

INSTITUTE OF CANCER RESEARCH: ROYAL CANCER HOSPITAL

Student Policy and Procedure

ADMISSIONS

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Policy Statement

- 1.1 The Institute of Cancer Research (ICR) is committed to providing high quality research training, and, in line with its equal opportunities statement, the ICR welcomes applications from suitably qualified candidates, irrespective of their background, of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion, political belief or affiliation, socio-economic group, family responsibility, gender, sexual orientation, or disability.
- 1.2 Decisions about offering a place are made on the basis of:
 - Existing or predicted qualifications and grades (individual projects may require a qualification in a specific subject area)
 - Academic references
 - The candidate's application form and in particular the personal statement
 - Interview
 - For research degrees, the projects available
- 1.3 The ICR considers each application on its individual merit and disabled applicants are considered using the same admissions criteria as all other applicants. The ICR is keen to address the issues which, whether real or perceived, may deter a disabled applicant from

applying for a place on the taught postgraduate course or research studentship in a laboratory-based environment and, to this end, The ICR provides a support service via the Learning and Development Team and Academic Services for prospective and existing students.

- 1.4 The ICR's Academic Regulations set out the general criteria for admission to the ICR as follows:

"... In order to be admitted to The Institute of Cancer Research a student must normally:

- be at least 17 years of age, subject to waiver in exceptional circumstances;
- satisfy the general entrance requirements of the University of London;
- satisfy any additional programme-specific entry requirements, for example registration with the General Medical Council
- demonstrate a standard of proficiency in an approved English Language test as specified in the *Programme Regulations* for each programme;
- comply with the enrolment procedures laid down by the ICR.

Decisions on admission are taken in good faith by the ICR on the basis that the information given by the applicant is accurate and correct. If it is subsequently discovered that information given is untrue or inaccurate the ICR may refuse admission or, if the student has enrolled, terminate the student's registration..."

- 1.5 Feedback is provided on request to unsuccessful candidates who have attended an interview, if a request is made within a month of notification that the application was not successful. Feedback will not be provided to candidates who do not make it to interview stage.
- 1.6 Any applicant wishing to make an appeal or complaint about the admissions procedure or process should refer to the Appeals and Complaints procedure for applicants.

2. Admissions Procedure: Full-time PhD Students

- 2.1 The recruitment process will normally commence in September/October and should include, where possible, all funded studentships.

- 2.2 Potential projects must be vetted according to the ICR's procedure for approval of studentships which will cover review of academic, financial and supervisory arrangements for the duration of the project.
- 2.3 Studentships will be advertised in October as part of the ICR's annual recruitment process. The advert must be approved by the Academic Dean or his/her Representative. Studentships are normally advertised in the scientific press, relevant websites, the ICR's website and to university departments with high RAE rankings, running relevant undergraduate/masters degree courses. Studentships in very specialised areas may also be advertised via relevant subject-specific email list.
- 2.4 All applications must be submitted using the on-line application by the advertised deadline. Complete applications will be initially screened against the criteria, as outlined in 1.2/3.1, to ensure applicants meet or are likely to be able to meet the required minimum standards. All the applications are then made available via a web-interface to the Dean's Team and supervisors of the projects who will rank the applications.
- 2.5 Successful applicants will be invited to a recruitment event in January/February. The Registry will normally pay reasonable travel expenditure but not first class travel.
- 2.6 All interviewees will undergo assessment, and be scored by a panel which will comprise a minimum of three staff acting on behalf of the ICR. Those meeting the minimum requirement on the assessment will then be interviewed by the prospective supervisors.
- 2.7 Before any offer is made, the supervisors and Dean's Team will meet to agree all offers. Successful candidates will be contacted by email from the Registry and informally offered a place.
- 2.8 When a candidate has confirmed their acceptance of the informal offer, a formal written offer will be issued. The offer letter will state the terms and conditions that need to be met. All offers will be subject to medical clearance and, where appropriate, the award of degree with the required classification.
- 2.9 If a candidate would like to request that their offer is deferred they must submit a request in writing to the Registry including the reason for the deferral and the length of time requested.
- 2.10 Should a candidate decline the offer, the supervisors of the project may offer to a reserve candidate. If there is no reserve candidate, the supervisors of the project may re-advertise the project with the approval of the Academic Dean's Team. Any candidates invited for interview are required to be interviewed by a minimum of the project supervisor and a member of the Dean's Team. The interview should follow the format of the recruitment event as closely as possible.

- 2.11 In exceptional circumstances (including 2.10 above) supervisors may be allowed to advertise outside of the event as long as they are able to justify this to the Academic Dean's Team. The supervisor will be required to submit a short written case. This could be where a studentship has not been filled as part of the recruitment event or if a Division receives funding for a studentship which they did not have at the time of the initial advertising round. Studentships can only be advertised outside of the main ICR recruitment event if approved by the Academic Dean's Team. The studentship must be advertised externally and as a minimum on the ICR's website. All interviews must follow the format of the recruitment event as closely as possible.

3. Qualifications for Entry: Full-time PhD Students

- 3.1 Applicants should normally possess or expect to obtain EITHER:
- a degree in a relevant subject at upper second class honours or above
- OR:
- a Masters degree in a relevant subject OR:
- an overseas qualification of equivalent standard to the above.

4. Overseas Candidates

- 4.1 Candidates whose first language is not English must be able to demonstrate a proficiency in English to the equivalent of:
- IELTS score of 7.0, with a minimum of 6 in any one component
- The ICR offers training to candidates for whom English is not a first language. It may be possible to make a conditional offer to candidates whose IELTS score is less than the minimum, subject to further study and re-examination.
- 4.2 Overseas candidates may not be eligible to be considered for projects funded by Research Councils, due to restrictions placed by the Research Councils. However, all ICR funded studentships are open to candidates irrespective of nationality, subject to meeting the minimum entrance criteria.

5. Admissions Procedure: Part-time PhD Students (non-clinical)

- 5.1 Candidates should be employees of the Institute of Cancer Research or the Royal Marsden NHS Trust and should have been in post for a minimum of one calendar year. Registration will not be backdated.
- 5.2 Candidates must recognise that the work for which they are primarily employed takes precedence over their studies for MPhil or PhD. It is

likely that some of this work will provide material for the thesis, but it must be accepted that there may be a change of direction of research within a Division, or even redeployment to another Division.

- 5.3 Candidates should submit a 300 word summary of the project, together with a completed Supervisor Form to the Deputy Dean (Biomedical Sciences). They should also include a letter of support from the Head of Division that confirms the candidate's suitability for a research degree, that the facilities required are available and that the proposed study will not compromise the work of the Division or Team. The Head of Division must also guarantee a specified amount of study time for the candidate, agreed with the Deputy Dean [Biomedical Sciences]. Before registration is approved, the prospective supervisor and student must agree a work timetable. For research students, a minimum of 40% of normal work time must be available to contribute to the thesis for the plan to be deemed viable. This assumes that the student will contribute an additional effort equivalent to 10% FTE in their own time.

6. Qualifications for Entry: Part-time PhD Students

- 6.1 Candidates should normally possess a degree in a relevant discipline at second class honours or above, or equivalent.
- 6.2 Where the candidate possesses an award at lower second class honours, the candidate will be required to produce an extended Year 2 report of Master's degree standard.

7. Admissions Procedure : MD(Res) Students

- 7.1 Candidates are required to complete the ICR's Application Form and a protocol outline which should then be discussed with their supervisor. The supervisor must complete the Supervisors form. The proposed project must be authorised by the relevant ICR Head of Division, who is confirming the feasibility of the proposal and that adequate resources will be available for the duration of the project. Once all forms are complete and signed the candidate should make an appointment to discuss their proposed research project with the Deputy Dean (Clinical Studies) or Senior Tutor.
- 7.2 Before registration is approved, the prospective supervisor and student must agree a work timetable. For MD(Res) students, the ICR Code of Practice stipulates "the normal expectation is that the maximum time which may be spent on routine clinical service work during normal working hours is one session per week (this excludes sessions where the majority of the student's time is spent in recruiting or monitoring research subjects). It is expected that Students will contribute a minimum additional effort equivalent to 10% FTE in their own time. These students will be subject to the same monitoring as full-time students.

In exceptional circumstances this can be negotiated with the Deputy Dean (Clinical) and Senior Tutor. However a minimum of 4 sessions must be protected for research. Where this is the case it is expected that Students will contribute a minimum additional effort equivalent to 10% FTE in their own time.

Students required to provide clinical service cover during normal working hours may do so for a maximum of two weeks per annum for full-time students and the pro rata equivalent for part-time students.

8. Qualifications for Entry: MD(Res) Students

All are registered as part-time students.

8.1.1 To be eligible for registration for the MD(Res) degree, a candidate must either:

- (a) have obtained the MB BS degrees of the University of London or some other registerable primary qualification in Medicine, and be eligible for full registration or hold limited registration with the General Medical Council; or
- (b) have obtained the BDS degree of the University of London and/or be eligible for registration with the General Dental Council.
- (c) Clinical experience relevant to the post.

In addition it is desirable for candidates to:

- (d) have research experience relevant to the post; and
- (e) a national training number or be eligible for one.

9. Admissions Procedure: Clinical Fellows (Clinical PhD Students)

9.1 Candidates are required to complete the ICR's Registration Form and a protocol outline which should then be discussed with their supervisor. The supervisor must complete the Supervisors form. Once all forms are complete and signed they should be returned to the Registry with confirmation of three years' funding and written confirmation from their Head of Division that their project is feasible. The Deputy Dean (Biomedical Sciences) will check and approve applications.

9.2 All students are registered initially for MPhil, with transfer of registration to PhD following a successful progress report and internal transfer viva. All are registered as part-time students.

9.3 Before registration is approved, the prospective supervisor and student must agree a work timetable. For Clinical Training Fellows, the ICR

Code of Practice stipulates that: “the maximum time which may be spent on routine clinical service work during normal working hours is one session per week (this excludes sessions where the majority of the student’s time is spent in recruiting or monitoring research subjects.)”

10. Qualifications for Entry: Clinical Fellows (Clinical PhD Students)

10.1 To be eligible for registration for the degree of MPhil candidates must either:

- (a) have obtained the MB BS degrees of the University of London or some other registerable primary qualification in Medicine, and be eligible for full registration or hold limited registration with the General Medical Council; or
- (b) have obtained the BDS degree of the University of London and/or be eligible for registration with the General Dental Council.
- (c) Clinical experience relevant to the post.

In addition it is desirable for candidates to:

- (d) have research experience relevant to the post; and
- (e) a national training number or be eligible for one.

Taught Postgraduate Programmes

11. Admissions Criteria

11.1. The specific qualifications for entry, in addition to the general criteria set out in the ICR’s Academic Regulations, are set out in the programme regulations for each course.

12. Admissions Procedures

12.1 Applications must be made on the ICR’s Application Form. Applications may be made at any time, however there will be a date notified in the prospectus, and to enquirers, by which time no further applications will be considered for entry at the next given intake. An application fee may be charged.

12.2 All applications will be considered in the first instance by the Course Director(s) concerned and at least one other member of academic staff involved in the teaching and delivery of the course in question.

12.3 All applications that the Course Director(s) and other member of academic staff wish to progress will be offered a place, subject to any appropriate conditions. Candidates may be invited to attend an interview prior to a decision being made.

- 12.4 Any applicant in receipt of an offer of admission who wishes to withdraw before enrolment on the course must notify the Registry in writing of their intention to do so. The ICR reserves the right not to refund the application fee or any other charge paid up until the point of withdrawal.
- 12.5 Any applicant wishing to request that their offer is deferred must submit a request in writing to the Course Directors including the reason for the deferral and the length of time requested. Any request for deferral is considered by the Course Directors on its merits, which will include the likelihood of space being available on the programme's next starting date and the reasonableness of the request.