. Applicants wishing to transfer to LSHTM from another institution should refer to LSHTM's [Recognition of Prior Learning Policy](#).

## 9. Disability

- 9.1. If an applicant declares a disability within their application (as opposed to within the separate, confidential *Equal Opportunities* section), LSHTM will seek advice on what suitable provisions are required to best accommodate the applicant in the event of an offer of admission being made.
- 9.2. Students are welcome to declare a disability at any time during their studies. If before enrolment, please email [admissions@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@lshtm.ac.uk) with a brief summary of your disability details and learning support needs so that they can be fully considered and reasonable adjustments can be put in place in a timely manner. This declaration will be reviewed by the Student Advice team who will respond to discuss your requirements further.

## 10. Decision Making

- 10.1.** Entry to a postgraduate research degree programme is competitive. Each application is considered on its merits and in competition with others. Purely meeting the minimum entry requirement does not guarantee an Offer of Admission.
- 10.2.** Decisions on postgraduate research degree programme applications are made by Supervisors with approval from Faculty Research Degree Director. The selection process will take consider the following:
- a) the applicant's potential to succeed in their chosen programme of study;
  - b) actual or expected academic or professional qualifications and grades;
  - c) relevant work experience;
  - d) the applicant's personal statement of interest in their chosen programme of study;
  - e) the applicant's references;
  - f) the applicant's research proposal;
  - g) supervisory availability in the relevant research area; and
  - h) for DrPH applicants only, the Organisational and Policy Analysis (OPA) proposal.
- 10.3.** Faculties complete a checklist when making decisions on applicants. This checklist is used to record comments on the applicant's academic record, references, experience, personal statement, and any other general comments.
- 10.4.** Local procedures for handling applications may vary between Faculties. However, an offer of admission can only be made if a potential supervisor is willing to take the application forward. The supervisor will be asked to make an initial assessment of the application, and this may be followed by an online interview.
- 10.5.** LSHTM aims to ensure that decisions will be made within three months of receipt of a **complete** research degree application. An application is considered complete when mandatory information and documents have been provided and suitable reference(s) received. Please see our [Research degree application process | Research degrees and Doctoral College | LSHTM](#) for further information.

## 11. Offer Of Admission

- 11.1.** An Offer of Admission is normally based on the information provided on the application form and relevant supporting documentation. An Offer of Admission will be sent to all successful applicants by e-mail.
- 11.2.** An Offer of Admission includes:
- a) programme start and end dates
  - b) mode of study
  - c) fee status
  - d) tuition fee
  - e) conditions of offer, if applicable
  - f) supervisory information
  - g) research department
- 11.3.** Offers of Admission will remain conditional until all outlined conditions are met.
- 11.4.** Conditions of an Offer of Admission are as follows:

### **Verification of qualifications**

LSHTM require Offer holders to verify evidence of the qualification(s) they are using to gain entrance to the programme of study. Offer holders who are studying when they apply to LSHTM will need to provide evidence that they have completed their programme of study and met LSHTM's minimum entry requirements, as outlined in section 4 above, prior to registration. This condition is mandatory and will not be waived under any circumstances.

### **Evidence of English language requirements**

Offer holders must provide evidence of their English language test results. Offer holders who do not meet LSHTM's minimum English language requirements, or who have not taken an approved English language test by the time the Offer of Admission is sent, will be made a conditional offer in accordance with the guidance in section 5 above. This condition is mandatory.

### **Employer letter**

Offer holders who are in active employment and who will be studying part time must provide written confirmation from their employer (line manager), confirming that they are happy to release the offer holder for 2-3 days per week for the duration of their studies. This condition is mandatory and will not be waived under any circumstances.

### **Evidence of financial support (Student Visa and sponsored applicants only)**

Offer holders must provide satisfactory evidence of financial support. This condition is mandatory and will not be waived under any circumstances.

- 11.5.** Applicants are required to provide a formal response to an Offer of Admission within 28 days of issuance, either firmly accepting or declining their offer. LSHTM reserves the right to rescind an Offer of Admission if no response is provided by an applicant within 28 days of issuance.
- 11.6.** The Admissions Team will confirm an applicant's unconditional offer once all conditions have been met.
- 11.7.** Failure to meet all conditions of an Offer of Admission will result in the offer being rescinded.

## **12. Rejection**

- 12.1.** The faculty must indicate the reason(s) for rejecting an application. These reasons can include, insufficient academic grades, insufficient experience, lack of available supervisors, or the research degree programme deemed being unsuitable.
- 12.2.** The applicant will be notified of the decision and reason(s) for rejection via email.
- 12.3.** If an applicant is rejected, they are not permitted to apply for another postgraduate research degree programme in the same admissions cycle. If an applicant submits a new application in the same admissions cycle this will be withdrawn automatically.
- 12.4.** If staff consider an application to be more suitable for a research degree programme in another Faculty, then the application will be forwarded, as necessary.

## **13. Deferral Of Admission**

- 13.1.** LSHTM permits postgraduate research degree applicants to defer an Offer of Admission for a maximum of one academic year only.
- 13.2.** Applicants wishing to defer an Offer of Admission should submit a brief written statement to the Admissions Team confirming their wish to defer, a brief explanation to support their deferral and the

new start date/term that they wish to begin their research degree at LSHTM – the new date should be within one calendar year of the originally approved start date.

- 13.3.** All deferral requests will be passed to the nominated Supervisor and Faculty Research Degrees Director for consideration.
- 13.4.** MPhil/PhD applicants who are not given an Offer of Admission in time for their preferred start date will automatically be considered for entry to the next available entry point.

## **14. Late Registration**

- 14.1.** Late registration is only permitted in exceptional circumstances. Applicants are advised that the first week of the programme is crucial and all students are expected to attend LSHTM's induction and orientation activities.
- 14.2.** The last permitted date of registration is the first Friday of the academic year/term (the last day of the first week of teaching).
- 14.3.** If for any reason an applicant anticipates that their arrival at LSHTM will be unavoidably delayed, they must contact the [Admissions team](#) as soon as possible. The Admissions team will notify the Supervisor and Faculty Research Degrees Administrator of the expected arrival date. If this date is later than the date specified in 14.2 above, the Head of Admissions will decide if the applicant will be permitted to register or be required to defer entry to the next available entry point.
- 14.4.** Applicants who arrive late will miss planned orientation activities and events. It is the applicant's responsibility to catch up on any time/activities that are missed.
- 14.5.** Applicants requiring a student visa will be notified of the last permitted registration date. If their expected arrival date is after this date, they will be advised not to travel by LSHTM's Immigration Advisory Service, as entry to the UK will likely be refused by the UKVI Border Agency.
- 14.6.** The final date for issuance of a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) reference number to support a student visa application will usually be 30 days before the official start of the programme of study.

## **15. Programme Amendments**

- 15.1.** If there is a significant amendment to a programme of study or withdrawal of a programme between the publication of LSHTM's prospectus and the start of the programme to which an applicant has applied, LSHTM will notify all affected applicants as soon as possible by email, indicating any available options.

## **16. Tuition Fees**

- 16.1.** Tuition fees are due for each academic year for which a student registers at LSHTM. Please see LSHTM's [Student Tuition Fees & Refund Policy](#) for full guidance.

## **17. Appeals & Complaints**

- 17.1.** Applicants wishing to submit an appeal against any decision regarding their application to LSHTM, or a complaint about the handling of an application should submit a written request to the [Head of Admissions](#), following the procedures outlined below:

### **Fee Status**

- 17.2.** Appeals against an applicant's fee status assessment will be reviewed by the Head of Admissions or their nominee in accordance with LSHTM's [Fee Assessment Policy](#). Scenarios where an applicant's fee status could change are if their visa status has changed during the application cycle, or if they are able to provide additional, relevant, supporting documentation to support their appeal.

### **English Language**

If an applicant believes that they should not be required to take an English language test (and they do not require a student visa), they must provide a written statement outlining their reasons for this within their appeal. Written statements must include evidence of any previous education, professional work and published work which demonstrates their proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening in the English Language. This statement will be reviewed by the Admissions team and passed to the nominated Supervisor, Faculty Research Degrees Director, and Head of Admissions for consideration.

If the appeal is accepted, this condition will be met. If the appeal is rejected, the English language requirement will remain as a condition of the Offer of Admission.

### **Offer of Admission Decision**

Appeals against a decision to reject an application will be reviewed by the Head of Admissions. Applicants should submit a written statement explaining why they feel the decision should be reviewed, stating the grounds to be considered. Appeals will be referred to the Faculty Research Degrees Director who will seek further information from the relevant supervisor(s), if required. A final decision and any relevant feedback will be provided to the applicant via the Head of Admissions.

### **Late Arrival**

Appeals regarding arrival after the last permitted arrival date will not be considered. See section 13 above for full guidance.

### **Complaints**

Applicants wishing to submit a formal complaint about the handling of their application should provide a written statement, containing full details and supporting evidence regarding how the administration of their application has been below expected service standards. This should be submitted to the Head of Admissions, for initial review, but may be passed to the Head of Registry for full investigation. Upon review, a final decision and any relevant feedback will be sent to the applicant via the Head of Admissions.

- 17.3.** Appeals and complaints in relation to any of the categories listed above must be submitted within 20 days of receipt of a final decision on an application. Appeals and complaints received after this date will not be considered.
- 17.4.** For each appeal and complaint category, the Head of Admissions' decision will be final. This decision may be made in consultation with the Head of Registry and/or other relevant LSHTM staff.

## **18. Criminal Convictions**

- 18.1.** LSHTM is committed to assessing all applications on their academic merit. However, it does have to balance this with its duty to ensure the safety and wellbeing of its staff and student community. Having a criminal record does not necessarily prevent an individual from studying at LSHTM. The final decision is very much dependent on the background and nature of the offence(s).
- 18.2.** As part of the application process students are required to declare any relevant ['unspent'](#) conviction(s) in their online application form.

- 18.3.** Convictions that are " " are not considered to be relevant and applicants are not required to disclose these. The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 enables some convictions to become "spent" after a "rehabilitation period". The rehabilitation period varies depending on the sentence imposed by the court.
- 18.4.** The information provided by applicants will be kept in the strictest confidence and will be considered separately from academic achievements. Submitted information will be reviewed by a Criminal Convictions Panel consisting of the Head of Admissions, Head of Registry and the relevant Faculty Research Degree Director who will consider the potential impact of the offence on staff and students. Please see Privacy Policy to see how data is stored, managed, and retained.
- 18.5.** When considering ['unspent' criminal conviction\(s\)](#), the Criminal Convictions Panel will consider the following factors:
- the nature of the offence(s);
  - the time that has passed since the offence was committed;
  - any additional information provided by other sources, such as the Probation Service, Social Services, or senior prison officers, in the form of independent references or reports;
  - if more than one offence was committed, whether each was a separate offence or part of a series of similar offences;
  - the potential impact on fellow students, staff, and others with whom the applicant will have contact.
- 18.6.** One of the following decisions will be made by the Criminal Convictions Panel:
- to require further information from the applicant or a third party;
  - to permit an offer to be made with no further conditions;
  - to permit a conditional offer to be made, for example with a condition relating to pastoral issues such as support for the applicant; in such cases the Head of Admissions will contact the applicant to outline the conditions set by the Criminal Convictions Panel;
  - to reject the application; in this case the Head of Admissions will contact the applicant to inform them of the decision.
- 18.7.** Applicants wishing to discuss anything related to criminal convictions should contact the [Head of Admissions](#) in the first instance. All conversations will be treated as strictly confidential.

## **19. Fraud & Misrepresentation**

- 19.1.** It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the information included in their application and supporting documentation is accurate and complete.
- 19.2.** LSHTM will investigate any application suspected of including misleading, false, or fraudulent information and/or documentation.
- 19.3.** LSHTM reserves the right to reject or withdraw any applications found to contain misleading, false, or fraudulent information and/or documentation.
- 19.4.** LSHTM reserves the right to withdraw any Offer of Admission made if an application is subsequently found to contain misleading, false, or fraudulent information and/or documentation.
- 19.5.** LSHTM reserves the right to terminate the registration of any student if an application is subsequently found to contain misleading, false, or fraudulent information and/or documentation.

## **20.Data Protection**

- 20.1.** LSHTM complies with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 in its use of applicants' personal data. Please see the [LSHTM Data Protection Policy](#) for further details.
- 20.2.** LSHTM uses anonymized personal data for statistical and reporting purpose to fulfil its functions as an education provider.

## **21.Contact Details**

- 21.1.** For further advice or clarification regarding admissions processes, practices, or the content of this Admissions Policy, please contact [admissions@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@lshtm.ac.uk).