



THE UNIVERSITY
of ADELAIDE

Admissions to Research Programs Policy

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OVERVIEW

This Policy sets out the University of Adelaide's approach to the selection of applicants for admission to research programs. It reflects the University's commitments to the highest academic standards, by only selecting applicants who are likely to succeed in the University's programs, and to social equity, by encouraging broad access by qualified students from diverse backgrounds.

The Policy aims to ensure the integrity of the selection and admission processes, and that admission decisions are transparent, consistent and fair, whilst complying with relevant legislative and regulatory requirements, as well as community expectations.

SCOPE AND APPLICATION

This Policy applies to all domestic and international applicants for admission to postgraduate research programs at the University of Adelaide (hereafter 'the University').

Nothing contained in this Policy is intended to alter or limit the full extent of the University's right to grant or refuse admission in its absolute discretion, subject always to the laws of Australia.

Implementation of this Policy will be carried out in accordance with the University's [Code of Conduct](#) and the [Academic Board Statement on Undue Influence](#). Any attempts to improperly exert pressure or influence actions or decisions made pursuant to this policy must be reported in accordance with the [Fraud and Corruption Control Policy](#).

POLICY PRINCIPLES

Admission Requirements

1. Admission Requirements are designed to enable the University to select Applicants who are likely to succeed in a program.
2. Admission Requirements for all postgraduate research programs are recommended by the Research Education and Development Committee (REDC) for endorsement by the University Research Committee and Academic Board, and subsequent approval by the Vice-Chancellor and President.

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3. Applicants who apply for admission to a postgraduate research program will normally be required to achieve one or more of the following:
 - i. Successful completion of an Honours or Master of Philosophy degree or equivalent and the awarding of an Honours or MPhil grade (or equivalent) at the required level approved for admission into the program;
 - ii. Successful completion of a coursework Master degree with a significant research component as per the Academic Program Rules for the program;
 - iii. For entry to a research Master degree only, outstanding academic performance in an undergraduate degree of the University in a closely related discipline, as per the Academic Program Rules for the program;
 - iv. Tertiary education qualifications deemed by the University to be equivalent to the above qualifications.
 4. Applicants are expected to be proficient in written and spoken English comprehension and expression. International Applicants must provide evidence of their English language proficiency in order to satisfy the University's [minimum English Language Proficiency Entry Criteria for Postgraduate Research Students](#).
 5. Some programs may have additional Admission Requirements, including but not limited to academic or other tests or requirements (which must be reached or evidenced to the level required by the University), such as an interview, oral assessment, specific knowledge test, aptitude test, work experience, an audition, portfolio, application statement, referee report or registration with a particular body or organisation.
 6. Admission to any postgraduate research program will only be approved if accredited supervisors with the relevant experience, and adequate facilities and resources to support the Applicant's proposed research project, are available. Additional assessment of communication skills may be recommended before an Applicant is admitted to a program which is linguistically demanding.
 7. The University may determine exemptions to Admission Requirements for an individual Applicant in exceptional circumstances where sufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the Applicant is likely to succeed in the program.
 8. The University has absolute discretion to determine whether or not an Applicant is to be offered admission, and reserves the right to refuse admission to an Applicant:
 - i. where the Applicant has previously been suspended or excluded from the University or any other tertiary education institution for academic reasons, including but not limited to academic dishonesty or unsatisfactory academic progress; or
 - ii. under any of the circumstances detailed in Procedure 3 of this Policy.

POLICY PROCEDURES

1. Applying for Admission to the University

- 1.1 To be eligible for admission into a program, Applicants must satisfy the Admission Requirements for that program.
- 1.2 Satisfying the Admission Requirements enables an Applicant to be considered for admission, but does not guarantee an offer of admission to the program.
- 1.3 International Applicants may also be required to demonstrate compliance with other legislative or Governmental requirements.
- 1.4 Current and former students of the University who want to apply for admission to a new or alternative postgraduate research program will be subject to the requirements of this Policy.

2. Reviewing Applications and Making Offers

- 2.1 The University has absolute discretion to determine whether a qualification offered for admission is equivalent to that specified in the Admission Requirements.
- 2.2 If an offer is made, the University may attach conditions to an offer of admission to a program, including but not limited to meeting Admission Requirements, visa or other legal obligations, or making any required fee payments.
- 2.3 In reviewing applications, an additional procedure is required for Applicants to a proposed research program where there might be grounds for refusing admission in relation to Procedures 3.1 (v), 3.1 (vi) or 3.1 (vii) of this Policy only.
- 2.3.1 In instances where the Chief Security Officer (CSO) has raised concerns with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Researcher Education and Development) and Dean of Graduate Studies which would preclude admission, the latter will chair an *ad hoc* committee, including as a minimum the CSO and the relevant Head of School to discuss the matter. Where appropriate, the relevant University Research Institute Director(s) will also be invited to attend.
- 2.3.2 If a determination to preclude admission is supported, the Head of School will advise the nominated Principal Supervisor, who will be given the opportunity to provide any additional information to support admission of the Applicant. This material will be provided to the committee for consideration and final recommendation to the PVC (Researcher Education and Development) and Dean of Graduate Studies.
- 2.3.3 Following the review procedure in Procedures 2.3.1 and 2.3.2, the PVC (Researcher Education and Development) and Dean of Graduate Studies will determine if the offer of admission is to proceed, with or without any conditions attached to that offer.
- 2.4 If an Applicant wants to accept an offer of admission, they must do so in accordance with the process specified in their letter of offer. Failure to do so may result in the offer of admission being rescinded.

Responsibility: PVC (Researcher Education and Development) and Dean of Graduate Studies

- a) Determine equivalency of qualifications for admission.
- b) Following the review procedure in Procedures 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 of this Policy, determine if the offer of admission is to proceed, with or without any conditions attached to that offer.

Responsibility: Director, Adelaide Graduate Research School

- c) Approve any conditions attached to offers of admission, noting the special circumstances of Procedure 2.3.3 of this Policy.

Responsibility: Head of School or Delegate

- d) Confirm the availability of accredited supervisors with the relevant experience and adequate facilities and resources to support an Applicant's proposed research project.

3. Refusing Admission for Non-Academic Reasons

- 3.1 The University reserves the right to refuse admission to an Applicant who would otherwise be eligible for admission where it believes that:
- i. the Applicant or the presence of the Applicant poses a risk to the students and/or staff of the University or the wider University community; or
 - ii. the Applicant may prejudice the reputation, management, good governance or discipline of the University; or
 - iii. the Applicant has engaged in dishonest and/or deceitful behaviour in the process of applying for admission to the University or any other tertiary educational institution; or
 - iv. the Applicant would not be able to lawfully enter University premises for all or part of the duration of a program by reason of a court order or any enactment or decision made under an enactment; or

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- v. admission of the Applicant, or admission to the proposed research program, would cause the University to be in breach of Commonwealth or State laws, for example in relation to autonomous sanctions, foreign relations, foreign engagement and/or Defence, Cyber and Space research; or
 - vi. admission to the proposed research program is judged to be contrary to Australia's sovereign/security interest having regard to, for example, critical technologies as identified by the Commonwealth Government from time to time, and current and emerging technologies having a significant impact on the national interest (economic prosperity, national security and social cohesion); or
 - vii. admission of the Applicant, or admission to the proposed research program, is judged to result in a reasonable likelihood of failure to meet community expectations as required of the University under section 9 of the University of Adelaide Act; or
 - viii. the Applicant would likely be unable to meet the requirements of a program, including but not limited to attendance or group participation requirements; or
 - ix. the Applicant has outstanding fees owing to the University.

Responsibility: PVC (Researcher Education and Development) and Dean of Graduate Studies

- a) Exercise judgement to refuse admission pursuant to Procedure 3 of this Policy.

4. Deferring Commencement of Studies

- 4.1 Offers of admission into postgraduate research programs will specify the earliest and latest dates acceptable to the School of enrolment. Deferment beyond the latest start date is subject to approval by the School and the Adelaide Graduate Research School, and is contingent on the availability of appropriate supervision and resources.

Responsibility: Head of School and Director, Adelaide Graduate Research School

- a) Consider requests for deferment of commencement of studies.

5. Withdrawal of Offer

- 5.1 The University reserves the right to withdraw an offer of admission to a postgraduate research program at any time prior to candidature commencement if:
 - i. the Applicant fails to meet any of the conditions attached to their letter of offer by the required date; or
 - ii. a supervisor with expertise required to supervise the Applicant's proposed project is no longer available; or
 - iii. the facilities required for successful completion of the program are no longer available; or
 - iv. a required visa granted by the Commonwealth is cancelled; or
 - v. the University no longer offers the program; or
 - vi. the offer was made in error; or
 - vii. the Applicant does not enrol by the deadline specified in their letter of offer; or
 - viii. the University believes that one or more of the circumstances or conditions specified in Procedure 3.1 applies to the Applicant.
- 5.2 The University may withdraw an offer of admission to a program, and reserves the right to cancel a student's current enrolment, at any time if the offer was made as a result of incorrect, inaccurate, fraudulent or misleading information or documentation supplied by the Applicant or a third party on behalf of the Applicant, or if the offer, admission or the continuing enrolment of the Applicant/student to the research program is or becomes contrary to any Commonwealth or State law.
- 5.3 If an Applicant's offer of admission is withdrawn and they want to reapply for entry into the same program or entry into any other program, they will be required to apply in accordance with the University policies and processes in place at the time the new application is made.
- 5.4 The University reserves the right to cancel a program that is not viable, and to cancel any offers of admission that have been made to that program.

6. Appeals

In relation to this Policy, there are three primary reasons for appeals: one for the outcome of a decision made under Procedure 3.1, one for the cancellation of a current enrolment under Procedure 5.2, and one for non-compliance with this Policy.

6.1 Appealing the outcome to cancel a student's current enrolment

- 6.1.1 A student will be notified in writing within 10 business days of any decision to cancel their enrolment pursuant to Procedure 5.2. The student may initially appeal the decision by submitting an appeal to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research) within 15 business days of the date of the correspondence notifying the student of the decision.
- 6.1.2 The appeal must be submitted in writing and must specify the grounds of the appeal and contain such written submissions and documentary material upon which the student seeks to rely.
- 6.1.3 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research) will consider the matter; may affirm, reverse or vary the decision which is the subject of the appeal; and will inform the student and the PVC (Researcher Education and Development) and Dean of Graduate Studies of the outcome of the appeal within 20 business days of receiving it.
- 6.1.4 Where the decision to cancel a current enrolment is supported by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research), the student may subsequently appeal the decision by submitting a grievance notice, specifying the grounds of the grievance together with written submissions and documentary material upon which the student seeks to rely, to the Vice-Chancellor and President within 15 business days of notification of the decision to refuse admission.
- 6.1.5 The Vice-Chancellor and President may establish, and refer the grievance notice to, the [Grievance Committee](#) for consideration and seek the Committee's recommendation and advice.
- 6.1.6 The Grievance Committee will comprise three members, at least two of whom are not associated with the Faculty concerned in the appeal.
- 6.1.7 The Grievance Committee shall consider the material provided by the student and any other material that it decides in its discretion to receive, and make a recommendation to the Vice-Chancellor and President in relation to the grievance. The recommendation shall be made within 20 business days of the date that the University received the grievance notice, (or such further time as may be required and formally approved by the Vice-Chancellor and President and notified to the Applicant in writing).
- 6.1.8 The Vice-Chancellor and President will determine the matter and may have regard to any recommendation by the Grievance Committee.
- 6.1.9 The Vice-Chancellor and President may affirm, reverse or vary the University's decision to cancel the enrolment of the student which was the subject of the grievance, and that determination shall be final.

Responsibility: Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research)

- a) Consider initial appeals relating to the University's decision to cancel a student's enrolment as pursuant to Procedure 5.2, and inform the student and the PVC (Researcher Education and Development) and Dean of Graduate Studies of the outcome.

Responsibility: Vice-Chancellor and President

- a) Affirm, reverse or vary the University's decision to cancel a student's enrolment which was the subject of a grievance, as pursuant to Procedure 5.2, and inform the student and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research) of the outcome.

6.2 Appealing a decision to refuse admission for non-academic reasons or on non-compliance with this Policy

6.2.1 Applicants may appeal any decision to refuse admission pursuant to Procedure 3.1.

6.2.2 Applicants may appeal the following decisions on the sole ground that there has been non-compliance with this Policy:

- i. assessment on whether an Applicant satisfies the Admission Requirements of a program;
- ii. refusal to admit an Applicant pursuant to Procedure 3.1; or
- iii. withdrawal of an offer of admission pursuant to Procedures 5.1 and 5.2 of this Policy.

6.2.3 Any appeal must be submitted by the Applicant to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research) within 15 business days of the date of the correspondence notifying the Applicant of the decision.

6.2.4 The appeal must be submitted in writing and must specify the grounds of the appeal and contain such written submissions and documentary material upon which the Applicant seeks to rely.

6.2.5 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research) will consider the material provided by the Applicant and any other material that it is in their discretion to receive.

6.2.6 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research) may affirm, reverse or vary the decision which is the subject of the appeal, and will inform the Applicant of the outcome of the appeal within 20 business days of receiving it.

6.2.7 The determination of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research) shall be final.

Responsibility: Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research)

- a) Consider appeals relating to a decision to refuse admission for non-academic reasons or non-compliance with this Policy, and inform the Applicant of the outcome.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Policy, the terms below have the following meanings:

Academic Program Rules

The formally-approved Program requirements that students must follow in order to progress successfully through and graduate from a Program.

Applicant means a person who applies for admission to a postgraduate research program at the University.

Admission Requirements are the specific academic qualifications, skills knowledge and other requirements that must be satisfied in order for an Applicant to be eligible for admission into a particular program.

Grievance Committee means the Grievance Committee for the Refusal of Admissions and Enrolment on Non-Academic Grounds.

Postgraduate Research Program

A program at Doctoral or Master level which comprises two-thirds or more of its assessable content by research.

AUTHORITIES

| Key | Authority Category | Authority | Delegation Holder | Limits |
|------------|---------------------------|---|---|---------------|
| Academic | Admissions | Approve Postgraduate Research Admission Requirements | Vice-Chancellor and President | |
| Academic | Admissions | Approve exemptions to admission requirements for individual Applicants | PVC (Researcher Education and Development) and Dean of Graduate Studies | |
| Academic | Admissions | Approve exemptions to admission requirements for individual Applicants | Deputy Dean of Graduate Studies | |
| Academic | Admissions | Assess individual applications for admission to determine whether they satisfy the Admission Requirements | Manager, Admissions and Scholarships, Adelaide Graduate Research School | |
| Academic | Admissions | Determine equivalency of qualifications | PVC (Researcher Education and Development) and Dean of Graduate Studies | |
| Academic | Admissions | Determine equivalency of qualifications | Deputy Dean of Graduate Studies | |
| Academic | Admissions | Following the review procedure in Procedures 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 of this Policy, determine if the offer of admission is to proceed, with or without any conditions attached to that offer | PVC (Researcher Education and Development) and Dean of Graduate Studies | |
| Academic | Admissions | Approve any conditions attached to offers of admission, noting the special circumstances of Procedure 2.3.3 of this Policy | Director, Adelaide Graduate Research School | |
| Academic | Admissions | Exercise discretion to refuse admission pursuant to Procedure 3 of this Policy | PVC (Researcher Education and Development) and Dean of Graduate Studies | |
| Academic | Admissions | Exercise discretion to withdraw a deferred offer | Director, Adelaide Graduate Research School | |
| Academic | Admissions | Affirm, reverse or vary the University's decision to cancel a student's enrolment which was the subject of a grievance pursuant to appeals Procedure 6.1 of this Policy | Vice-Chancellor and President | |
| Academic | Admissions | Exercise direction to withdraw offer pursuant to Procedure 5 of this Policy | Director, Adelaide Graduate Research School | |
| Academic | Admissions | Determine initial appeals relating to the University's decision to refuse admission for non-academic reasons pursuant to appeals Procedure 6.1 of this Policy | Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research) | |
| Academic | Admissions | Affirm, reverse or vary the University's decision to refuse admission to the Applicant which was the subject of a grievance pursuant to appeals Procedure 6.2 of this Policy | Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research) | |

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| RMO File No. | F. 2021/3991 |
| Policy Custodian | Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research) |
| Responsible Policy officer | Pro Vice-Chancellor (Researcher Education and Development) and Dean of Graduate Studies |
| Endorsed by | Academic Board on 3 August 2022 |
| Approved by | Vice-Chancellor and President on 15 August 2022 Re-affirmed by DVCR as custodian for a further three years on 9 January 2025 |
| Related Documents and Policies | n/a |
| Related Legislation | n/a |
| Superseded Policies | Admissions to Research Programs Policy 2021 |
| Effective from | 17 August 2022 |
| Review Date | 8 January 2028 |
| Contact for queries about the Policy | Director, Adelaide Graduate Research School |