

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS
Faculty of Biological Sciences
TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE ADMISSIONS POLICY
2020

This document outlines the Faculty of Biological Sciences Taught Postgraduate Admissions Policy for 2020 entry. It supports the admissions principles and policies of the University of Leeds, as outlined in the [University of Leeds Taught Postgraduate Admissions Policy](#) and should be considered alongside this document. This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

The Faculty of Biological Sciences Taught Postgraduate Admissions Policy applies to the following courses:

MSc Bioscience
MSc Infection, Immunity and Human Disease
MSc Plant Science and Biotechnology
MSc/MRes Biodiversity and Conservation*
MSc/MRes Biodiversity and Conservation with African Field Course*
MSc Precision Medicine: Genomics and Analytics

**These courses are offered part time. Please follow the application process as detailed below.*

1. Principles

The Faculty of Biological Sciences ensures that the selection process provides due consideration for applicants who apply by the relevant closing date. All selection decisions are made on the basis of merit and the ability of each applicant to meet the academic and non-academic criteria for admission to the relevant programme of study.

2. Selection Principles

The Faculty of Biological Sciences will treat all applicants fairly and not discriminate unlawfully on grounds of their age; disability; sex; gender reassignment; pregnancy or maternity status; race; religion or belief; or sexual orientation.

The University operates a policy of Dignity and Mutual Respect, which all staff, students and third parties, including prospective students, are expected to abide by. The University reserves the right to withdraw an application if behaviours are deemed to have contravened this policy. This policy can be found within the [Equality Policy Unit's](#) webpages.

3. Application process

3.1 How to apply

All applicants for taught postgraduate courses should [apply online](#). Applicants can track the application at each stage of the process through the applicant portal and it is recommended that they check the portal regularly for updates.

For overseas applicants it is important to upload all academic transcripts and degree certificates¹ to the portal to enable us to assess suitability, and CAS and visa documents if the applicant has studied in the UK previously, as failure to upload these may result in a delay to processing the application. Please see section 3.5 for more details. Where relevant, applicants will also be expected to provide officially translated versions of their documentation.

The admissions process is covered by the University's Policy on Equality and Inclusion which is available from the [University's Equality Policy Unit](#).

3.2 General entrance requirements

The typical entrance requirement for the Faculty of Biological Sciences is a good first honours degree of at least a UK upper second class or equivalent. Criteria for entry to individual courses of study may be higher and applicants are advised to check with the relevant school prior to applying. Exceptions to this academic requirement may be made when applicants can demonstrate significant relevant experience and their potential for benefiting from the course is clear.

For programme specific entry requirements please visit:

MSc Bioscience -

<https://biologicalsciences.leeds.ac.uk/courses/a990/bioscience-msc>

MSc Infection, Immunity and Human Disease -

<https://biologicalsciences.leeds.ac.uk/courses/g813/infection,-immunity-and-human-disease-msc>

MSc Plant Science and Biotechnology –

<https://biologicalsciences.leeds.ac.uk/courses/g065/plant-science-and-biotechnology-msc>

MSc/MRes Biodiversity and Conservation -

MSc <https://biologicalsciences.leeds.ac.uk/courses/x006/biodiversity-and-conservation-msc>

MRes <https://biologicalsciences.leeds.ac.uk/courses/a912/biodiversity-and-conservation-mres>

MSc/MRes Biodiversity and Conservation with African Field Course -

MSc <https://biologicalsciences.leeds.ac.uk/courses/g363/biodiversity-and-conservation-with-african-field-course-msc>

MRes <https://biologicalsciences.leeds.ac.uk/courses/g367/biodiversity-and-conservation-with-african-field-course-mres>

MSc Precision Medicine: Genomics and Analytics -

<https://biologicalsciences.leeds.ac.uk/courses/l661/precision-medicine-genomics-analytics-msc>

Admissions staff are experienced in considering a wide range of international qualifications against course entry requirements. Prospective applicants who wish to discuss whether their qualifications will meet the necessary entry criteria should contact the School [of insert] directly. Further information for prospective international applicants can be found on the [University of Leeds international student webpages](#).

3.3 Application deadlines

Applicants are encouraged to apply as early as possible for taught postgraduate programmes. The Faculty of Biological Sciences will only assess applications which are

¹ If applicants have completed and graduated from their degree programme.

complete before the application closing date, where one applies. The following programmes operate an application closing date:

Biodiversity and Conservation – all variants – 31st March 2020.

The other courses listed in this policy do not have an application deadline.

If the applicant intends to apply for funding, they should submit an application for a place at least one month before any specific scholarship deadline.

International students requiring a Tier 4 visa are particularly advised to submit applications as early as possible to ensure they have sufficient time to obtain a visa and prepare for arrival in the UK. Furthermore, an offer of a place is needed for many of the scholarships available to international students and scholarship application closing dates can often be early in the year.

3.4 English language requirements

Teaching, assessment and student support will take place in English, unless otherwise stated. For this reason the University and the academic school must be confident that candidates have the proficiency in English language necessary to succeed on the chosen course and that, where relevant, they meet the UKVI (UK Visas and Immigration) minimum requirements to obtain a Tier 4 visa.

Proof of English language proficiency will be required and minimum levels and approved tests for the Faculty of Biological Sciences are detailed below or can be found in the [University of Leeds Taught Postgraduate Admissions Policy](#).

The Faculty of Biological Sciences expect applicants to have a minimum of IELTS 6.5 overall, with no less than 6.0 in any component. For other English qualifications, read [English language equivalent qualifications](#).

Certain qualifications, e.g. IELTS, have a 2 year validity period and must be valid at the commencement of studies.

Where an applicant does not meet the English language requirements for the academic course, but does meet the requirements for the University of Leeds pre-sessional English Language summer courses, they may be eligible for a combined offer for the pre-sessional and Taught Postgraduate course. Applicants with a combined offer needing a CAS (Confirmation of Acceptance to Study) will receive one CAS for the duration of both their pre-sessional and Taught Postgraduate study. Applicants must attend and successfully complete the pre-sessional course in order to progress onto the Taught Postgraduate course. Failure to do so will result in the applicant being unable to join the Taught Postgraduate course. Applicants can opt out of the combined pre-sessional offer and instead meet the English Language requirement by completing one of the English Language tests detailed in Appendix A, Section 2 of the [University of Leeds Taught Postgraduate Admissions Policy](#), by declining the offer and contacting

tp_applications@leeds.ac.uk. A single CAS for the postgraduate programme can then be issued.

3.5 CAS statement, ATAS and Tier 4 visa

Applicants who require a Tier 4 (General) Student Visa and have previously studied in the UK will need to provide documentary evidence detailing any periods of study on a Tier 4 (General) Student Visa (or on a Student Visa if the study in the UK was before 2009) in order for the University to be able to carry out checks to ensure compliance with the UKVI's Points Based System. Applicants are encouraged to include documents such as previous CAS, copies of passport pages containing visas or copies of Biometric Residence Permits with their application to assist in processing. Any information that is not included in the application will be requested when the application is considered, or the University may need to request the applicant's permission to check their UK immigration history directly with the UKVI.

Please note where the UKVI allows exceptions to its policy, the University reserves the right to make its own assessment on whether these are applied.

Applicants for distance learning courses may not require a Tier 4 visa and may be eligible for a Short Term Study visa.

Applicants from outside the European Economic Area may require an Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate in order to undertake postgraduate study in certain subject areas. Those who require ATAS clearance must obtain the ATAS certificate before applying for the Tier 4 visa. More information about [ATAS](#) can be found on the University website.

Overseas applicants and applicants from non-EU countries who require sponsorship to study in the UK should note that the University does not sponsor candidates for part-time courses as standard practice.

For more information please visit the [Visas and Immigration](#) section of the University website.

3.6 Admissions intake

All courses within the Faculty of Biological Sciences aim to recruit the highest calibre students, with all places awarded on merit. The allocation of student places is set for each course on an annual basis.

3.7 Advanced Entry

Accreditation of prior learning is a process undertaken by the University in order to assess and, as appropriate, recognise prior experiential learning or prior certificated learning for academic purposes. This recognition may give the learning a credit value and allow it to be counted towards the completion of a programme of study. Credit Transfer is the process by which the University accepts credit arising from prior certificated learning, either awarded by itself or another institution, as contributing to an award of the University.

Any decision on credit transfer or entry of students with advanced standing is an academic decision taken within the relevant academic school at the point of admission onto a course. Retrospective applications from students part-way through a course will not normally be considered.

Further details of the University's policy can be found [on our webpage](#).

4. Selection process

Academic grades normally form only one part of the final decision and the following sections give examples of how applicants may demonstrate that they have the skills, knowledge and attributes that we consider will enable them to become a successful student in the Faculty of Biological Sciences.

Relevant voluntary or work experience may be taken into account. The applicant would be required to demonstrate that this experience is substantial and relevant to their chosen programme of study. Research publications or evidence of scholarly activity e.g. professional journal, contributions to guidelines, report to professional sports body may be taken into consideration if they demonstrate significant expertise in a relevant field.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to include a CV to provide more detailed information about their prior educational and work experience. Our supporting statement form should also be completed to provide further information about their suitability for their chosen programme of study and the reasons for their choice of programme.

Our supporting statement form can be accessed via the following link:

https://biologicalsciences.leeds.ac.uk/downloads/download/24/supporting_statement_and_reference_form.

4.1 Interviews

The Faculty of Biological Sciences does not typically undertake interviews with applicants; however, in certain circumstances programme leaders may invite an applicant to interview as part of the selection procedure. This may allow us to further assess the applicant's aptitude and interest in the programme in the cases where the applicant's circumstances are not straightforward.

If invited to interview, the applicant will receive an email invitation from the Faculty to attend an interview on a specific date. We will do our best to accommodate requests for an alternative date but this cannot be guaranteed.

Interviews may take place via a number of alternative means depending on the circumstances of the applicant. For example, interviews may take place on a one to one basis or via Skype, video conferencing or telephone particularly for overseas applicants.

Some applicants, such as those who are disabled or those who are pregnant may require adjustments to their interview (for example, a sign-language interpreter or an adjustment to

an audition process) to provide them with full and equal access to the process. The Faculty is responsible for making reasonable adjustments where possible. The University's Disability Services team should be consulted for further advice or information regarding disability related adjustments (email disability@leeds.ac.uk) and the Equality Policy Unit for advice on other adjustments (email equality@leeds.ac.uk).

4.2 Offers

Offers are made on the basis of merit and the ability of each applicant to meet the academic and non-academic criteria for admission to the relevant course of study. Offers are made based on the information supplied on the application form, and where required, proof of English Language as detailed in section 3.4.

The Faculty of Biological Sciences requires an academic transcript before any offer can be made, and for some courses will also require a supporting statement and CV.

The [University of Leeds Taught Postgraduate Admissions Policy](#) gives further detail on the type of offers that are made.

4.3 Reasons for unsuccessful applicants

Unsuccessful applicants may wish to request feedback on the reason for the outcome of their application. All requests for feedback should be made via the applicant portal. Generally where applicants request feedback on why they have not been admitted, feedback will be given.

The University's policy on providing feedback to applicants can be found in the [University of Leeds Taught Postgraduate Admissions Policy](#).

4.4 Complaints

The Faculty of Biological Sciences will consider all applications fairly and effectively in line with the procedures outlined in this document and the [University of Leeds Taught Postgraduate Admissions Policy](#). Applicants who wish to challenge a decision to reject their application should write to *Paul Matthews, Faculty Admissions Manager*, (p.matthews@leeds.ac.uk) detailing the nature of their complaint. The complaint must typically be made within 14 days of the decision. Complaints made on behalf of an applicant cannot usually be processed and therefore applicants are advised to contact the Admissions Manager directly wherever possible.

Full details of the complaints procedure can be found in the University of Leeds [Postgraduate Admissions Policy](#).

4.5 Age and Safeguarding

The University recognises that someone's age (if under 18) or safeguarding position may need to be taken into account. For full details of the University policy please see the University [Safeguarding Policy](#).

UKVI guidance states that under Tier 4 (General), students must be 16 or over. Accordingly, the University cannot assign a CAS for anyone under 16, and those reliant on a Tier 4 (General) visa must be aged 16 or over in order to be considered for sponsorship.

The Faculty of Biological Sciences does not currently have any additional age restrictions attached to any of its courses.

4.6 Disabled applicants

The Faculty of Biological Sciences welcomes applications from disabled people². The University will make reasonable adjustments, with the aim of ensuring that disabled applicants have full and equal access to our admissions procedures and courses. Information about disability is not used when considering an applicant's academic eligibility for their chosen course. It is reviewed in order to identify any potential study-related support requirements, and the eligibility for disability-related support funding, so that the University can ensure the applicant is supported effectively on the course.

The University will always aim to make appropriate adjustments for disabled applicants. However, applicants who choose not to declare their disability should be aware that, without the knowledge it may be more difficult, or in rare cases impossible, for the University to provide support and/or make the reasonable adjustments. Applicants are invited to indicate their disability status on their application form and we strongly encourage applicants to declare any disability so that reasonable adjustments and/or other support requirement can be made/considered. Disabled applicants are also advised to contact the University's Disability Services team (part of the University's Student Education Service) once an application has been submitted, to discuss any support requirements they may have in relation to the course for which they have applied. Disability Services can be contacted at disability@leeds.ac.uk.

The admissions process is covered by the University's Policy on Equality and Inclusion which is available from the [University's Equality Policy Unit](#).

4.7 Applicants with a health-related issue or other mitigating circumstance

This section deals with health-related issues³, which are distinct from disability-related issues. Applicants with a health-related issue should contact the relevant academic school as soon as possible if their health is likely to impact on their ability to engage with the admissions process. The University aims to be flexible in such circumstances and to take such issues into account.

² The University is committed to the social model of disability and in line with the definition under the Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as someone with a physical or mental impairment which is long-term (lasting 12 months or more) and which has a substantial impact on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. The definition of disability includes long-term medical conditions such as cancer, HIV/AIDS and MS (in each case from the point of diagnosis) and may include epilepsy, diabetes, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/ME amongst others.

³ Which are not classed as a disability.

If a candidate feels that their prior ill-health – or personal circumstances other than ill-health (for example, bereavement or other difficult home or family circumstances) – may have affected their previous education, or the grades they received in past examinations, then they are also welcome to contact the school to discuss this further. All formal requests for mitigating circumstances to be taken into account in the admissions process should be supported by a full declaration about the nature of the circumstances.

4.8 Support for applicants who are pregnant

In line with the University policy on support for students who are pregnant or have young children (available from [the Equality Policy Unit website](#)), applicants who are pregnant are advised to inform their Admissions Tutor/Officer at an early stage. This is so that consideration can be given to appropriate support being available from the start of their course.

4.9 Guidance for trans applicants

Applicants who do not wish to disclose their trans status to the faculty/school admissions team for a course of study but require their status to be changed should contact study@leeds.ac.uk and the team will be able to support the applicant through the process. The University will be required to carry out identity checks as part of the registration process, and/or taught admissions staff may be required to advise the relevant Faculty Admissions Manager of a status change in order to facilitate removal of any previous documentation. This process will be undertaken confidentially and with sensitivity. Full guidance to support trans staff and students can be found on [Equality Policy Unit website](#).

4.10 Applicants seeking deferred entry

The Faculty of Biological Sciences considers a deferred applicant as one who currently holds an offer but wishes to change the year of entry to the following academic year, or one who applies for the following academic year from the outset. Applicants who wish to defer an offer of a place to the following academic year should contact the Faculty of Biological Sciences⁴ by 1st April 2021 where the course has a September or October start date. Only applicants with an unconditional offer, or who have an offer conditional on English language are able to defer. Deferral of a place to study is at the discretion of the Faculty of Biological Sciences and is strictly limited to a maximum of one academic year following the year of initial application. Any offer made will not be subject to change, except where an English language qualification is subject to a validity period which has now expired, for example IELTS has a two year validity period.

Applicants who request deferral for more than one academic year will be required to reapply. Such candidates should be aware that no guarantee can be given that another offer will be made and that the conditions of any future offer may differ to those of the original.

⁴ Where applicants hold an offer via the online application portal the deferral request should be made via the portal.

4.11 Applicants wishing to reapply

Any decision on the eligibility of applicants who have previously held an offer of a place but failed to achieve the academic conditions at first attempt will be an academic judgement. Such candidates should be aware that no guarantee can be given that another offer will be made, and that the conditions of any future offer may differ to those of the original.

4.12 Former students of the University

The University of Leeds welcomes applications from candidates who have previously studied at this institution. Where appropriate, such candidates may be able to apply for Advanced Entry (see 3.7 above).

Candidates who have been withdrawn from their earlier studies due to academic failure may apply for re-entry to the University, but not to the same or a closely related course, i.e. where over half of the compulsory modules are identical. Candidates who previously left the University due to non-academic reasons e.g. ill health, financial reasons, will not be subject to this condition. When assessing applications from former students all relevant factors will be considered, including previous study, and applications will be considered on a case by case basis.

Applications from candidates who have been permanently excluded (expelled) from the University for disciplinary reasons, those who have been excluded under the Referred Student Procedure or for reasons of misconduct or fitness to train in a professionally-regulated discipline will be rejected.

Applicants should contact the School for further information.

Applicants who require a Tier 4 (General) Student Visa and have previously studied at the University under Tier 4 sponsorship will be subject to academic progression checks to ensure UKVI compliance. Please see section 3.5 for further information.

4.13 Criminal convictions

The University has a [policy statement on students with criminal records](#). This policy includes applicants seeking admission. It should be noted that if an applicant or offer-holder is required to disclose a criminal offence and fails to do so this will generally be considered a very serious matter and is likely to lead to their application being rejected, their offer being withdrawn or, if they have registered as a student, to their registration at the University being revoked. Having a prior criminal record will not necessarily prevent an applicant from joining the University; this may depend, for example, on the nature, timing and relevance of the criminal offence in question. The University may request further information about the nature or context of an applicant or offer-holder's criminal record.

The University will ask applicants to declare a relevant unspent criminal conviction as part of the process of accepting an offer which is made. Information about why this information is requested, and the process for disclosing a relevant unspent criminal conviction is at www.leeds.ac.uk/declaration.

4.14 Course start date and arrival

The course start date is indicated clearly in the offer letter alongside the period of study and applicants must ensure that they are able to attend their course from this date. The University reserves the right to refuse admission to those offer holders who arrive after this date. Should there be any possibility of a delay to arrival, offer holders should seek advice from the Faculty of Biological Sciences before travelling.

5. Opportunities to visit

5.1 Faculty open days

Applicants who wish to visit the Faculty of Biological Sciences may book an appointment by contacting the Admissions Office using the contact details given at the end of this document. The Faculty holds online webinar sessions during the year where applicants can find out more about the course and studying at Leeds. These are an excellent way to ask questions and speak to academics teaching on the postgraduate programmes.

Information on Faculty or University Open Days can be found on our website at:

http://www.leeds.ac.uk/homepage/35/postgraduate_open_days.

6. Scholarships and funding

The University of Leeds currently offers a wide range of scholarships and bursaries that provide funding for students to undertake taught postgraduate study at the University. Further details can be found on our [webpages](#).

6.1 University Scholarships

Postgraduate students at Leeds benefit from around £10m of funding from the University and externally. [Postgraduate scholarships](#) are available to eligible international, UK and EU students.

6.2 Faculty level scholarships information

Further details of school level scholarships can be found on our website [here](#).

7. Contact details

Admissions enquiries to the Faculty of Biological Sciences should be directed to:

FBS Admissions Team

Tel: +44(0) 113 343 1418

Email: fbspgt@leeds.ac.uk

Updated by Paul Matthews, 16th May 2019.

Date of amendment	Change detail	Section