Admissions Policy – Postgraduate Research Programmes

1. **Principles**

This policy provides the basis for the admissions practice across the University and sets out a framework for how the University selects and admits students to postgraduate research programmes.

The University of Surrey offers a high quality learning environment which supports research students to achieve their potential in their chosen academic discipline and prepares them for professional life. It is University policy that all applicants are considered primarily on merit, their suitability and aptitude for carrying out doctoral level research, and the availability of appropriate supervision.

The University's is committed to:

- Providing transparent, consistent and timely information
- Selecting applicants who are considered likely to be able to complete the programme within the expected registration periods as judged by their achievements and potential
- Using reliable assessment methods, including consideration of evidence provided and interviews
- Minimising barriers to access to postgraduate research programmes
- The University is committed to equality of opportunity as stated in our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2015 - 17

Initially, applicants will be considered for entry on to our programmes based on the following criteria:

- Review of prior academic achievement of the applicant
- Review of future examinations where results are not yet known
- Review of the referee’s assessment of an applicant’s ability
- Availability of appropriate supervisory arrangements
- Interview

In addition, the following may also be considered where applicable:

- Review of a research proposal
- Review of a personal statement in support of the application
- Review of relevant work experience

See Sections 3 and 4 for full details of admissions and selection criteria

2. **Roles & Responsibilities**

The role of the University of Surrey Admissions Office is to ensure that policies and procedures are carried out in a fair and consistent way in line with any relevant legislation and the University strategy.
3. **Admissions Criteria**

The University Research Degrees Committee has ultimate responsibility for setting the entry criteria for the admission of postgraduate research students. Applicants are advised to consider the following points:

- Details of programme specific entry criteria which can be found on the programme pages of the University website
- English language requirements for non-native speakers of English
- Applicants who have non-standard qualifications or have work experience they wish to have assessed may be considered on an individual basis in line with the general aims and principles of the Admissions and RP(E)L (Recognition of prior (experiential) learning) policies
- Entry onto some programmes of study requires applicants to meet additional non-academic conditions. These conditions usually apply to programmes that have professional requirements and may include Disclosure & Barring and Fitness to Practise clearance. Where such clearance is required, information will be provided in programme literature and advice given to applicants.

4. **Selection**

The University's aim is to select those applicants who are likely to succeed academically and gain from the provision available. Aptitude for an individual programme of research is the primary criterion for selection and an academic decision will always be reached on an application before other factors such as, for example, additional needs or criminal convictions are taken into account.

**Our selection criteria and process ensure the following:**

- Decisions are fair and consistent in relation to the published entry criteria.
- We consider evidence of a candidate’s potential to succeed on the programme.
- We operate a transparent selection process. Selection is normally on the basis of an application form and, where applicable, a research proposal, and an interview conducted by two trained members of academic staff. Candidates will be informed of the process in advance.
- We communicate in a timely way with the applicant, advising them on the outcome of their application. The University will communicate via email and the Applicant Portal.
- The University of Surrey will take into account compliancy requirements in regard to external legislation (such as the UKVI requirements) when reviewing an application.

5. **Applicants with disabilities**

The University of Surrey is committed to equality of opportunity for all of its students and encourages applications from students with disabilities or specific learning difficulties. The University’s policy of equal opportunity ensures that all applicants are considered on the same academic grounds. It is important, however, that applicants with a disability make this known to the University so that appropriate arrangements for reasonable adjustments to support their education and learning can be made. A [procedure](#) for exploring all possible reasonable adjustments with the participation of the applicant will be followed. In exceptional cases, the University may require further advice from health professionals.
Occasionally, other criteria may need to be considered, such as the requirements of professional bodies.

6. **Applicants with Criminal Convictions**

Having a criminal conviction will not necessarily prevent an applicant from gaining admission to the University but it is important that applicants disclose all unspent convictions. However, it may be necessary for specific programmes that all convictions, including spent, cautions and warnings are declared. In reaching decisions on those with criminal convictions, the University will consider not only its own responsibilities and duties to the academic community at large but also the safety and well-being of the individual and its ability to provide any appropriate support arrangements.

The test the University will use is whether any criminal conviction disclosed by an applicant gives reasonable grounds for considering that the admission of the individual: (a) poses a real threat to the safety or property of staff, students, visitors, those coming into contact with the applicant during their programme of study or others involved in University business; or (b) would be contrary to the law or to the requirements of any relevant professional or other regulatory body.

Failure to declare this information at the point of application could result in the offer being withdrawn.

7. **Deposit**

In order to firmly accept an offer of admission, applicants are required to pay a deposit of £2000. Payment should be made by the 1st August for programmes starting in September/October. For programmes starting at any other point during the year, the deposit must be paid no less than 10 days prior to the start of the programme. If the fee payable is less than £2000 for a January, April or July starter then this fee, as detailed on the offer letter, is payable in full. Fully funded students will not be required to pay a deposit on the condition that a satisfactory sponsorship letter is provided.

8. **Refunds**

Once a deposit has been paid, it can only be refunded for the following reasons:

- **Refusal of a student visa for an overseas applicant**

  An applicant will be asked to provide proof that a visa has been refused and the University must be able to verify through the UKVI that the individual has been refused entry to the UK. An administration fee of £100 will be deducted from the refund.

- **Inability to meet the conditions of offer**

  An applicant will be asked to provide proof that they have been unable to meet the conditions of their offer. An administration fee of £100 will be deducted from the refund.

- **Programme Closure**
In the event that the University can no longer offer a place on a programme, due to closure or substantial changes to the programme, a full refund will be given.

If applicants wish to request a refund they must complete a refund form. This form can be requested by email admissions@surrey.ac.uk

Should any applicant be found to use fraudulent documents at the time of application or at the time of applying for entry clearance, no refund will be due.

9. **UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI)**

Applicants coming to study in the UK for more than six months, and who are not an EEA national, are required to obtain a student visa. UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) require applicants to be sponsored by a licensed UK Higher Education Institution. To apply for a Tier 4 Visa, they must have a Confirmation of Acceptance (CAS) for the University at which they wish to study. This is a unique number which will enable them to apply for their Visa. A Confirmation of Acceptance (CAS) will not be issued until an applicant has met all the conditions of their offer.

10. **ATAS Certificate**

It is mandatory for some applicants who need entry clearance to study in the United Kingdom and who are applying to certain programmes, to have an ATAS Certificate. The University will not be able to issue a Confirmation of Acceptance to Study (CAS) or register applicants on to the programme until their clearance has been received. For further details, please visit the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website: https://www.gov.uk/academic-technology-approval-scheme

11. **Disclosure of Information**

Failure to disclose relevant information or providing false information may result in the offer of a place being withdrawn.

12. **Feedback**

In order to support a transparent admissions process, the University provides feedback on request. Applicants should be aware that feedback will only be given directly to them and not a third party, unless the University has received written permission that the applicant is willing for the matter to be discussed with another individual. The applicant should also be aware that there may be cases where highly specific or tailored feedback may not be possible.

13. **Complaints**

The University of Surrey is committed to delivering a high quality, timely and fair admissions service in line with its selection criteria and policy. In the event that an applicant wishes to make a formal complaint, the University will ensure that all complaints are dealt with fairly, promptly, consistently and with due regard to the Equalities Act. If a complaint is upheld, the University will take appropriate action. If a complaint is not upheld, the reasons for the decision will be communicated clearly to the applicant.
An applicant does not have the right to appeal against an academic decision not to offer them a place at the University, as long as the decision can be shown to have been reached fairly and in accordance with the University’s published entry requirements and selection criteria.

The University will only correspond with the applicant, unless the applicant has provided written permission for the University to discuss the application with another person.

Please refer to the full complaint procedure

14. Disclaimer

The University undertakes a continuous review of its programmes as part of its quality assurance processes. Therefore, the University reserves the right if it considers it to be necessary:

- To make reasonable variations to the content and syllabus of a programme of study
- To suspend or discontinue programmes of study or to combine or merge them with others

15. Monitoring and review

The Admissions Policy is reviewed annually by the University Research Degrees Committee in liaison with the Admissions Subcommittee.

16. Related Policies

- Criminal Conviction
- Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)
- Equivalent & Lower Qualifications (ELQ)
  http://www.surrey.ac.uk/registry/resources/fees/elq_policy_2014.pdf
- Disability http://www.surrey.ac.uk/currentstudents/study/als/prospective/index.htm
- RP(E)L (Recognition of prior (experiential) learning)